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ON THE COVER (L to R): Seniors John La Rusch, Taylor Gregory and Cody Martin. All photos taken by John Fajardo.

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QUICK FACTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location	Long Beach, Calif.
Founded	1949
Enrollment	36,822
Nickname	49ers
Colors	Black & Gold
National Affiliation	NCAA Division I
Conference	Mountain Pacific Sports Federation
President	Dr. Jane Close Conoley
Athletic Director	Vic Cegles
Arena	Walter Pyramid (4,200)
Arena Floor Surface	Maple Wood
Arena Press Row Phone	(562) 985-4667
Ticket Office Phone	(562) 985-4949

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach	Alan Knipe (Long Beach State, 1992), 13th season
Record at LBSU	226-134 (12 years)
Overall NCAA Division I Record	Same
Assistant Coaches	Tyler Hildebrand, Nick MacRae
Volunteer Assistant	Andy Read
Administrative Assistant	Cameron Green
Director of Operations/Video Coordinator	Jon Parry
Statistical Coordinator	Troy Crutchfield

TEAM INFORMATION

2015 Overall Record	15-13
2015 MPSF Record	11-11
2015 MPSF Finish	7th
Letterwinners Returning/Lost	15/5
Starters Returning/Lost	6/0
Redshirts Returning	2
Newcomers	6

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#	NAME	POS	HT	YR	EXP	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
1	Jeff Utupo	OH	6-5	Jr.	TR	Bellflower, Calif. (Long Beach City College/Mayfair HS)
3	Matt Butler	S	6-0	Jr.	2L	Huntington Beach, Calif. (Huntington Beach HS)
4	Bjarne Huus	OH	6-1	So.	1L	Foerde, Norway (Toppvolley Norge)
5	Kyle Ensing	OH/OPP	6-7	Fr.	HS	Valencia, Calif. (Valencia HS)
6	John La Rusch	OPP	6-6	Sr.	3L	Long Beach, Calif. (Poly HS)
8	Curtis Stallings	S	6-5	Jr.	2L	Chesapeake, Va. (Grassfield HS)
9	Dan Glamack	OH	6-6	Sr.	3L	Victor, N.Y. (Victor Senior HS)
10	Josh Tuaniga	S	6-3	Fr.	HS	Long Beach, Calif. (Huntington Beach HS)
11	TJ DeFalco	OH	6-4	Fr.	HS	Huntington Beach, Calif. (Huntington Beach HS)
12	Edgar Palos	OH	6-1	Sr.	3L	Huntington Beach, Calif. (Huntington Beach HS)
13	Taylor Gregory	MB	6-7	Sr.	3L	Saugus, Calif. (Hart HS)
17	Amir Lugo-Rodriguez	MB	6-7	Jr.	RS	South Pasadena, Calif. (Cal Baptist/Bishop Mora Salesian HS)
18	Davis Cannon	OPP	6-7	So.	TR	Santa Ana, Calif. (Irvine Valley College/Foothill HS)
19	Bryce Yould	MB	6-4	Jr.	2L	Laguna Niguel, Calif. (Dana Hills HS)
20	Andrew Whitt	OH	6-4	Sr.	3L	Laguna Hills, Calif. (Laguna Hills HS)
21	Jason Willahan	MB	6-4	So.	1L	Mission Viejo, Calif. (Mission Viejo HS)
22	Cody Martin	OH	6-1	Sr.	2L	Gilbert, Ariz. (Orange Coast College/Gilbert HS)
23	Zach Gates	MB/OPP	6-5	So.	1L	Huntington Beach, Calif. (Huntington Beach HS)
24	Eric Ensing	OH/OPP	6-8	Jr.	2L	Valencia, Calif. (Valencia HS)
25	John Henry	MB	6-6	Sr.	3L	Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei HS)
27	Andrew Sato	L	5-10	Jr.	2L	Calabasas, Calif. (Agoura HS)
28	Ryan Manoogian	L	6-1	Jr.	1L	Marina del Rey, Calif. (Orange Coast College/Windward HS)
33	Kysen Olsen	OPP	6-4	Fr.	HS	San Diego, Calif. (Scripps Ranch HS)

Starters Returning (6)

Name	POS	HT	YR	K/S	D/S
John La Rusch	OPP	6-6	Sr.	3.09	1.61
Cody Martin	OH	6-1	Sr.	2.68	1.80
Dan Glamack	OH	6-6	Sr.	2.65	1.55
Bryce Yould	MB	6-4	Jr.	1.71	0.96*
Taylor Gregory	MB	6-7	Sr.	1.33	1.51*
Curtis Stallings	S	6-5	Jr.	9.11**	1.61

Letterwinners Returning (15)

Name	POS	HT	YR	K/S	D/S
John La Rusch	OPP	6-6	Sr.	3.09	1.61
Cody Martin	OH	6-1	Sr.	2.68	1.80
Dan Glamack	OH	6-6	Sr.	2.65	1.55
Bryce Yould	MB	6-4	Jr.	1.71	0.96*
Taylor Gregory	MB	6-7	Sr.	1.33	1.51*
Curtis Stallings	S	6-5	Jr.	9.11**	1.61
Andrew Whitt	OH	6-4	Sr.	1.61	1.10
John Henry	MB	6-6	Sr.	1.05	0.90*
Eric Ensing	OH/OPP	6-8	Jr.	1.00	0.81
Jason Willahan	MB	6-4	So.	0.67	0.33*
Zach Gates	MB	6-5	So.	0.50	0.46
Matt Butler	S	6-0	Jr.	4.15**	0.73
Bjarne Huus	OH	6-1	So.	0.32**	1.56
Edgar Palos	OH	6-1	Sr.	0.06**	0.13
Ryan Manoogian	L	6-1	Jr.	0.00	0.00

*Blocks per set

**Assists per set

Redshirts Returning (2)

Name	POS	HT	YR	EXP.
Amir Lugo-Rodriguez	MB	6-7	Jr.	TR
Andrew Sato	L	5-10	Jr.	2L

Newcomers (6)

Name	POS	HT	YR	EXP.
Davis Cannon	OPP	6-7	So.	TR
TJ DeFalco	OH	6-4	Fr.	HS
Kyle Ensing	OH/OPP	6-7	Fr.	HS
Kysen Olsen	OPP	6-4	Fr.	HS
Josh Tuaniga	S	6-3	Fr.	HS
Jeff Utupo	OH	6-5	Jr.	TR

Roster by Class

Seniors (7)	Glamack, Gregory, Henry, La Rusch, Martin, Palos, Whitt
Juniors (8)	Butler, E. Ensing, Lugo-Rodriguez, Manoogian, Sato, Stallings, Utupo, Yould
Sophomores (4)	Cannon, Gates, Huus, Willahan
Freshmen (4)	DeFalco, K. Ensing, Olsen, Tuaniga

Roster by State/Country

Arizona (1)	Martin
California (19)	Butler, Cannon, DeFalco, E. Ensing, K. Ensing, Gates, Gregory, Henry, La Rusch, Lugo-Rodriguez, Manoogian, Olsen, Palos, Sato, Tuaniga, Utupo, Whitt, Willahan, Yould
New York (1)	Glamack
Norway (1)	Huus
Virginia (1)	Stallings

Roster by Height

6-8 (1)	E. Ensing
6-7 (4)	Cannon, Gregory, K. Ensing, Lugo-Rodriguez
6-6 (3)	Glamack, Henry, La Rusch
6-5 (3)	Gates, Stallings, Utupo
6-4 (5)	DeFalco, Olsen, Whitt, Willahan, Yould
6-3 (1)	Tuaniga
6-1 (4)	Huus, Martin, Manoogian, Palos
6-0 (1)	Butler
5-10 (1)	Sato

There is a sense of anticipation and excitement surrounding the 2016 Long Beach State men's volleyball team, which is searching for its second NCAA title. Although the Beach is used to being a championship contender, all of the parts seem to be falling into place to make this year a special one.

LBSU returns 15 letterwinners, including every starter from last year's team, while also bringing in a recruiting class that boasts three U.S. Youth National Team members and two AVCA High School All-Americans.

The 49ers will once again be led by former U.S. Men's National Team coach Alan Knipe, who enters his 13th year as the head coach at Long Beach State. Since his return to the helm of the program in 2013, Knipe has led his teams to a 57-31 record and three-straight MPSF Tournaments, including an appearance in the program's fifth championship match (2013).

"We have a really good group of returners, who all got a ton of playing time last year," Knipe said. "All of that valuable experience in college sports is everything. You can't fast track the experience of getting out there and actually doing it. We are excited about bringing all of those guys back and to have the opportunity to bring in our freshmen, a couple of junior college players and also a couple of guys who redshirted last year."

"Our guys are getting a little older and stronger, and we certainly feel like we're significantly better athletically and talent-wise than we have been the last couple years," Knipe added. "The guys are excited about that, but the MPSF is a grind and they know that. We can't control anything other than how good our daily practices are and our preparation for matches, but everyone is excited about what this team can do when we are playing at the level we think our ability can take us to."

There is no doubt that the Beach, with its leadership, experience and talent, has the potential to be one of the last teams standing in May.

OUTSIDE HITTERS

Long Beach State returns its top-two outside hitters from 2015 in seniors Cody Martin and Dan Glamack. Martin averaged 2.68 kills, 1.80 digs and 0.39 aces per set as a junior, and is coming off one of his best fall seasons since he arrived at the Beach in 2013. Glamack, meanwhile, started every match last year, registering 2.65 kills and 1.55 digs per set.

The 49ers also bring in three talented newcomers who will compete for playing time right away. Leading the trio is 6-foot-4 freshman TJ DeFalco. DeFalco led Huntington Beach High School to three-straight CIF-Southern Section and Southern California Regional titles, closing out his prep career on a 104-match win streak. He was an AVCA High School All-American, the 2014 CIF-SS Division I Player of the Year and a three-time Sunset League MVP. DeFalco was also the youngest player named to the U.S. Men's National Team's World League preliminary roster. Although he did not play in any World League matches, DeFalco saw plenty of international competition over the summer as a member of the U.S. Pan American Team and the U.S. Boys' Youth National Team.

Freshman Kyle Ensing and junior transfer Jeff Utupo add to LBSU's depth on the outside. Ensing was an All-CIF selection and a member of the U.S. Boys' Youth National Team that competed in the 2015 FIVB U19 World Championships in Argentina, while Utupo comes to the 49ers from Long Beach City College where he garnered all-conference accolades and led the Vikings with 3.42 kills per set.

Eric Ensing, older brother of Kyle, also returns for his junior season. Last year, Ensing received valuable playing time as he saw action in 17 matches and earned his first career starts after coming off the bench as a serving specialist in his first two years.

MIDDLE BLOCKERS

Taylor Gregory, a 2015 *Volleyball Magazine* All-American and All-MPSF selection, returns for his senior season and is expected to be in the starting rotation for the fourth year in a row. Gregory, who stands at 6-foot-7, led the MPSF and ranked second in the nation with 1.51 blocks per set last year. He was also the NCAA blocking champion as a redshirt freshman in 2013 (1.47/set).

In addition, LBSU returns junior Bryce Yould, senior John Henry and sophomores Zach Gates and Jason Willahan. Yould started 23 matches in 2015, finishing the season with 1.71 kills per set and a team-best .370 hitting percentage.

Junior Amir Lugo-Rodriguez is also coming off a redshirt season after transferring to the Beach from Cal Baptist. The 6-foot-7 Lugo-Rodriguez was a two-year starter for the Lancers and led the squad with 1.12 blocks per set as a sophomore.

OPPOSITES

Senior John La Rusch will look to lead the 49ers at the opposite position once again this year. In 2015, he started 25 matches and garnered All-MPSF honorable mention recognition after leading Long Beach State with 3.09 kills per set.

Sophomore transfer Davis Cannon, along with the Ensing brothers, could also see playing time at opposite. Cannon spent one season at Irvine Valley College where he was a first-team all-conference selection.

SETTERS

Long Beach State has two talented setters competing for the starting spot this year. Junior Curtis Stallings was LBSU's starter for a majority of the 2015 season, averaging 9.11 assists and 1.61 digs per set.

Freshman Josh Tuaniga also has the ability to come in and make an immediate impact. Tuaniga lettered two years at Huntington Beach High School, helping the Oilers to a pair of CIF-Southern Section and Southern California Regional titles. HBHS went 80-0 over the course of those two seasons. Tuaniga was named the 2015 CIF-SS Division I Player of the Year and garnered Sunset League co-MVP honors as a senior. He was also an AVCA High School All-American and a member of the U.S. Boys' Youth National Team.

LIBEROS

The Beach, which led the nation in digs per set last year, will be expected to do the same in 2016 with the return of junior Andrew Sato. Sato, who is coming off a redshirt season, was an All-MPSF selection as a sophomore and was named to the conference's all-freshman team in 2013. In his two years with the 49ers, he has compiled 500 digs (2.28/set).

Junior Ryan Manoogian and sophomore Bjarne Huus will also vie for playing time in the back row.

SCHEDULE

Long Beach State opens the 2016 campaign at the UCSB Asics Tournament, Jan. 8-9, before getting right into MPSF action by hosting Cal Baptist (Jan. 15) and USC (Jan. 16). LBSU will then welcome preseason favorite BYU to the Walter Pyramid for a pair of conference matches, Jan. 22-23.

In addition to being in the toughest men's volleyball league in the country, the 49ers' non-conference matches feature some of the top opponents from the Midwest and the East. The Beach is set to make its first trip out to perennial NCAA Final Four participant Penn State since 2006, while also hosting Lewis and Ohio State in the annual Asics Tournament.

"It's a great schedule and it's exactly what you want if you're a competitor," Knipe said. "It challenges us against teams that have the ability to make it to the NCAA Championship this year and it's important for us to continue to play as many of those teams as possible."

2016 AVCA DIVISION I-II MEN'S PRESEASON POLL

Rk.	Team (first-place votes)	Points	2015 Record
1.	BYU (13)	268	17-10
2.	UC Irvine	258	28-5
3.	Loyola-Chicago (6)	236	28-2
4.	LONG BEACH STATE	213	15-13
5.	UCLA	193	13-14
6.	Ohio State	182	22-9
7.	Hawai'i	168	24-7
8.	Lewis (1)	158	27-4
9.	UC Santa Barbara	153	18-10
10.	Penn State	145	21-10
11.	Pepperdine	126	24-6
12.	USC	95	19-9
13.	Stanford	91	10-18
T14.	Ball State	35	13-16
T14.	George Mason	35	15-13



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