

Sports



WIU brings volleyball back to Brophy Hall

NCAA official volleyball playing surface easier on players' bodies

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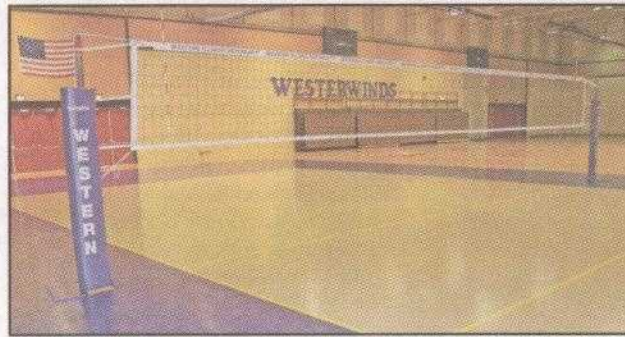
The WIU volleyball program unveiled Sport Court flooring—the NCAA official volleyball playing surface—in Brophy Hall in August. In past seasons the team had named Western Hall as its home court.

"This is a significant day for the volleyball program and women's athletics at Western Illinois," said head volleyball coach **Kym McKay MS '08**. "We are bringing volleyball back to Brophy Hall and doing it in style.

"Head baseball coach **Stan Hyman** has always gone out of his way to comment on the quality and home court advantage of our matches in Brophy Hall," McKay continued. "After this past season's matches against Oral Roberts and North Dakota State, which were played in Brophy Hall, he questioned why we didn't play all of our matches there to benefit from the amazing crowds. This got us thinking, and we started putting together a plan to make this happen."

Western Hall has a crowd capacity of over 5,000, whereas the court in Brophy Hall holds roughly 800 with fans tightly surrounding the court.

"The crowd's impact in Brophy Hall creates a home court advantage that is unmatched at most Division I schools," McKay said. "The smaller venue makes the facility extremely loud and is a major intimidating factor for opponents. All fans will be a vital part of the match experience and should be able to truly impact the positive outcomes."



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The 'positive outcomes' that have been most prevalent in the past four seasons for the Western Illinois volleyball program relate with the 21-7 home conference record they hold. Having at least five home conference wins and two or less losses in the conference at home each year has earned the Westerwinds a spot at The Summit League Tournament for four straight years.

Western now becomes the only volleyball program in The Summit League to have the playing surface and is only one of two Illinois Division I Athletic programs with Sport Court, with Northwestern being the other. For the 2008-09 season, the Westerwinds will play all conference matches in Brophy Hall and all non-conference opponents in Western Hall.

"The floor will serve two major functions," McKay said. "First and foremost, it will reduce the physical wear and tear on the players' bodies. In the past, we preferred to play matches in Western Hall due to the quality of the floor and its ability to absorb lateral and vertical shock. The floor in Brophy Hall did not provide this and the players' shins, ankles, knees, and backs endure higher levels of stress and discomfort. But the Sport Court will provide more lateral and vertical forgiveness on a player's body. The other function that the floor will provide is an aesthetic one. It makes a statement."

The newly added Sport Court is a total of 5,000 square feet with the actual court containing 1,800 square feet and the outside playing surface occupying the final 3,200 square feet. The volleyball court playing area is a simulated maple with the surrounding floor in purple with gold court lines. It is made of a polypropylene copolymer and has a locking system to integrate the tiles together. Each square tile is 9.8 inches, a half inch thick and weighs .62 pounds. The court was funded through private sources.

"This new floor clearly enhances our volleyball program, and we hope it will separate us from our competition," said **Tim Van Alstine**, director of athletics. "Moreover, this is another indication of our commitment to advancing women's programs. Kym has done a great job building our volleyball program into a perennial contender in The Summit League, and our program deserves this enhancement."



Westerwinds win conference opener against Centenary, 3-1

Courtesy: Katie Kane Release: 09/20/2008



▶ [Box Score](#)

MACOMB, Ill. - Western Illinois senior left side hitter [Monique Houston](#) led the team in kills with 14 and fell one dig short of a double-double, while [Erin Frick](#) had 12 kills and two season-bests in service aces (4) and block assists (7) as the Westerwinds defeated Centenary in the conference-opening match, 3-1, (18-25, 27-25, 17-25, 15-25), Saturday.

"It was nice to see two veteran players execute well offensively in our conference opener," Western Illinois head coach [Kym McKay](#) said. "Mo came up with big kills at times when the team needed them most and Erin also contributed by putting up a strong block and serving tough."

"We were elated that the vision that we had for a home court advantage in Brophy Hall with the Sport Court was apparent tonight. There was a point in the third game where it was standing room only on both sides. The crowd tonight was a positive factor. They were loud and supportive and were fun to play for. It was a good day for Western Illinois athletics to have two major sporting events going on (volleyball and football) and have excellent attendance at both," McKay exclaimed.

The Westerwinds (5-8) took the first set from the Ladies (2-11), 25-18, Houston tallied seven kills in 11 attempts for a .636 hitting percentage, the highest percentage of any player in the set. Senior setter [Sarah Trimpe](#) set up Houston's points as she recorded 13 assists in the set.

The second set came down to the wire as Centenary rallied from a 24-22 deficit to tie the set at 24-24 and surpass the Westerwinds at 26-25. The Ladies finished out the set, 27-25, out-hitting Western .293 to .174. The Ladies' Bethany Kern led the set with six kills and a .462 hitting percentage.

"You have to give credit to Centenary for playing very well," McKay said. "They were out-executing us at the end of game one and throughout game two. We were fortunate in games three and four that we served smart and tough."

Points were traded back and forth until the final tie at 12-12 when Western pulled away from Centenary in the third set. Houston and [Allison Gilbert](#) led the team in kills for the set with four, which also boosted Western Illinois' team hitting percentage to .265 over Centenary's .122. The Ladies had one more kill than Western, however errors proved costly as Centenary had five more than Western, falling 25-17 in the third set.

In the final set of the evening, Western recorded four team blocks with Frick assisting in three. Western took the lead from the first point and never let up to defeat Centenary, 25-15 and take the match.

Trimpe led the team in assists with 41 total and fell one dig shy of a double-double. [Elise Crnjak](#) had her 13th straight match with double-digit digs with 20, while [Ellen Miller](#) assisted defensively with 11 digs.

The Westerwinds return to competition as they host Bradley in a weekday match, Sept. 23 at 7 p.m. and continue conference play against IUPUI, Sept. 27 at 5 p.m.

"This upcoming week with matches against Bradley and IUPUI will require a much higher level of play from us if we want to be successful."



Courtesy: WIU
Visual
Productions
Center

Erin Frick served up a season-best seven aces in the 3-1 win over Centenary, Saturday.

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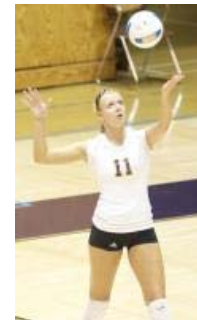
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Western Illinois volleyball program unveils Sport Court

Courtesy: Katie Kane Release: 07/25/2008



▸ [Photo Album](#)

MACOMB, Ill. - The Western Illinois volleyball program unveils Sport Court flooring, the NCAA official volleyball playing surface, in Brophy Hall, Friday.

"This is a significant day for the volleyball program and women's athletics at Western Illinois. We are bringing volleyball back to Brophy Hall and doing it in style. This enhancement could not have happened without the cooperation from Dr. Miriam Satern and Greg Beck's physical plant staff," Western Illinois head volleyball coach [Kym McKay](#) said. "It has been a joint effort to make this floor a reality. Dr. Satern shared in our vision to bring volleyball back to Brophy Hall and has been vital to the project."

"Western Illinois head baseball coach Stan Hyman always went out of his way to comment on the quality and home court advantage of our matches in Brophy Hall," McKay continued. "After this past season's matches against Oral Roberts and North Dakota State, that were played in Brophy Hall, Stan really planted a seed in the coaching staff's brains. He questioned why we didn't play all of our matches over there to benefit from the amazing crowds. This got us thinking and we started putting together a plan to make this happen."

"John Biernbaum and Greg Beck have also spent time joining efforts with the Athletic and Kinesiology Departments. Physical Plant is one of the most vital components as they will be setting up and taking down the floor. Their staff's willingness to take on these tasks has been imperative to the implementation of the flooring. We would not be celebrating this wonderful day in Western Illinois volleyball if it was not for Dr. Satern, JB, Greg, and their staff. This project is a perfect example of university departments and employees working together," McKay stated.

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"I am very pleased with this new floor as it clearly enhances our volleyball program and we hope it will separate us from our competition." Western Illinois Director of Athletics Dr. Tim Van Alstine said. "Moreover, this is another indication of our commitment to advancing women's programs. Kym has done a great job building our volleyball program into a perennial contender in The Summit League and our program deserves this enhancement."

"I also want to thank Dr. Garry Johnson and Dr. Tim Van Alstine for supporting the vision that the coaching staff had," McKay said. "They have been supportive throughout the process and the coaching staff appreciates having an administration that is open to enhancing the student-athlete experience and the facilities. Dr. Johnson and Dr. Van Alstine are truly and honestly committed to women's athletics at Western Illinois and this is evidence of that."

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"Nancy Sprout, Business Manager of the Athletic Department, also served a primary role in getting the floor," McKay said. "She had to put in many behind-the-scenes hours to get the flooring materials to successfully work its way through the purchasing process. It was a tedious task and she did a fantastic job of ensuring that all of the steps were followed. I was limited in my experience with a purchase this large and without Nancy's expertise and efforts, this would have never happened." In the past seasons the Western Illinois volleyball team has named Western Hall as its home court, but has also found success in competition at Brophy Hall.

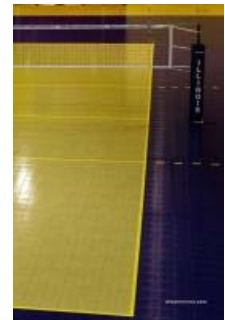
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"The crowd's impact in Brophy Hall creates a home court advantage for the team that is unmatched at most Division I schools," McKay said. "The smaller venue makes the facility extremely loud and is a major intimidating factor for opponents. We are creating an atmosphere that will be feared by most opponents. All fans will be a vital part of the match experience and should be able to truly impact the positive outcomes."

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"The level of volleyball being played in The Summit League is increasing in quality and mixed with the extensive travel, winning at home becomes of the utmost importance when attempting to earn a bid to the conference tournament," McKay stated. "This enhancement to Brophy will help the team continue to have a solid home record."



Courtesy: Katie Kane/Western Illinois Athletics

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