



# Sports

## MSU rallies to down 12th-ranked UNO

Sandstrom's 61 set assists helps host Mavs win conference opener

By Denny Weller  
Special to The Free Press

**MANKATO** — Minnesota State volleyball coach Dennis Amundson has always believed that to be a quality team you have to beat somebody who can beat somebody.

Saturday night at Bresnan Arena, Amundson's Mavericks did just that as a balanced hitting attack fueled a come-from-behind 3-2 North Central Conference win over Nebraska-Omaha.

"It's important for our program to let people know that just because you're somebody doesn't mean that we can't come out and play with you," Amundson said. "Our kids fought very hard and we were able to steal one from them."

"We've worked hard over the last year to develop a lot of depth and we used a lot of players today in a lot of different positions. I think we were a little bit fresher at the end."

Minnesota State (10-4 overall, 1-0 in NCC) had six players with seven kills or more as junior setter Stef Sandstrom collected 61 assists in the 30-24, 27-30, 21-33, 30-24, 16-14 triumph. Junior outside hitter Dana Ostertag led the way with 19 kills while senior outside hitter Cassie Wolpern added 17.

Nebraska-Omaha (10-4, 0-2) jumped out to an 8-3 lead in Game 5 behind a pair of kills from Nicole McLeod before the host Mavericks began to turn things around. Mandy Reuter's kill got things rolling and back-to-back blasts from



Sonja Reeves

Minnesota State senior Cassie Wolpern slammed 17 kills Saturday, helping the team to a 3-2 win over 12th-ranked Nebraska-Omaha at MSU's Taylor Center.

Ostertag helped cut the deficit to 12-11.

Wolpern then smacked two cross-court kills, the second tying things at 14. Kelly Sandstrom then tallied the final two points from the service line as a Nebraska-Omaha hitting error and illegal hit triggered a Minnesota State celebration.

"We've lost a lot of close games so we go back to the gym and work exactly on that," Wolpern, who also had

14 digs and three blocks, said. "We've struggled with our passing all year but tonight it really clicked for us. We established our middle and right-side hitters and then it was open on the outside. Our consistency was much better."

Reuter finished with 14 kills and 18 digs and Megan Stroud added 11 kills. Turner fired eight kills and was in on four blocks in playing the final three games.

"I am on a high right now, I

can't stop smiling," Stef Sandstrom said. "We've had trouble with falling behind early and not being able to get a side out right away."

"I used my middles a lot to get single blocks for the outside hitters and it worked. We got in a slump to start that last game but we just seemed to turn things around and come back."

Minnesota State hosts Southwest Minnesota State Tuesday.