



# Sports

## MSU gets upper hand on Upper Iowa

Sandstrom dishes out 35 assists in three-game MSU sweep

By Chad Courrier  
Free Press Staff Writer

**MANKATO** — The Minnesota State volleyball team was coming off consecutive losses, there was frustration and disappointment. The Mavericks needed a couple of victories to lift their spirits.

First came a 3-1 victory over Winona State last week, then on Tuesday, the Mavericks dumped another nonconference foe, Upper Iowa, 30-13, 30-15, 30-12 at Bresnan Arena.

"This was good for us," Minnesota State coach Dennis Amundson said. "We've worked them hard in practice; we have a big week coming up. This was an opportunity for the kids to get fresh and ready to go."

The 14th-ranked Mavericks (14-3) had won seven straight matches before losing to Southwest Minnesota State and Augustana two weeks ago, a midseason lull that could have soured the best start to a season since 1993.

"After Augustana, we were frustrated because it was a hard-fought match and we outstated them in every category," senior setter Stef Sandstrom said. "I think it was tough on our hearts. This was a match that gives us a little boost."

The Mavericks breezed through the first game, with Danielle Zimmermann, Dana Ostertag, Amanda Beekman and Stef Sandstrom having serving streaks of at least four points. The Mavericks — who had 16 kills in the opener, including four by Beekman — had leads of 8-2, 15-5 and 24-7 before finishing the game at 30-13.

Minnesota State hit .452 percent and got their hands on nearly every spike attempt defensively.

The second game was a little more competitive early as Minnesota State led 11-9, but



Pat Christman

Minnesota State's Danielle Zimmermann (19) makes one of her six blocks in a 3-0 nonconference victory Tuesday over Upper Iowa at Bresnan Arena.

an 11-2 run, fueled by two kills and a block by Zimmermann and three kills by Beekman, made it 22-11. Ashley Nachreiner added a couple of kills as the Mavericks won 30-15.

Minnesota State had 17 kills in Game 2 and hit .397 percent, with 10 blocks through two games.

The Mavericks were leading 10-5 in the third game when Sandstrom went to the line. Using a wicked jump serve, she scored six points, including an ace and four times when Upper Iowa mishandled the ball.

The Mavericks continued to roll, hitting .619 in the

game and ending the 30-12 victory on Sandstrom's ace for the most lopsided victory of the season.

"We got back to having fun and competing," said Sandstrom, who led the Mavericks with 35 assists and two ace serves. "No matter what they did, we came right back."

Beekman and Nachreiner each made 11 kills. Megan Stroud had seven kills, and Zimmermann added two solo blocks and four block assists. The Mavericks hit .449 percent for the match with 46 kills and only six errors.

"The thing that's happening is we're starting to believe we

can be a good program," Amundson said. "This was a good test, we're trying to get to the point where the kids believe we deserve to win the match."

Minnesota State resumes its North Central Conference schedule Saturday with a match at St. Cloud State.

The next home match for the Mavericks is Tuesday against sixth-ranked Concordia-St. Paul, and then there's an NCC road match at Minnesota Duluth on Friday, Oct. 12.

"In our conference, every match is tough," Sandstrom said. "This win gives us confidence."