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USNA Quick Facts

Location	Annapolis, Md.
Founded	October 10, 1845
Enrollment	4,200
Nickname	Midshipmen, Mids
Colors	Navy Blue and Gold
Superintendent	Vice Adm. Jeffrey Fowler, USN
Director of Athletics	Chet Gladchuk
Home Arena (<i>capacity</i>)	Macdonough Hall (1,000)
Conference Affiliation	Patriot League

Volleyball Staff

Head Coach	Mike Schwob (12th Season)
Alma Mater	George Mason '88
Record at Navy	168-169 (11 Seasons)
	Patriot League Record: 65-61
Career Record	168-169 (11 Seasons)
Assistant Coaches	Mary Clare Coghlan Heidi Mass Kristin Davidson
Volleyball Office Phones	(410) 293-5546 (Schwob) (410) 293-5565 (Coghlan)
Volleyball Office FAX	(410) 293-5264

2007 Team Summary

2006 Overall Record	11-20
2006 P.L. Record (Finish)	3-11 (T-6th pl.)
2006 Letterwinners Returning / Lost	8 / 4
2006 Starters Returning / Lost	4 + libero / 2
2007 Newcomers	3

Sports Information

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Macdonough Hall Press Row	none
Mailing Address	Ricketts Hall, 566 Brownson Rd. Annapolis, MD 21402

Photos for the media guide provided by Phil Hoffmann, the Lucky Bag staff and Kris Murray.

2007 Numerical Roster

No.	Player	Cl.	Pos.	Ht.	Hometown (High School)
2	Meredith Biri	So.	S/DS	5-6	San Antonio, Texas (Incarnate Word)
4	Aimee' Burns	Sr.	L	5-3	Dallas, Texas (Trinity Christian Academy)
5	Marissa Watson	Jr.	S	5-8	Redondo Beach, Calif. (Notre Dame)
6	Kristen Dickmann	Fr.	OH/DS	5-7	Kennett Square, Pa. (Unionville)
7	Jenny Rudewicz	Fr.	S	5-7	Winter Garden, Fla. (M.S. Douglas)
8	Jessie Sims	Jr.	OH	5-9	Etowah, N.C. (West Henderson)
9	Nikki England	Sr.	OH	5-8	Colorado Springs, Colo. (Doherty)
10	Rachel Dougherty	Sr.	RSH	6-1	Derwood, Md. (Magruder)
11	Alexa Gibbs	Jr.	MB	6-0	Springfield, Ill. (Springfield)
12	Aubrey Manes	So.	OH	5-9	Pratt, Kan. (Pratt)
14	Barbara Beal	So.	OH	5-9	Patchogue, N.Y. (Patchogue-Medford)
15	Lizzie Grider	Sr.	OH/DS	6-0	Marion, Ind. (Marion)
16	Lindi Conner	Sr.	MB	6-2	Kingman, Kan. (Kingman)
17	Abbie Merkl	So.	RSH	6-0	Upper Marlboro, Md. (Archbishop Spalding)
18	Krista Eschelman	So.	MB	6-2	Germantown, Md. (Seneca Valley)

2007 Alphabetical Roster

No.	Player	Cl.	Pos.	Ht.	Hometown (High School)
14	Barbara Beal	So.	OH	5-9	Patchogue, N.Y. (Patchogue-Medford)
2	Meredith Biri	So.	S/DS	5-6	San Antonio, Texas (Incarnate Word)
4	Aimee' Burns	Sr.	L	5-3	Dallas, Texas (Trinity Christian Academy)
16	Lindi Conner	Sr.	MB	6-2	Kingman, Kan. (Kingman)
6	Kristen Dickmann	Fr.	OH/DS	5-7	Kennett Square, Pa. (Unionville)
10	Rachel Dougherty	Sr.	RSH	6-1	Derwood, Md. (Magruder)
9	Nikki England	Sr.	OH	5-8	Colorado Springs, Colo. (Doherty)
18	Krista Eschelman	So.	MB	6-2	Germantown, Md. (Seneca Valley)
11	Alexa Gibbs	Jr.	MB	6-0	Springfield, Ill. (Springfield)
15	Lizzie Grider	Sr.	OH/DS	6-0	Marion, Ind. (Marion)
12	Aubrey Manes	So.	OH	5-9	Pratt, Kan. (Pratt)
17	Abbie Merkl	So.	RSH	6-0	Upper Marlboro, Md. (Archbishop Spalding)
7	Jenny Rudewicz	Fr.	S	5-7	Winter Garden, Fla. (M.S. Douglas)
8	Jessie Sims	Jr.	OH	5-9	Etowah, N.C. (West Henderson)
5	Marissa Watson	Jr.	S	5-8	Redondo Beach, Calif. (Notre Dame)

Head Coach — Mike Schwob (George Mason '88), 12th Season

Assistant Coach — Mary Clare Coghlan (Towson '05), First Season

Assistant Coach — Heidi Mass (Penn State '91), Second Season

Volunteer Assistant Coach — Kristin Davidson (Navy '03), First Season

Team Captain — MIDN 1/C Aimee' Burns

Faculty Representative — Chuck Hanna

Officer Representative — Cmdr. Ed Tucholski, USN

Athletic Trainer — Ray Chronister

Managers — Marius Jasmontas, Ryan Steenberge, Kathryn Yanez, Angela Yestko

Pronunciation Guide

Meredith **Biri** — BEER • ee

Aimee' **Burns** — AHH • me

Rachel **Dougherty** — DOE • er • tee

Krista **Eschelman** — ESS • shell • man

Aubrey **Manes** — MAN • ess

Abbie **Merkl** — MER • kull

Jenny **Rudewicz** — RUE • duh • witz

Mike **Schwob** — SCHWOHB (as in "owe")

Mary Clare **Coghlan** — COUGH-lan

Heidi **Mass** — MAHS



Mike Schwob
Head Coach
12th Season

Mike Schwob enters his 12th season as head coach of the Navy women's volleyball team, his 13th year with the program and his 20th season at the Naval Academy. During his 11 years as the program's mentor, Navy has posted at least 20 victories in three seasons, tallied a 168-169 overall record and a 65-61 Patriot League record. Individually, his players have totaled 18 all-league certificates.

Schwob coached the Mids to their second-straight 21-win season in 2005, as well as to a Division I-best winning percentage of .724 (21-8). Navy also posted a school-high 10-4 record during the Patriot League season to earn the No. 2 seed in the league tournament, the highest postseason seeding by the program in six years.

For the team's efforts, Schwob was selected as Navy's 2005 Fall Coach of the Year.

Schwob originally joined the Navy women's staff in 1995 as an assistant coach after working with the men's program for seven seasons. He was elevated to head coach the following year and led the Mids to a winning Patriot League season during his inaugural campaign. Over the next two years he would garner league coach-of-the-year honors in 1997 and lead the Mids to their first overall winning season in five years in '98.

Schwob's fourth season of '99 would prove to be one of the program's best. Navy recorded 21 wins that year and, with a school-record nine league victories, entered the postseason as the top-seeded team in the Patriot League for the first time. The Mids would close the season by reaching the title match of the league tournament for the second time in Schwob's initial four years.

With many of the standouts from the '99 season gone, Schwob guided a 2000 squad with a lineup featuring two returning starters, a sophomore setter, two starters who had never played on the collegiate level and one who did not play the previous year to double-digit victories.

Only one starter returned from that 2000 team the following year as the Mids were tabbed to place seventh in the '01 league preseason poll. Despite that initial ranking, Navy would end the season in fifth place in the league and miss returning to the postseason by one victory.

Navy would climb even closer to the playoffs in '02, a year that saw the Mids tally eight league victories and 17 wins on the entire season. Navy ended the year tied for fourth place in the Patriot League, but missed the playoffs due to the league tiebreaker system.

After again placing fifth and narrowly missing the postseason during the '03 campaign, Navy broke through in '04 by tying for third place in the Patriot League with an 8-6 league record and totaling a 21-9 overall mark.

While team success is most important to Schwob, his players have consistently been recognized for their individual achievements, as well, totaling 18 all-league certificates during his tenure. Among the standouts he has coached are Rachel Shropa, who was honored as both the league's rookie ('96) and offensive player of the year ('97), and Jen Williams, who became the first player in league history to earn both offensive ('98) and defensive ('99) player-of-the-year accolades during her career. Both players were named to the league's all-decade team in the fall of 2000.

Schwob first arrived at the Naval Academy as an assistant for the men's team in '89, then became the team's head coach two years later. He guided the Mids to a 54-41 record in three varsity seasons before leading the team to a top-10 national ranking on the club level over his next two campaigns.

He returned to the men's game during the summer of '01 when he coached the All-Navy Team to victory at the United States Armed Forces Championship in Honolulu, Hawai'i, in December '03 when he served as an assistant coach for the All-Armed Forces Teams at the World Military Games in Italy, and as the head coach of the All-Navy team in '05 and '06.

A native of Buffalo, N.Y., Schwob received his bachelor's degree in education from George Mason in '88. A standout volleyball player himself, Schwob was a four-year letterwinner and played on NCAA Final Four teams in '85 and '88. He captained George Mason's '88 squad as a senior and earned All-East honors during his last two seasons. He also competed at the 1985 Olympic Sports Festival.

Schwob earned his master's degree in administration from Loyola (Md.) in '95 and taught elementary school in Anne Arundel County for eight years. His wife, Susan, was an All-ACC volleyball standout at Maryland. Mike and Susan are the parents of four boys: William (10), Robert (8), Brian (7) and Michael (3).

Schwob Year-by-Year							
Year	Overall			Patriot League			
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.	Pl.
1996	13	19	.476	4	2	.667	T-2nd
1997	16	23	.410	4	2	.667	T-2nd
1998	14	13	.519	4	2	.667	T-2nd
1999	21	13	.618	9	3	.750	T-1st
2000	12	17	.413	4	8	.333	6th
2001	11	16	.407	6	8	.429	T-5th
2002	17	14	.548	8	6	.571	T-4th
2003	11	17	.393	5	9	.357	5th
2004	21	9	.700	8	6	.571	T-3rd
2005	21	8	.724	10	4	.714	T-2nd
2006	11	20	.355	3	11	.214	T-6th
Career	168	169	.499	65	61	.516	



Mary Clare Coghlan
Assistant Coach
First Season



Mary Clare Coghlan begins her first full season as Navy's lead assistant coach. She originally arrived at Navy in January and worked with the program through the spring season.

A 2005 graduate of Towson, Coghlan was the starting setter for the Tigers during her junior and senior

seasons. She tallied 3,078 assists and 144 service aces in her career to rank fourth and sixth, respectively, in Towson history.

She garnered First-Team All-Colonial Athletic Association accolades as a junior and senior, while also earning league setter-of-the-year accolades during both of those campaigns.

Coghlan helped the Tigers win the program's first CAA title and advance to their initial NCAA Tournament in 2004.

Additionally, the native of Northridge, Calif., who played at Tennessee as a freshman, was named as the CAA Scholar-Athlete of the Year for volleyball as a junior, earned CoSIDA Academic All-District II honors during her final two seasons, and was tabbed as Towson's Female Athlete of the Year in 2003. Following graduation she played professionally in Germany and Spain and competed on the 2006 All-Navy Team.

Heidi Mass
Assistant Coach
Second Season



Heidi Mass joined the Navy coaching staff during the 2006 spring season as the program's second assistant coach after being a successful coach on the collegiate, high school and club levels.

After lettering for four years at Penn State, she began her coaching career in

1989 as the head coach for the New Kensington-Arnold School District in Pennsylvania. She then served as the head coach at Johns Hopkins from 1993-97.

After several years out of coaching, she returned to the sideline as an assistant coach at Northern High School in Maryland. During her initial season of 2001, the team won the state title.

Mass has also coached with the All-Navy program during multiple summers.

She and her husband, Lou, are the parents of three children: son Zane and daughters Shelby and Chandler.

Kristin Davidson
Vol. Assistant Coach
First Season



Naval Academy graduate and former volleyball standout Kristin Davidson returned to her physical education department at her alma mater this summer and will serve as the volunteer assistant coach for the program this fall.

Lt. Davidson, a 2003 graduate of Navy, totaled

764 kills (2.49 kpg) and 276 blocks (0.90 bpg) during her three-year career with the Mids. She ended her volleyball career by garnering First-Team All-Patriot League accolades during her final campaign. Her career attack percentage of .267 ranks fifth in school history, while she stands second in the record books for career blocks and career blocks per game.

Originally recruited to play basketball at Navy, which she did during her freshman season, the native of Lexington Park, Md., arrived at Navy after earning all-league honors in both sports at Leonardtown High School.

Since receiving her commission as a surface warfare officer, Davidson has served aboard the USS Belleau Wood and USS James E. Williams, while also receiving training at the AEGIS Training and Readiness Center. She also continued her volleyball career by helping Navy win a Gold Medal at the 2005 U.S. Armed Forces Games and being selected to compete on the U.S. squad at the World Military Games.

She is engaged to be married on Oct. 20, the same day as the Army-Navy volleyball match in Macdonough Hall.

Volleyball Support Staff



Tina Bradley
 Administrative Assistant



Chuck Hanna
 Faculty Representative



Justin Kischefsky
 Sports Information



Loretta Lamar
 Sport Administrator



Cmdr. Ed Tucholski
 Officer Representative



Rett Warren
 Strength Coach

2007 SEASON OUTLOOK

2007 NAVY VOLLEYBALL

Non-League Opponents

Navy's 2007 season includes non-league matchups against both old (Howard, Coppin State, Saint Francis, UMBC) and new (USC-Upstate, NJIT) opponents, as well as the renewal of several dormant series (Cornell, Columbia, Penn, Wofford).

Regardless of the number of matches Navy has played against its non-league opponents, the entire slate of matches is aimed to test the Mids prior to the start of the league campaign.

"I feel we have a very balanced schedule which is designed to prepare ourselves for the Patriot League season," said Schwob. "We are playing some of our traditional opponents, but also will have the chance to test ourselves against a number of teams we either have not faced before or have not squared off against in a number of years.

"All of the teams we play will present different challenges for us. What may be an advantage of ours against one team could turn out to be a disadvantage against another. These opponents will make us work, make us think and make us adapt during matches, something we will need to do during the league season."

Patriot League Outlook

With not much separation between the teams, the race for the 2007 Patriot League Tournament figures to be as challenging as ever.

Six of the eight teams in the Patriot League have advanced to the four-team league tournament at least once over the last four years, with Navy being one of four teams to have made multiple postseason appearances during this time.

Of the 14 players who garnered all-league accolades from the Patriot League last year, 10 return this year including six of the seven first-team all-league award winners and each of the four players who were the recipient of a 2006 major individual award.

"The margin between all of the teams in the league seems to close each year, and this year appears to be no exception," said Schwob. "Playing league matches on back-to-back nights is always a challenge. Whether those matches are at home or on the road won't matter. Each team will have to be focused each night, no matter who or where they are playing. There is too much parity to not be totally focused on every match.

"With the teams so close together, it wouldn't surprise me if tiebreakers are again used to determine the playoff seeding and field. That means every match, every game and every point means a great deal."

Returning Players

Letterwinners Returning / Lost — 8 / 4

Starters Returning / Lost — 4 + libero / 2

Navy returns five of its seven starters from a year ago, as well as six of the eight players who saw action in at least half of Navy's 50 Patriot League games during the 2006 season.

Leading the way is a strong core of four seniors who saw significant playing time during their 2004 and '05 seasons when Navy advanced to the Patriot League Tournament.

"We don't just have experience back this year, we have players returning who were contributors to some very good teams during their careers," said Schwob. "They saw the work required for us to play at a consistently high level during the 2004 and 2005 seasons, while last year they saw how slim the margin of error is for teams in this league to have success.

"Our senior class has done a great job since January in focusing everyone on the team towards doing whatever is required to return us to the playoffs. To do so is a process, a mindset and, above all, hard work."

New Players

Newcomers — 3

Navy added just a trio of new players to its roster, but each will be expected to make contributions and fulfill the old adage of "quality over quantity."

"Collectively, our newcomers bring a lot of positive energy and varied experiences to the team," said Schwob. "They have been a part of successful teams on the high school or club level, in volleyball or in other sports, so they bring that desire for success to our program.

"With their experience and background, we are not looking for them to just sit back this year and wait for their turn. We not only look for, but also need for them to be contributors to this year's team, whether those contributions are in pushing players to excel in practice or taking to the court during matches themselves."

Defensive Players

Key — L = 2006 letterwinner; S = 2006 starter

Players Lost

- ★ Chelsea Reidy — 2 gms, 0.50 dpg
- ★ Karla Lazenby (L) — 44 gms, 0.98 dpg

Returning Players

- ★ Meredith Biri (L/S) — 73 gms, 2.23 dpg
- ★ Aimee' Burns (L) — 93 gms, 1.99 dpg
- ★ Lizzie Grider — 1 game, 0.00 dpg

New Player

- ★ Kristen Dickmann

How the 2007 season goes for Navy very well may depend upon the stability and success of the Navy passers.

"We are relying heavily on our defensive players and their passing abilities for how we want to run our offense and defense," said Schwob. "For us to be successful this year, we need this group to be consistent and stable.

"I like having proven veterans in **Aimee' Burns** and **Meredith Biri** keying this group."

Burns and Biri were mainstays in the Navy backrow last year. Burns saw the court in 93 of Navy's 110 games during the 2006 season, while Biri played in 46

of Navy's 50 league games.

Burns, the Navy team captain for the 2007 season, enters the fall as the squad's libero, while Biri, who is also a talented setter, will fill one of the defensive specialist positions.

"Aimee' really solidified the libero position during the spring. She gained a lot of confidence last year and we look for that, along with her incredible work ethic, to pay off for her this year. Meredith, meanwhile, was hard to keep off the court as last season went on.

"We had a nice tandem in the backcourt for several years in Andrea Wernecke and Megan Vehovic. Andrea was a very steady ball-control player, while Megan could come in and change the course of a match with her emotion. I see a lot of Andrea in Aimee' and Megan in Meredith."

Also returning for the Mids in the backcourt is **Lizzie Grider** whose 2006 season ended during her first game of the year with a broken finger.

"Liz has been plagued by injuries, but she is one of our better utility players on the team," said Schwob. "She can make contributions for us in a number of different positions."

The newcomer to the backrow is **Kristen Dickmann**.

"I look for Kristen to push for playing time as the season goes on," said Schwob.

Middle Blockers

Players Lost

- ★ Megan Boyd (L/S) — 109 gms, 1.74 kpg, 0.95 bpg
- ★ Beth McArthur — 49 gms, 2.37 kpg, .065 bpg

Returning Players

- ★ Krista Eschelmann — 35 gms, 0.83 kpg, 0.54 bpg
- ★ Alexa Gibbs (L/S) — 83 gms, 1.64 kpg, 0.60 bpg

New Player

- ★ Lindi Conner

Navy's quintet of middle blockers may be one of the most athletic group of players assembled at the position in recent years for the Mids.

One of the liveliest arms on the team belongs to **Alexa Gibbs**, who appeared in 83 games last year and enters the fall as the top middle blocker on the squad.

"Alexa may be the most physical player on the team," said Schwob. "She has shown glimpses of what she is capable of during her freshman and sophomore years and became our go-to middle blocker during the spring. She needs to carry that confidence and consistency into the fall."

Although **Krista Eschelmann** played in only 35 games last year, 17 of those appearances came over Navy's final seven matches of the year. Now, with a full 12 months of collegiate experience under her belt, she is poised to be a fixture in the Navy lineup for the next three years.

"Krista really took advantage of her opportunity at the end of the 2006 fall season and throughout the 2007 spring season," said Schwob. "She worked on a number of good shots to go around different types of blocks and developed a great mentality for a middle blocker."

After competing on the Navy basketball team for three years, new middle blocker **Lindi Conner** brings collegiate athletic experience with them to the team. Despite her being away from volleyball for several years, Schwob feels confident she will be able to regain the form that helped her her all-state accolades in volleyball during her prep career.

"In addition to what Lindi brings to the team with her volleyball ability, she also will add a great deal of experience in competing in college athletics with her to the team," said Schwob.

Outside/Right Side Hitters

Players Lost

★ None

Returning Players

- ★ Barbara Beal — 0 games
- ★ Rachel Dougherty (L/S) — 109 gms, 2.68 kpg, 0.80 bpg
- ★ Nikki England (L/S) — 104 gms, 2.90 kpg, 2.23 dpg
- ★ Lizzie Grider — 1 game, 0.00 dpg
- ★ Aubrey Manes — 12 gms, 1.00 kpg, 0.25 dpg
- ★ Abbie Merkl (L) — 52 gms, 0.50 kpg, 0.37 bpg
- ★ Jessie Sims (L/S) — 109 gms, 3.11 kpg, 4.07 dpg

New Players

★ None

Navy returns all four of its 2006 letterwinners from the wing positions this year, with the foursome combining for 424 games played last season.

"This is the most depth I can remember having at almost any position," said Schwob. "I am very confident in the abilities of this entire group of players. The challenge for us as coaches will be in finding the best positions, rotations and chemistry to be on the floor at given times and situations."

Headlining the position is **Rachel Dougherty** who has improved her kills per game average during each of

her three years and hauled in nearly twice as many digs during the 2006 season as she did during her freshman and sophomore seasons combined.

"Rachel has the ability to be one of the best players in the league on the right side," said Schwob.

Dougherty's senior classmate **Nikki England** enjoyed a breakout 2006 season by ranking second on the team in kills and digs.

"Nikki is such a team player," said Schwob. "We know we will receive steady play from her, and there will also be times when she does some serious damage to the other defenses."

England ranked second in kills and digs to Jessie Sims last year as Sims became just the fourth Mid in school history to pace the squad in both categories.

"Jessie is a solid, six-rotation player," said Schwob. "For us to be successful this year she needs to play within herself and do what she needs to accomplish depending upon where she is stationed on the floor at the time. This includes improving her blocking ability."

Despite appearing in less than half of Navy's games last year and averaging one-half of a kill per game, Schwob is ready to make the lofty comparison of **Abbie Merkl** to both Jen Williams and Ashley Van Hartesvelt, two of the most prolific attackers in Navy history.

"Abbie has the court presence of Jen and Ashley," said Schwob. "She has worked as hard as anyone on the team since the end of last season, especially over the summer. She will be a totally different player this year. Whether we see that complete development during the 2007 season or in 2008 is something that remains to be seen."

Merkl's classmate **Aubrey Manes** is another player who took advantage of the offseason to improve her

game.

"Aubrey is the best leaper on the team," said Schwob. "She has become a better player since the end of last season and now needs to take the next step and develop her all-around game so we can use her in all six rotations."

Barbara Beal is the third member of the sophomore class returning on the outside. She didn't appear in a varsity match last year, but has the potential to do more than simply provide depth this year.

"Barbara is continually improving and working hard," said Schwob.

Setters

Players Lost

- ★ Mariellen Carnes (L) — 68 gms, 6.25 apg, 1.29 dpg
- ★ Kim Koss (L/S) — 65 gms, 8.12 apg, 1.97 dpg

Returning Players

- ★ Meredith Biri — 73 gms, 0.23 apg, 2.23 dpg
- ★ Marissa Watson (L) — 51 gms, 4.45 apg, 1.71 dpg

New Player

★ Jenny Rudewicz

After several seasons of using a 6-2 lineup followed by years of alternating between that and a 5-1 lineup, Schwob feels he has the personnel to return to using the 5-1. Part of that reasoning has to do with the ability of setter **Marissa Watson**.

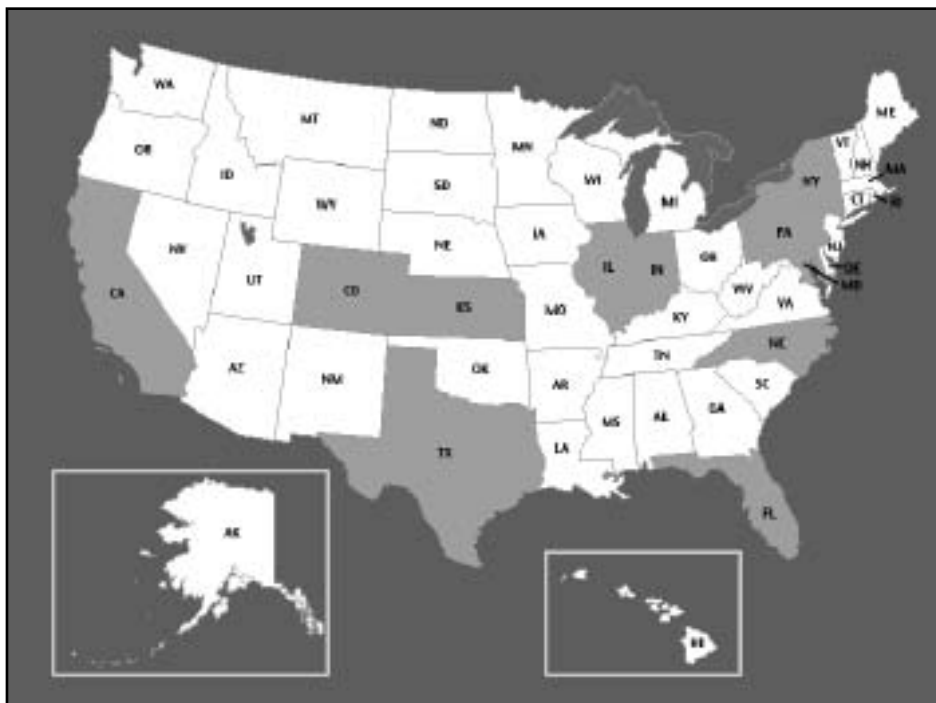
"I have complete and total confidence in Marissa's ability to successfully run our 5-1 offense," said Schwob.

Watson was the starter for most of the non-conference season last year, but she never recovered from a bout with tonsillitis in late September.

"Marissa has worked incredibly hard since her illness," said Schwob. "Thanks to a great deal of tutelage from (assistant coach and former CAA setter of the year) Mary Clare Coghlan, Marissa has improved both technically and tactically at putting the set where it needs to be."

Backing up Watson will be Biri and freshman **Jenny Rudewicz**. Biri spent most of the 2006 season playing in Navy's backrow, but cross trained as a setter last year and can be a valuable veteran backup to Watson.

"It is nice to have a veteran player in Meredith to backup Marissa if needed," said Schwob. "She is a very good athlete who can easily make the position switch. Jenny is a flashy setter who works hard. Between the two of them, they will help Marissa and all of our hitters stay at the top of their games."



Navy's 15-player roster hails from 11 different states.