

2006 Headlines

July 5, 2006

ANTEATERS SWEEP VOLLEYBALL MAGAZINE HONORS

Irvine, Calif. -- The July issue of *Volleyball Magazine* tabbed Jayson Jablonsky Player of the Year, Brent Asuka, Freshman of the Year and head coach John Speraw as Coach of the Year.

Jablonsky and Asuka were named first-team Asics/*Volleyball Magazine* All-Americans, while Brian Thornton and Matt Webber were second team selections.

A number of incoming recruits also garnered recognition. Jordan DuFault and Anthony Spittle were named Mizuno *Volleyball Magazine* first team All-Americans. Cory Yoder was a second team choice, while Cole Reinholm was an honorable mention selection.

June 15, 2006

STEFFIN RANGEL NAMED MPSF MEN'S VOLLEYBALL ACADEMIC ALL-CONFERENCE

IRVINE, Calif. - Senior Steffin Rangel was a Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Men's Volleyball Academic All-Conference selection.

Rangel will graduate with a degree in sociology. The outside hitter averaged 1.0 kills in 37 games this season.

To qualify for this honor, a student-athlete must be at least a sophomore academically and carry a 3.0 or better cumulative grade point average. Additionally, the student-athlete must have completed one full academic year at the member institution prior to the season for which the award is received as well as participated in at least fifty percent of the games in his or her respective sport.

A total of 40 MPSF men's volleyball players from 12 institutions were named to this year's All-Academic team.

May 31, 2006

SPERAW NAMED TACHIKARA/AVCA NATIONAL COACH OF THE YEAR

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - The American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA), in conjunction with Tachikara USA, Inc., announced that UC Irvine head men's volleyball coach John Speraw has been selected the 2006 Tachikara/AVCA Division I-II Men's National Coach of the Year. It marks the first time Speraw or UC Irvine has been honored with the national award.

Speraw completed his fourth season as head coach of the Anteaters in record-setting fashion. UC Irvine rewrote its men's volleyball record book this season starting with a school-best 27-5 record (.844). The win total also represented the most among all NCAA Division I-II schools this year. The Anteaters claimed their first-ever Mountain Pacific Sports Federation title, finishing with a 20-2 league record. UCI's previous best conference finish was fifth in 2003.

UC Irvine improved by 18 matches in the win column from its 2005 record of 9-20. The Anteaters earned the NCAA National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship top-seed in their first-ever

NCAA Tournament appearance. UC Irvine had a school-record 21 consecutive victories to end the regular season. The Anteaters closed out the year ranked second in the final CSTV/AVCA Division I-II Men's Coaches Top 15 Poll after falling to Penn State in five games during the semifinal round of the NCAA Championship. UC Irvine started season ranked ninth in the national poll and ascended to the top spot on March 13. The Anteaters held the number-one ranking for eight consecutive weeks.

Speraw, who is 70-54 overall as head coach of the Anteaters, mentored both the AVCA Division I-II Men's National Player of the Year and the AVCA Division I-II Men's Newcomer of the Year. The Anteaters placed two members on the AVCA Division I-II Men's All-America first team, along with two second-team players. Speraw's 70 victories in four years are more than UCI's combined win total from the first 11 years of the program with the previous best four-year mark being 49 wins from 1999 to 2002.

Speraw served in various roles with the UCLA volleyball program for 12 years prior to arriving at UC Irvine. He played middle blocker for the Bruins from 1990-95 and was a member of two national championship teams. He was named to the NCAA All-Tournament team in 1995 when he had 11 kills and eight blocks in the championship victory over Penn State. Speraw became a volunteer assistant coach with the Bruins before assuming a full-time assistant's position in 1998. He graduated from UCLA in 1995 with a bachelor of science degree in microbiology and molecular genetics.

Speraw has extensive international coaching experience and is currently the head coach of the USA Junior National Team, which won a silver medal at the NORCECA Junior Men's Continental Volleyball Championship. He served as an assistant for the Youth National Team (1998 and 2001), the World University Games Team (1997 and 1999) and the Pan American Games Team (1999).

Tachikara will formally present the AVCA Division I-II Men's National Coach of the Year award in Omaha, Neb., at the Tachikara/AVCA Coach of the Year and Victory Club Awards Banquet on Thursday, Dec. 14. The brunch is held in conjunction with the 2006 AVCA Annual Convention.

May 26, 2006

JABLONSKY TABBED UC IRVINE'S MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Irvine, Calif. -- Men's volleyball player Jayson Jablonsky and women's swimmer Chelsea Nagata have been named UC Irvine's male and female Athletes of the Year for 2005-06. The announcement was made during the Athletic Department's annual student-athlete barbecue.

Jablonsky, a junior outside hitter from Esperanza High School, was named 2006 National Player of the Year by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA).

An AVCA All-America first team selection, he became the first UCI men's volleyball player to take the nation's top honor. He ended the year averaging 4.89 points, 4.17 kills, 1.61 digs, 0.37 aces and 0.65 blocks per game. He ranked 11th in the nation in aces, 17th in kills per game and 18th in points per game.

He was also named the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Player of the Year and was selected as AVCA Player of the Week twice this season.

The Anteaters compiled a school-record 27 wins and the program's first MPSF regular-season title. UCI advanced to the NCAA Final Four for the first time in history and was ranked No. 1 for eight straight weeks before finishing the season with a final national ranking of second.

May 16, 2006

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS RECOGNIZED AS SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Irvine, Calif. -- Volleyball players Jayson Jablonsky, Brett Kohout, David Smith Brian Thornton and Steffin Rangel were among the 152 student-athletes honored by UC Irvine as 2005-06 Big West Conference Scholar-Athletes at the program's annual banquet at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

This year's list brings UCI's total to 2,731 conference scholar-athletes since 1983.

Requirements for this award include maintaining a 3.0 grade-point average (GPA) over three quarters or a 3.2 GPA over two quarters for freshmen. Student-athletes must also earn letters in their sports. The Scholar-Athlete award was implemented by the Big West Conference to honor those student-athletes that have maintained a high level of scholastic excellence while participating in intercollegiate athletics.

May 8, 2006

A SEASON TO REMEMBER: UC Irvine rewrote the record book this season starting with best record, 27-5 (.844), which was also the most wins in the country this year.

The Anteaters claimed its first-ever Mountain Pacific Sports Federation title, finishing with a 20-2 league record. UCI's previous best conference finish was fifth in 2003.

UCI, who hadn't hosted a first round match in post-season, received a bye into the semifinals and hosted the MPSF Championship. The Anteaters lost to Long Beach State, 3-0, following a 12-day lay-off. The Anteaters were the at-large selection for the NCAA Championship and were the tournament's No. 1 seed. It was UCI's first NCAA appearance.

The Anteaters were 16-1 at home (13-0 at Crawford, 3-1 at the Bren). UCI averaged 2,221 fans in four matches at the Bren this season and sold out Crawford Court three times.

UCI had a school record 21 consecutive victories which were the most in Division I this season.

UCI ENDS SEASON IN SEMIFINALS OF NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP: Top-seeded UC Irvine (27-5, 20-2) was upended in a grueling five-game match (32-30, 30-23, 31-33, 27-30, 15-13) versus fourth-seeded Penn State in a semifinal at the NCAA Championship in University Park, Penn.

UCI battled back after losing the first two games to win the next two and force a deciding game five. With the score tied 13-13, Penn State's Max Holt recorded a kill (14-13) and stepped back to the service line. Before Holt could serve, the court lights, which were on a timer, went out causing a 14-minute delay. After firing up the lights, Holt served an ace to end the game 15-13 and the match 3-2.

Juniors Jayson Jablonsky and Matt Webber led UCI with 20 kills apiece. Middle blocker Aaron Harrell tied his career-high with 14 kills and had a personal best three solo blocks. Junior David Smith added 13 kills and a team-high six blocks. The Anteaters committed a season-high 25 service errors in the loss.

Jablonsky was named to the NCAA All-Tournament team.

ANTEATERS END SEASON RANKED NO. 2: UC Irvine ended the year ranked No. 2 in the final CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. The Anteaters held the No. 1 ranking for eight weeks, the most by any team this season. The Anteaters also held the No. 1 ranking for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 99 consecutive weeks.

JABLONSKY NAMED NATIONAL PLAYER OF THE YEAR: Junior outside hitter was named the 2006 National Player of the Year by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA). Jablonsky, who was also named to the AVCA All-America first team, became the first UCI men's volleyball player to take the nation's top honor. He ended the year averaging 4.89 points, 4.17 kills, 1.61 digs, 0.37 aces and 0.65 blocks per game. He ranked 11th in the nation in aces, 17th in kills per game and 18th in points per game. He was also named the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Player of the Year and was selected as AVCA Player of the Week twice this season.

ASUKA SWEEPS NEWCOMER AWARDS: Freshman libero Brent Asuka was named the AVCA Newcomer of the Year as well as MPSF Newcomer of the Year. He is the only libero to ever win the Newcomer honor and was also selected a first-team All-American. Asuka led the MPSF with a 3.23 dig average and was third nationally with a 3.03 mark.

THORNTON; WEBBER GARNER ALL-AMERICA RECOGNITION: Juniors Brian Thornton and Matt Webber were named to the All-America second team.

The duo joins Jablonsky and Asuka on the All-America list giving UCI four honorees this season. The Anteaters have never had more than one athlete recognized as All-America in a single year and only have had four all-time prior to this year.

HARRELL TOPS OWN SCHOOL RECORD: Middle blocker Aaron Harrell bested his own school record for hitting percentage in a season with a .463 mark. Harrell hit .917 (11-0-12) versus Loyola-Chicago which was the second best mark in the match record book. He also hit .818 versus UC San Diego (6th) and .750 against Cal Baptist (9th) this year. The sophomore held the previous record with a .457 average in 2005. Junior David Smith hit .412 this season which is the third best mark in the season annals.

WEBBER LEADS EATERS: Junior opposite Matt Webber led UCI with 4.66 kill average which was ranked eighth nationally. He also topped the squad in points with a 5.32 average which ranked ninth in the country. Webber led the Anteaters in kills in 22 of 32 matches this season.

TOTAL TURNAROUND: The Anteaters' 27-5 record is a 18-match turnaround from the 2005 season's 9-20 record. It is the best turnaround in men's collegiate volleyball history. The Anteaters' 20 conference wins was more than the previous two years combined (15).

UCI SWEEPS MPSF AWARDS: UC Irvine swept all three MPSF post-season awards with outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky named Player of the Year, Brent Asuka honored as Newcomer of the Year and John Speraw recognized as Coach of the Year.

It is the first time a UCI player has ever been named Player or Newcomer of the Year. Speraw joins Charlie Brande, UCI's current women's volleyball head coach, who was named MPSF Coach of the Year in 1999.

It is UCI's largest total of players named to the all-conference teams as the Anteaters have never had more than three players recognized in the same year.

Jablonsky and Asuka were also named to the All-MPSF first team, while opposite Matt Webber and setter Brian Thornton were named to the All-MPSF second team. Middle blocker Aaron Harrell was a third team honoree and middle blocker David Smith was an honorable mention selection.

THORNTON LEADS NATION: Setter Brian Thornton led the nation in set assists with a 13.70 average. The junior had 1,548 assists this season which ranks third in the UCI season record books. He is also fourth all-time in UCI assists (3,017). He guided the Anteaters to a .332 team hitting percentage, which was fourth best in the nation.

MORE NCAA STATISTICS: Middle blocker Aaron Harrell was fifth in hitting percentage (.463) and also ranked 12th in blocking with a 1.30 average. Middle blocker David Smith was ranked 14th in blocking (1.27) and 16th in hitting percentage (.412).

May 3, 2006

JAYSON JABLONSKY NAMED NATIONAL PLAYER OF YEAR

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. --- UC Irvine junior outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky (Esperanza HS) has been named the 2006 National Player of the Year by the American Volleyball Coaches Association. He received the award at the NCAA Championship Banquet in University Park, Pa., Wednesday night.

Jablonsky, who was named to the AVCA All-America first team earlier Wednesday, is averaging 4.90 points, 4.17 kills, 1.65 digs, 0.37 aces and 0.65 blocks per game. He is hitting .356 on the season and has recorded double-figure kills in 27 matches this season. Jablonsky ranks 12th in the nation in aces and 17th in kills per game and points. He was named the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Player of the Year last week and he was selected as AVCA Player of the Week twice this season. Jablonsky led UCI to its first-ever MPSF regular-season title as the Anteaters had a 21-match winning streak.

He has 434 kills this season for the ninth-best single-season total in Anteater history. Jablonsky has 38 service aces for the second-highest total in a season at UCI and he ranks 10th in single-season attack attempts (859) and 13th in digs for a season (172).

Freshman libero Brent Asuka (Aiea, Hawaii/Iolani School) was named the AVCA Newcomer of the Year Wednesday.

Coach John Speraw's UCI squad is 27-4 overall and seeded first for the NCAA Championship at Penn State this weekend. The Anteaters open against fourth-seeded Penn State Thursday (May 4) at 5:00 p.m. PDT. Second-seeded UCLA faces No. 3 IPFW in the other semifinal at 3:00 p.m. Both semifinal matches will be televised by ESPNU and the UCI match Thursday will be webcast at <http://www.athletics.uci.edu/RAD/listenlive.html>

May 3, 2006

FOUR UC IRVINE PLAYERS RECEIVE ALL-AMERICA RECOGNITION; BRENT ASUKA NAMED NATIONAL NEWCOMER OF YEAR

IRVINE, Calif. --- Four players on the top-ranked UC Irvine men's volleyball team have received All-America distinction by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA).

Junior outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky (Esperanza HS) and freshman libero Brent Asuka (Aiea, Hawaii/Iolani School) were named to the All-America first team while junior setter Brian Thornton (San Clemente HS) and junior opposite Matt Webber (Brentwood/Liberty Union HS) were selected to the second team.

Asuka also was named the AVCA National Newcomer of the Year. The National Player of the Year will be announced at the NCAA Championship Banquet tonight at University Park, Pa.

Jablonsky, who was named the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Player of the Year last week, is averaging 4.90 points, 4.17 kills, 1.65 digs, 0.37 aces and 0.65 blocks per game. He is hitting .356 on the season and has recorded double-figure kills in 27 matches this season. Jablonsky ranks 12th in the nation in aces and 17th in kills per game and points. He was named the AVCA Player of the Week twice this season.

Asuka ranks third in the nation in digs at 3.08 per game and has registered at least 10 digs in 19 of UCI's 31 matches this season. He was named the MPSF Newcomer of the Year and was an All-MPSF first team selection.

Jablonsky and Asuka join Jimmy Pelzel (2003) as the only UCI players to earn first-team distinction. The Anteater men's volleyball program never had more than one player recognized as All-America in a single year and had four total All-Americans prior to this year.

Thornton, who was an All-MPSF second team member, leads the nation in assists at 13.76 per game. He is averaging 1.57 digs and 0.65 blocks per game. Webber is leading the Anteaters with averages of 5.36 points and 4.69 kills per game. He has reached double-figure kills in 27 of 31 matches this year.

Webber also was second team All-MPSF this season.

Coach John Speraw's UCI squad is 27-4 overall and seeded first for the NCAA Championship at Penn State this weekend. The Anteaters open against fourth-seeded Penn State Thursday (May 4) at 5:00 p.m. PDT. Second-seeded UCLA faces No. 3 IPFW in the other semifinal at 3:00 p.m.

May 1, 2006

UC IRVINE BATTLES PENN STATE IN SEMIFINALS OF NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP: No. 1 UC Irvine (27-4) will battle No. 4-seeded Penn State (20-8) in a semifinal match of the NCAA Championship at 5:00 p.m. PDT Thursday (May 4) at Rec Hall on the Penn State campus. Second-seeded UCLA (24-12) meets No. 3 IPFW (23-6) in the first semifinal match.

VERSUS THE OPPONENT: The series is tied 2-2, but UCI won the lone contest this year, 3-0, in Irvine. Penn State enters the match ranked 11th nationally.

MORE ON THE MATCH-UP: In the first meeting between the teams, UCI out-hit the Nittany Lions .511-.345. UCI also out-dug 28-10 and out-served 4-2 Penn State. The Nittany Lions had the advantage at the net with 10 team blocks to UCI's 5. The Anteaters' .511 hitting percentage was a season-high.

FULL CIRCLE: UCI began the year at Penn State's Rec Hall where they hit the hardwood in a pre-season exhibition last October. The Anteaters topped PSU twice while playing in the fall.

TOURNAMENT CENTRAL: The men's volleyball website www.mvball.uci.edu will feature daily quotes, photos and stories of the team's journey to the NCAA Championship.

MAKING HISTORY: This will be the first time in school history that UCI has advanced to the NCAA Championship. UCI is 1-5 in post-season competition at the MPSF Championship with the lone win coming in 2003 in a 3-1 victory over Stanford on the road in the first round.

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP: UC Irvine's 21-match winning streak was snapped last Thursday with a 3-0 loss to Long Beach State in the semifinals of the MPSF Tournament. It was the longest streak in Division I this year as well as in the program history. UCI had lost just 10 games during the winning streak. Jayson Jablonsky led the Anteaters versus the 49ers with 12 kills, while Brent Asuka added nine digs.

ANTEATERS MAINTAIN NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine maintained its No. 1 ranking in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll (5/1/06) for the eighth consecutive week, the longest any team has stayed atop the rankings this season. The Anteaters also held the No. 1 ranking for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 99 consecutive weeks. UCLA is No. 2 this week, IPFW eighth and Penn State No. 11.

IN THE NCAA STATISTICS: Setter Brian Thornton leads the country in assists with a 13.75 mark. Freshman libero Brent Asuka ranks third in digs (3.08) and middle blocker Aaron Harrell is fifth in hitting percentage (.463). Harrell also ranks 12th in blocking with a 1.31 average. Matt Webber is seventh in kills (4.69) and ninth in points (5.36). Jayson Jablonsky is 12th in aces (.365), and 17th in kills (4.17) and points (94.90). Middle blocker David Smith is ranked 14th in blocking (1.27) and 15th in hitting percentage (.413).

SMALL, BUT MIGHTY: While Penn State is one of the tallest teams in the country, UCI is one of the smallest. The Nittany Lions have two middle blockers that are 6-9 and one that is 6-7, while UCI have three middle blockers that stand 6-7, 6-5 and 6-4. At 6-1, senior Paul Spittle is the smallest starting outside hitter in the tournament field.

BALANCED ATTACK: UCI has five players that average 2.00 kills or more. The well-balanced team is hitting .334 on the year which ranks fourth in the nation.

May 1, 2006

JAYSON JABLONSKY FEATURED ON BLUE & GOLD REPORT THIS WEEK

Irvine, Calif. -- Junior Jayson Jablonsky will featured on this Tuesday's edition of the "Blue and Gold Report" on KUCI Radio/88.9 FM.

The show will feature Jablonsky as well as interviews with UC Irvine baseball pitcher Glenn Swanson, the National Pitcher of the Week after he threw a no-hitter last week and women's golf coach Kelly Crawford, the 2006 Big West Coach of the Year who leads her UCI team into the NCAA West Regional next week.

The "Blue and Gold Report" airs Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. on KUCI and can be accessed on the web via the Blue and Gold Report link on the right side of the men's volleyball page. The show is archived at that site for later listening.

April 30, 2006

UC IRVINE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL EARNS NO. 1 SEED AT NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP

Irvine, Calif. – The UC Irvine men's volleyball team is the No. 1 seed for the 2006 NCAA Championship May 4 and 6 in University Park, Penn. at Rec Hall on the campus of Penn State.

The No. 1 seeded Anteaters (27-4) qualified for the NCAA Championship for the first time in program history, entering as the at-large selection. UCI will face fourth seeded Penn State (20-8) at 5:00 p.m. PDT Thursday in the second semifinal match. The Nittany Lions are the Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association champions.

The first semifinal match features second-seeded UCLA (24-12), the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation champion against IPFW (23-6), the Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association champion at 3:00 p.m. PDT Thursday.

The winners of each contest will then square off for the national title on Saturday, May 6 at 4:00 p.m. PDT.

No. 1 ranked UC Irvine won the MPSF regular season title with a 20-2 record. The Anteaters lost to No. 2 Long Beach State in the semifinals of the MPSF Tournament, snapping a 21-match winning streak.

Both semifinals will be broadcast live on Thursday on ESPNU with the national championship match to air live at 4 p.m. pacific time on ESPN2. UCI's matches will also be webcast off the UCI Athletics site by accessing the Listen Live link.

NCAA National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship Rec Hall - Penn State University - University Park, Penn.

Semifinals (Thursday, May 4)

3:00 p.m. (PDT) --- No. 2 UCLA (24-12) vs. No. 3 IPFW (23-6) ----- ESPNU

5:00 p.m. (PDT) --- No. 1 UC Irvine (27-4) vs. No. 4 Penn State (20-8) ----- ESPNU

(webcast at <http://www.athletics.uci.edu/RAD/listenlive.html>)

National Championship (Saturday, May 6)

4:00 p.m. (PDT) --- ESPN2

(if UCI plays, also webcast at <http://www.athletics.uci.edu/RAD/listenlive.html>)

April 24, 2006

UCI SWEEPS MOUNTAIN PACIFIC SPORTS FEDERATION POST-SEASON AWARDS; SIX PLAYERS HONORED AS ALL-CONFERENCE

Irvine, Calif. -- UC Irvine swept the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) post-season awards with outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky named Player of the Year, Brent Asuka honored as Newcomer of the Year and John Speraw recognized as Coach of the Year.

Jablonsky and Asuka were also named to the All-MPSF first team, while opposite Matt Webber and setter Brian Thornton were named to the All-MPSF second team. Middle blocker Aaron Harrell was a third team honoree and middle blocker David Smith was an honorable mention selection.

It is the first time a UCI player has ever been named Player or Newcomer of the Year. Speraw joins Charlie Brande, UCI's current women's volleyball head coach, who was named MPSF Coach of the Year in 1999. It is UCI's largest total of players named all-conference as the Anteaters have never had more than three players recognized in the same year.

Jablonsky averaged 4.30 kills, 5.05 points and .382 aces versus MPSF opponents this season. The junior recorded kills in double figures in all but one league match, including a career-high 25 versus UC Santa Barbara in February. He is currently ranked 11th nationally in aces (.370), 15th in kills (4.18 kills) and 18th in points (4.90). He became only the eighth player in UCI history to record 1,000 or more kills in a career with 1,014 currently, good for seventh best all-time. Jablonsky was named AVCA National Player of the Week and MPSF Player of the Week on Feb. 13 and AVCA National Player of the Week on Mar. 20. he was a second-team All-MPSF pick in 2004.

Freshman Brent Asuka led the MPSF with a 3.23 dig average and is currently ranked fourth in the nation (3.08). The libero has recorded 15 or more digs five times this year, which is tied for the most 15+ performances in the country this season. Asuka totaled double-digit digs in 19 matches this season. He tallied a career-best 19 digs in the first meeting with Pepperdine, the fourth best in a match at UCI all-time and the most ever since rally scoring began. The freshman also shattered the UCI season record for digs with 318 currently.

Speraw is in his fourth season at UC Irvine, guiding his teams to three post-season appearances, including earning the MPSF Championship Tournament's top seed for the first time in school history this year. During the 2006 season Speraw has led UCI to a school record 27-3 overall and 20-2 MPSF record. The team has had an 18-match improvement this season after going 9-20 in 2005. UCI has also broken the school mark for record at home (16-0) and longest winning streak with 21 currently. The Anteaters have been ranked No. 1 for six consecutive weeks, the longest stint at the top for any school this year.

April 17, 2006

UCI WINS FIRST MPSF REGULAR SEASON TITLE: With two wins last week, No. 1 UC Irvine (27-3, 20-2) claimed its first-ever Mountain Pacific Sports Federation title. The Anteaters were 20-2 in conference play, finishing a game ahead of Hawaii atop the league standings. UCI's previous best conference finish was fifth in 2003.

UCI HOSTS MPSF SEMIFINALS & FINALS: Being the tournament's No. 1 seed, earns UCI a bye in the first round of the MPSF Tournament. UCI will host the semifinals and finals April 27 and April 29 at the Bren Events Center.

UCI will play the winner of the No. 5 BYU vs No. 4 Long Beach State match. The other semifinal match will feature the winners of No. 6 Cal State Northridge vs No. 3 Pepperdine and either No. 7 UCLA or No. 8 UC Santa Barbara versus No. 2 Hawaii. The UCLA/UCSB play-in match is Wednesday (Apr. 19) while the first round matches are held on Saturday (Apr. 22) at the higher seeds home court

The finals are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on the 29th at the Bren.

ANTEATERS MAINTAIN NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine maintained its No. 1 ranking in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll for the sixth consecutive week. Six weeks is the longest any team has stayed atop the rankings this season. The Anteaters also held the No. 1 ranking for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 96 consecutive weeks.

JABLONSKY JOINS GRAND CLUB: Following Wednesday night's 10 kills versus Cal State Northridge, Jayson Jablonsky has accumulated 1,014 career kills. He is one of only eight UCI players to hit the 1,000 plateau, ranking seventh all-time. The outside hitter also has 79 career aces which ranks fourth all-time. His 37 aces this season ranks second best in the UCI season annuals.

DYNAMIC DUO: Juniors Matt Webber and Jayson Jablonsky have provided a powerful attack this season, averaging 4.75 and 4.18 kills, respectively. Webber leads the squad with 5.43 points, while Jablonsky adds 4.90 points per game. One of the two players has led the team in kills in every match this season.

ANTEATERS IMPROVE ON SCHOOL RECORD FOR WINS: UCI's 27 victories is a school record for wins in a season. The old school mark of 20 was set in 2003 (20-11). The Anteaters also have 20 MPSF wins which is a new school mark, topping the old record of 12-10 set in 2003.

STREAKING: The Anteaters are on a 21-match winning streak, the longest in Division I as well as in the program history. UCI has lost just 10 games during the winning streak.

TOTAL TURNAROUND: The Anteaters' 27-3 record is a 18-match turnaround from last season's 9-20 record. The Anteaters' 20 conference wins is more than the previous two years combined (15).

MAYHEM IN THE MIDDLE: According to last week's NCAA statistics, UCI is the only school with two middle blockers ranked in the nation's top 14 in both hitting and blocking. Sophomore Aaron Harrell owns a .477 hitting mark and a 1.31 blocking clip, while junior David Smith averages 1.28 blocks per game and is hitting .422 on the year.

BEING AT THE BREN: UCI has had a home court advantage at the Bren this season. The Anteaters are 3-0 at the Bren and have averaged 2,150 fans in that facility. Overall, UCI is 16-0 at home this season, the best record in school history. The old mark was 9-4 set in 2003.

AROUND THE MPSF: Following the conclusion of the conference season, freshman libero Brent Asuka led the MPSF with a 3.23 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky was ranked eighth in the league in kills (4.30) and in points (5.05), and was third in aces (.382). Opposite Matt Webber was ranked sixth in kills (4.54) and fourth (5.28) in points. Setter Brian Thornton led the league in assists with a 13.91 mark and Aaron Harrell was fifth in hitting percentage (.448) and eighth in blocking (1.26). Middle blocker David Smith ranks tied for fourth in blocking (1.53) and ninth in hitting (.399). As a team, UCI led the league in kills (16.26), digs (11.07) and was second in assists (15.36).

ANTEATERS CLOSE REGULAR SEASON WITH TWO SWEEPS: No. 1 ranked UC Irvine rolled to a 3-0 (30-27, 30-24, 30-24) victory over No. 3 Cal State Northridge on the road Wednesday and a 3-0 win against No. 8 UC Santa Barbara (30-25, 30-22, 30-25) at home Saturday.

Against Northridge, Matt Webber led UCI with 12 kills, while senior Paul Spittle added 11 kills and hit .391. Outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky added 10 kills and seven digs. Middle blocker David Smith tallied eight kills and a match-high six total blocks. Anteater libero Brent Asuka posted a match-high 10 digs and setter Brian Thornton added 38 assists, six digs and one ace in the win. The Anteaters out-blocked the Matadors, 11-7.

Webber and Jablonsky led UCI against the Gauchos with 14 kills each. Jablonsky also added four blocks, while Webber recorded three. Middle blocker Aaron Harrell hit .500, recording 10 kills on 16 attempts and two errors. Harrell led all players with seven blocks assists. Spittle totaled seven kills, an ace and four digs in the win. Asuka led all players with 12 digs, while Thornton tallied 46 assists and five digs.

The Anteaters hit .430 to UCSB's .260 and out-blocked the Gauchos 11-5.

April 13, 2006

MPSF STANDINGS (as of April 13, 2006)							
Team	Conference				Overall		
	W	L	PCT.		W	L	PCT.
*UC Irvine	19	2	.905		26	3	.897
*Hawai'i	17	3	.850		21	4	.840
*Brigham Young	14	6	.700		18	6	.750
*Pepperdine	14	7	.667		15	7	.682
*CS Northridge	13	8	.619		18	9	.667
*Long Beach State	12	8	.600		19	9	.679
*UCLA	11	10	.524		19	12	.613
*UC Santa Barbara	9	12	.429		13	14	.481
USC	7	14	.333		11	17	.393
Pacific	5	15	.250		7	19	.269
Stanford	2	18	.100		4	22	.154
UC San Diego	0	20	.000		1	26	.037
*Clinched MPSF Tournament berth							

UPCOMING MPSF MATCHES

Fri., Apr. 14

- *BYU at HAWAI'I, 7:00 p.m.
- *Stanford at UC SAN DIEGO, 7:00 p.m.
- *UCLA at CS NORTHRIDGE, 7:00 p.m.
- *Pacific at LONG BEACH STATE, 7:30 p.m.

Sat., Apr. 15 (final MPSF competition)

- *UC Santa Barbara at UC IRVINE, 7:00 p.m.
- *BYU at HAWAI'I, 7:00 p.m.
- *Pacific at UC SAN DIEGO, 7:00 p.m.
- *USC at PEPPERDINE, 7:00 p.m.
- *Stanford at LONG BEACH STATE, 7:00 p.m.

MPSF Scenarios

UCI, Hawaii, BYU, Pepperdine, CS Northridge and Long Beach State have all clinched playoff spots, however, their seeding will be determined by the results of Friday and Saturday night matches. MPSF championship tournament seeds two-four will host quarterfinal matches.

MPSF Tiebreakers:

- UH-UCI: UH holds tiebreaker outscoring UCI 169-165 in total match points between the two teams = .506 vs. .494 (Tiebreaker C)
- Pepp-BYU: Pepp holds tiebreaker over BYU having won 4 games to BYU's 3 in their conference matches. (Tiebreaker B)
- CSN-Pepp: CSN holds tiebreaker over Pepp having won 5 games to Pepp's 3 in their conference matches. (Tiebreaker B)
- LBSU-Pepp: LBSU holds tiebreaker over Pepp having won 4 games to Pepp's 3 in their conference matches. (Tiebreaker B)
- BYU-CSN: BYU holds tiebreaker over CSN with two MPSF conference match wins. (Tiebreaker A)
- LBSU-BYU: LBSU holds tiebreaker over BYU with two MPSF conference match wins. (Tiebreaker A)
- LBSU-UCLA: LBSU holds tiebreaker outscoring UCLA 169-164 in total match points between the two teams = .507 vs. .492 (Tiebreaker C)

Should UC Irvine be the top seed, the Anteaters would host the semifinals on Thursday, April 27, and the MPSF championship match on Saturday, April 29 in the Bren Center and Hawaii would host a quarterfinal match vs. UCLA or UC Santa Barbara – the opponent will be determined by the play-in match at UCLA on Wednesday, April 19. Should UC Irvine and Hawaii tie in the final MPSF standings, UH holds the tiebreaker and UCI would host the quarterfinal match in Crawford Court on April 22.

•CSTV will be televising the MPSF final live at 7p.m.

Tiebreaker Formulas

- A. Head-to-head record in MPSF match play between tied teams.
- B. Highest percentage of MPSF games won between tied teams.
- C. Points scored divided by points allowed in MPSF matches between tied teams.
- D. Percentage of games won in all MPSF matches.
- E. Total points scored in all MPSF matches divided by total points allowed in all MPSF matches.
- F. Coin toss.

MPSF TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Wed., April 19 – Play-In

UC Santa Barbara at UCLA, 7:00 p.m.

Sat., April 22: Quarterfinals

#1 Bye – Host semifinal & final matches

#7 at #2

#6 at #3

#5 at #4

Thu, Apr. 27: Semifinals at TBD #1 seed

#1 vs. Winner of 5 vs. 4

Winners of 7 vs. 2 and 6 vs. 3

Sat, Apr. 29: Championship at #1 seed TBD:

Semifinal Winners

April 10, 2006

UCI HEADS INTO FINAL WEEK WITH TWO IMPORTANT MPSF MATCHES: No. 1 UC Irvine (25-3, 18-2) will travel to No. 3 Cal State Northridge Wednesday (Apr. 12) then hosts No. 8 UC Santa Barbara Saturday (Apr. 15) at 7:00 p.m. in the Bren Center to close out the regular season.

Wednesday's match at Northridge will be broadcast on an internet-only basis by KUCI 88.9 FM with Robert Espero calling the action. The match can be accessed via the web at www.athletics.uci.edu/RAD/listenlive.html

Seniors Paul Spittle and Steffin Rangel will be recognized prior to Saturday's match.

OCTA NIGHT SATURDAY: UC Irvine Athletics and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) have partnered and will be offering OCTA users (Bus, 91 Express and Metrolink) a buy one get one free ticket special for Saturday's match. Any adult paying full-price admission (\$9), will get another admission ticket **FREE** if they show their buss pass, 91 Transponder (or billing statement), or a Metrolink ticket.

BIG WEEK: UCI will battle Cal State Northridge and UC Santa Barbara in important MPSF matches. Heading into the final week of action, the Anteaters sit on top of the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation standings, one game ahead of Hawaii. The Warriors will host BYU twice this week. The conference's top team earns a bye in the first round of the MPSF Tournament and hosts the semifinals and finals April 27 and April 29.

The Anteaters are guaranteed a top four finish for the first time in school history. Prior to this season, UCI's best finish was fifth in 2003.

VERSUS THE OPPONENTS: The Anteaters topped Cal State Northridge (3-0) and UC Santa Barbara (3-1) in MPSF matches earlier this year, but the Gauchos beat the Anteaters in five games in the first match of the UCSB Elephant Bar Tournament in January.

Third-ranked Northridge is riding a seven-match winning streak. The Matadors, who enter the week in fifth place in the league standings, are 18-8 overall and 13-7 in the MPSF. UCI's last win at Northridge dates back to Mar. 1, 2002 (3-1). The Anteaters are 3-11 all-time on Northridge's home court.

No. 8 UCSB enters the week 13-13 on the year and 9-11 in league action and will host UCLA Wednesday before heading to Irvine. The Gauchos have clinched a tournament berth and will be either the seventh or eighth seed.

ANTEATERS MAINTAIN NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine maintained its No. 1 ranking in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll for the fifth consecutive week. Five weeks is the longest any team has stayed atop the rankings this season. The Anteaters also held the No. 1 ranking for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 95 consecutive weeks.

BEING AT THE BREN: Saturday's match will be the third contest at the Bren this season. The Anteaters are 2-0 at the Bren and have averaged 2,520 fans in that facility. Overall, UCI is 15-0 at home this season, the best record in school history. The old mark was 9-4 set in 2003.

ASUKA SETS DIG MARK: Freshman libero Brent Asuka broke the UCI record for digs in a season with 296 and counting. He passed Greg Ford's mark of 275 set in 2004.

JABLONSKY COMING UP ACES: Junior outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky fired seven service aces last week and leads the team with 36 this season. His 36 aces ranks second best in the UCI season annuals. Jablonsky has 78 career aces which ranks fourth all-time.

THORNTON LEADS NATION: Setter Brian Thornton leads the nation in set assists with a 13.84 average. The junior has 1,370 assists this season which ranks fourth in the UCI season record books. Following last week, he moved into fourth all-time in UCI assists (2,839). He has guided the Anteaters to a .336 team hitting percentage, which is fifth best in the nation.

DYNAMIC DUO: Juniors Matt Webber and Jayson Jablonsky have provided a powerful attack this season, averaging 4.78 and 4.19 kills respectively. Webber leads the squad with 5.44 points, while Jablonsky adds 4.92 points per game. One of the two players has led the team in kills in every match this season.

ANTEATERS IMPROVE ON SCHOOL RECORD FOR WINS: UCI's 25 victories is a school record for wins in a season. The old school mark of 20 was set in 2003 (20-11). The Anteaters also have 18 MPSF wins which is a new school mark.

STREAKING: The Anteaters are on a 19-match winning streak, the longest in Division I as well as in the program history. UCI has lost just 10 games during the winning streak.

TOTAL TURNAROUND: The Anteaters' 25-3 record is a 16-match turnaround from last season's 9-20 record. The Anteaters' 18 conference wins is more than the previous two years combined (15).

AROUND THE MPSF: Freshman libero Brent Asuka leads the MPSF with a 3.19 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky is ranked eighth in the league in kills (4.33) and in points (5.09), and is third in aces (.400). Opposite Matt Webber is ranked sixth in kills (4.56) and third (5.28) in points. Setter Brian Thornton is second in assists with a 13.90 mark and Aaron Harrell is fourth in hitting percentage (.448) and 10th in blocking (1.20). Middle blocker David Smith ranks third in blocking (1.54) and ninth in hitting (.399). As a team, UCI leads the league in digs (11.17) and is second in aces (1.39), and assists (15.30).

TAKING TWO IN NOR CAL: For only the second time (2001) in school history, UCI won both matches on the Pacific and Stanford swing. It was also only the third win ever at Stanford.

Juniors Jayson Jablonsky and Matt Webber each had 18 kills to lead No. 1 UC Irvine to a 3-1 (28-30, 30-22, 30-28, 30-25) victory over No. 15 Pacific to begin the roadtrip.

Jablonsky hit .405 (18-3-37) and totaled nine digs and three service aces, while Webber collected eight digs and three total blocks. Middle blockers Aaron Harrell and David Smith each added 11 kills with Smith recording seven block assists. Libero Brent Asuka tallied 13 digs, while setter Brian Thornton had 57 assists, six digs and five blocks.

UCI ended the week with a 3-0 (30-28, 30-18, 30-19) sweep of Stanford. Jablonsky led UCI again with 15 kills and four aces. Webber followed with 14 kills and six digs, while outside hitter Steffin

Rangel added five kills and a season-high eight digs. Setter Brian Thornton tallied 38 assists, five digs and three block assists.

April 10, 2006

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL FEATURED ON FSN'S NCAA ON CAMPUS SHOW

Irvine, Calif.-- UC Irvine will be featured on NCAA On Campus, a television show to be broadcast Monday, April 10 on Fox Sports Net West at 3:00 p.m.

The show, produced by FSN, features stories on collegiate athletes and their teams. The television crew visited UCI in late March to shoot the program around the campus.

One segment of the show will feature UCI's No. 1 ranked men's volleyball team, including interviews with senior Paul Spittle, junior Jayson Jablonsky and head coach John Speraw as well as a behind the scenes look at the Anteaters' pre-match routine. The program is hosted by Patrick O'Neal

April 6, 2006

UCI VOLLEYBALL AMBASSADOR ROBERT NEWCOMB RECOGNIZED WITH TRAILBLAZER AWARD

Irvine, Calif. -- UC Irvine volleyball ambassador Robert Newcomb, Ph.D, is one of eight individuals to be recognized with the Trailblazer Award at the Molten Division III Men's Invitational Volleyball Championship Thursday on the campus of Stevens Institute of Technology at Hoboken, N.J.

The United States Volleyball Association (USA Volleyball), the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) and Molten USA will honor eight individuals for their role in establishing the Division III Championship 10 years ago. Newcomb joins Craig Barker, Doug Beal, Larry Bock, Jim Coleman, Joel Dearing, Gerald Maticotta and Sandy Vivas in recognition of their individual contributions.

Dr. Newcomb has served on Molten Division III Men's Invitational Volleyball Championship committee since its inception 10 years ago. He wrote the initial proposal and lobbied for the establishment of the Men's Collegiate Volleyball Grants Program in 1988-89. Newcomb served on the NCAA Men's Volleyball Championship Committee from 1989 to 1992, holding the title of chair starting in 1990.

He was the founding coach of the UC Santa Barbara men's volleyball program in 1963 and held the position until 1965. Newcomb founded the UC Irvine men's volleyball program in 1975 and held the title of head coach through 1975. He was commissioner of the Southern California Intercollegiate Volleyball Association, later renamed the Western Intercollegiate Volleyball Association, from 1975 to 1992. Newcomb is currently the director for UCI Center for Statistical Consulting and continues to be a mentor and ambassador for the UCI volleyball programs.

April 3, 2006

UCI HEADS NORTH FOR TWO: No. 1 UC Irvine (23-3, 16-2) will travel north to battle No. 15 Pacific Friday (Apr. 7) then Stanford Saturday (Apr. 8). Both matches begin at 7:00 p.m.

VERSUS THE OPPONENTS: UCI topped both the Tigers and the Cardinal, 3-0 in MPSF matches earlier this year. The Anteaters also beat Stanford, 3-0 at the UCSB Elephant Bar Tournament in the second match of the season. UCI had a season-high 11 service aces and hit a season's best .514 (44-7-72) in the first meeting with the Cardinal.

15h-ranked Pacific is 7-17 overall and 5-13 in MPSF play. Stanford enters the week 4-20 on the year and 2-16 in league action and will entertain UCLA Friday before hosting the Anteaters. UCI has only won twice (4/1/03 & 4/12/01) at Stanford.

ANTEATERS MAINTAIN NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine maintained its No. 1 ranking in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll for the fourth consecutive week. It is the longest stint at the top of the poll with the Anteaters holding the No. 1 ranking for just two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 94 consecutive weeks.

HARRELL IS HOT: Middle blocker Aaron Harrell has not committed a hitting error in two matches and is hitting .608 (51-3-79) over the last five outings. This season, he is rewriting the record books for match hitting percentage, holding three of the top eight marks. Overall, the sophomore is hitting .482 which is fourth best in the country.

SMITH TIES BLOCK ASSIST RECORD: Junior middle blocker David Smith totaled a career-high 13 block assists versus Long Beach State, tying the UCI match record held by Brenden Watumull (2002), John Arata (199) and Chris Harger (1996).

THORNTON LEADS NATION: Setter Brian Thornton leads the nation in set assists with a 13.86 average. The junior has 1,275 assists this season which is the seventh best total in the UCI season record books.

AT THE NET: UCI has out-blocked opponents in 16 of 26 matches this year. On the year, the team averages 2.9 blocks per game and had a season-high 21.5 rejections against Long Beach State last week. Harrell leads the team with a 1.28 blocking average.

ANTEATERS IMPROVE ON SCHOOL RECORD FOR WINS: UCI's 23 victories is a school record for wins in a season. The old school mark of 20 was set in 2003 (20-11). The Anteaters also have 16 MPSF wins which is a new school mark.

STREAKING: The Anteaters are on a 17-match winning streak, the longest in Division I as well as in the program history. UCI has lost just nine games during the winning streak.

SHAKING THE RUST OFF: After 12 days off, UCI began last week with a 3-0 sweep over UC San Diego Thursday at Crawford Court.

As a team, the Anteaters hit .483 (54-12-87) for the match and were led by middle blocker Aaron Harrell who hit .818, the sixth best mark in the UCI match record books. Harrell had nine kills on 11 swings without committing an error. The sophomore also had four block assists. Junior Matt Webber totaled 13 kills and seven digs while middle blocker David Smith recorded 10 kills and hit .643 on the night. Setter Brian Thornton had 42 assists and six digs.

ANTEATERS COMPLETE SEASON SWEEP OF LONG BEACH STATE: Following a 3-1 victory over Long Beach State last Saturday, UCI defeated 49ers twice in one season for the first time in program history. The Anteaters picked up just their sixth win all-time against the 49ers (25-6).

Matt Webber led UCI with 19 kills and eight digs. Aaron Harrell hit .611 with 11 kills on 18 swings and no errors. It was Harrell's second consecutive match without a hitting error. Jayson Jablonsky had 14 kills and seven digs, while setter Brian Thornton tallied 48 set assists and six total blocks.

David Smith had a career-high 13 block assists and seven kills. Senior Paul Spittle had a career-high eight block assists and five kills in the win.

UCI out-hit the 49ers .414-.150, but Long Beach State was better from the service line, firing nine aces to the Anteaters' two.

HOME SWEET HOME: The Anteaters are 15-0 at home this season, the best record in school history. The old mark was 9-4 set in 2003. UCI is 6-3 away from Irvine this season.

March 27, 2006

DAVID SMITH FEATURED ON 'BLUE & GOLD REPORT' ON KUCI/88.9 FM TUESDAY

IRVINE, Calif. --- Junior middle blocker David Smith will be featured on this Tuesday's edition of the "Blue and Gold Report" on KUCI Radio/88.9 FM.

Smith joins women's water polo player Jessica Lewis and baseball player Cody Cipriano on the show.

The "Blue and Gold Report" airs Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. on KUCI and can be accessed on the web via the Blue and Gold Report link on the right side of the men's volleyball site. The show is archived at that site for later listening.

Mark Roberts, who is in his 12th year as play-by-play announcer for Anteater men's basketball and baseball, hosts the "Blue and Gold Report."

March 27, 2006

UCI HOSTS TWO: No. 1 UC Irvine (21-3, 14-2) will conclude an eight-match homestand entertaining UC San Diego Thursday (Mar. 30) and No. 6 Long Beach State Saturday (Apr. 1). Both matches are at 7:00 p.m. in Crawford Hall.

VERSUS THE OPPONENTS: The Tritons are 1-21 overall and 0-16 in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation. The Anteaters swept UCSD in San Diego earlier this year.

Sixth-ranked Long Beach State enters the week 17-7 on the year and 10-6 in league play. The 49ers will visit UCLA before coming to Irvine. UCI topped The Beach, 3-1 at the Pyramid in the first meeting of the year.

BLACK & BLUE RENEWED: Saturday's match marks the second men's volleyball meeting in the "Black & Blue Rivalry Series" between UCI and Long Beach State. Long Beach State leads the series 21-17, which awards the winner two points during head-to-head meetings during Mountain Pacific Sports Federation or Big West play. An extra point is awarded for a road win.

ANTEATERS MAINTAIN NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine maintained its No. 1 ranking in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll for the third consecutive week. It is the longest stint at the top of the poll with the Anteaters holding the No. 1 ranking for just two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 93 consecutive weeks.

ANTEATERS SET SCHOOL RECORD FOR WINS: UCI enters the week 21-3 overall, the most wins in a season in program history. The old school mark of 20 was set in 2003 (20-11). The Anteaters also have 14 MPSF wins which is a new school mark.

HOME SWEET HOME: The Anteaters are 13-0 at home this season, the best record in school history. The old mark was 9-4 set in 2003.

STREAKING: The Anteaters are on a 15-match winning streak, the longest in the nation as well as in the program history.

LAST TIME OUT: The team has been idle since a 3-1 victory over No. 4 Pepperdine at the Bren Center on March 18.

THORNTON LEADS NATION: Setter Brian Thornton leads the nation in set assists with a 13.94 average. The junior has 1,185 assists this season which is the eighth best total in the UCI season record books.

HARRELL IS HOT: Middle blocker Aaron Harrell has hit .560 (31-3-50) over the last three matches. He is fifth in nation in hitting percentage with a .471 mark. The sophomore has hit .600 or better nine times this season.

AROUND THE MPSF: Freshman libero Brent Asuka leads the MPSF with a 3.53 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky is ranked sixth in the league in kills (4.46) and in points (5.18), and is fourth in aces (.330). Opposite Matt Webber is ranked fifth in kills (4.55), fourth (5.29) in points and ninth in aces (.286). Setter Brian Thornton leads the MPSF in assists with a 14.07 mark and Aaron Harrell is sixth in hitting percentage (.425). Middle blocker David Smith ranks fifth in blocking (1.39). As a team, UCI leads the league in digs (11.39) and is second in aces (1.45), blocking (2.96) and assists (15.50).

JABLONSKY NAMED AVCA NATIONAL PLAYER OF THE WEEK March 20, 2006

Irvine, Calif. -- UC Irvine outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky was named Sports Imports/AVCA National Men's Volleyball Player of the Week.

For the week, Jablonsky averaged 5.21 points, 4.57 kills, 0.43 blocks, 2.71 digs and 0.43 aces per game while hitting .413 in two matches. He contributed 15 kills, 10 digs, two blocks and a .500 attack percentage in the No. 1 ranked Anteaters' three-game win over No. 12 Southern California. Jablonsky tallied 17 kills, nine digs, one block and three aces while attacking at a .351 clip in a four-game win over No. 4 Pepperdine.

On the year, the junior averages 4.95 points, 4.26 kills, 0.63 blocks, 1.67 digs and 0.18 aces per game with a .358 cumulative hitting percentage.

Jablonsky, who also earned the national honor on Feb. 13, 2006, is the fifth different Anteater to receive a total of six national player of the week honors in program history.

March 20, 2006

UCI IDLE FOR FINALS WEEK: No. 1 UC Irvine (21-3, 14-2) is idle this week for finals. The team will resume Mountain Pacific Sports Federation action hosting UC San Diego on March 30 at 7:00 p.m. at Crawford Court.

ANTEATERS MAINTAIN NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine stayed to No. 1 for the second consecutive week in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. The Anteaters were also ranked No. 1 for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 92 consecutive weeks.

ANTEATERS SET SCHOOL RECORD FOR WINS: With victories over USC (3-0) and Pepperdine (3-1) last week, UCI is 21-3 overall, setting a school record for wins in a season. The old school mark of 20 was set in 2003 (20-11). The Anteaters also have 14 MPSF wins which is a new school mark.

MASTERING THE MPSF: With the win over Pepperdine last week, UCI has beaten every team in the MPSF at least once.

HOME SWEET HOME: The Anteaters are 13-0 at home this season, the best record in school history. The old mark was 9-4 set in 2003.

DEFINATELY THE DEFENSE: UCI has enjoyed a home court advantage, going 13-0, but defense has led the Anteaters to wins on the road. The Anteaters have a better hitting percentage (.343-.288) and more aces (1.43-1.09) at home, but average more digs (11.22-10.34) and blocks (2.86-2.81) on the road.

STREAKING: The Anteaters are on a 15-match winning streak, the longest in the nation as well as in the program history.

March 14, 2006

UCI HOSTS TWO MORE AT HOME: No. 1 UC Irvine (19-3, 12-2) will host No. 12 USC Thursday (Mar. 16) at 7:00 p.m. at Crawford Court then take on No. 4 Pepperdine Saturday (Mar. 18) at the Bren Events Center at 7:00 p.m.

ANTEATERS CLAIM NO. 1 RANKING: UC Irvine moved to No. 1 in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. The Anteaters were also ranked No. 1 for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 91 consecutive weeks.

NICE TO HAVE 19: UCI's 19 wins is one shy of the school record 20 set in 2003. The Anteaters have 12 conference wins, which ties the school mark set in 2003.

HOME SWEET HOME: The Anteaters are 11-0 at home this season, the best record in school history. The old mark was 9-4 set in 2003.

STREAKING: The Anteaters are on a 13-match winning streak, the longest in the nation as well as in the program history.

GOING BERSERK AT THE BREN: A season-high 2,817 fans watched UCI beat BYU on Friday night at the Bren Center. The attendance is the 16th highest in the nation this year and the largest total for a match not hosted by BYU or Hawaii. It was the Anteaters first win at the Bren (1-8).

AROUND THE MPSF: Entering the week, freshman libero Brent Asuka leads the MPSF with a 3.44 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky is ranked third in the league in points (5.17), sixth in kills (4.23), and is tied for third in aces (.347). Opposite Matt Webber is ranked third in kills (4.65) and sixth (5.06) in points. Setter Brian Thornton is second in assists with a 13.69 mark and Aaron Harrell is second in hitting percentage (.469) and 10th in blocks at 1.22 per game. Middle blocker David Smith ranks fourth in hitting percentage (.429) and sixth in blocking (1.41). As a team, UCI leads the league in digs (11.04) and aces (1.45).

BATTLE IN THE BREN IS A THRILLER: UC Irvine upset No. 1 BYU in a five-game thriller (30-24, 28-30, 27-30, 36-34, 15-13) at the Bren Events Center Friday.

The win was the second time in school history that the Anteaters have beaten the nation's top ranked team with the other coming on March 31, 1999 when the 13th-ranked Anteaters swept No. 1 Long Beach State.

BYU lead the match 2-1 entering game four. Neither team held more than a two point lead until UCI held a 25-22 advantage capped by a Paul Spittle kill. BYU would use a Yosleyder Cala kill and an Ant eater hitting error to get within 25-24. Following a Matt Webber kill for UCI, Cala had a kill and a service ace to tie the score at 26-26. The teams would trade points before BYU took a 32-31 lead on another Cala kill. Webber and Victor Batista each had a kill for their respective schools before a Cala service error followed by a Jonathan Charette attacking error giving UCI the 34-33 advantage. Ivan Perez would sideout for BYU before Jayson Jablonsky drilled a kill to give UCI their sixth game point 35-34. Cala sailed an attack wide giving the Anteaters a 36-34 victory to force game five.

BYU led 10-6 in game five before UCI mounted a monumental comeback using three BYU errors to close within 10-9. Freshman Brent Asuka had a huge dig without any blockers up to keep the ball in play and force the Cougar attack error at 10-9. A UCI service error put the Cougars up 11-9. A kill by Webber followed by two Jablonsky service aces put the Anteaters ahead 12-11. A Russell Holmes kill knotted the score at 12-12 before an Aaron Harrell kill in the middle and a hitting error by Batista gave UCI a 14-12 advantage. A BYU kill by Cala narrowed UCI's lead to 14-13 before David Smith put away the match winner 15-13.

Webber led UCI with 25 kills followed by Jablonsky, who recorded 17 kills, four service aces and seven digs. Senior Paul Spittle pounded a career-high 16 kills and 10 digs. Setter Brian Thornton recorded 62 assists and a career-best 11 digs. Freshman libero Brent Asuka totaled 11 digs

The Anteaters out-served the Cougars 10-2 and held a 47-44 dig advantage. BYU controlled the net, out-blocking UCI 19-10.

PART TWO: In a near repeat of Friday's match, UCI won the first game then had to battle back after losing the next two games to win the final two. A capacity 800 fans watched the match at Crawford Court Saturday.

Unlike Friday night, UCI controlled game four and dominated game five. The Anteaters held a 13-6 cushion. After a BYU kill, middle blocker David Smith gave UCI match point with a kill, 14-7. BYU scored three consecutive points on an Irvine service error, a triple block and a kill by Cala to narrow the score to 14-10. A service error by Rodrigo Gomes ended the game (15-10) and the match (3-2). The Anteaters had four blocks in game five, including two solos by setter Brian Thornton. BYU hit -.067 (4-5-15) in the final stanza.

Webber recorded 20 or more kills for the fourth consecutive match, leading UCI with 20 put-aways. Webber also added three service aces, five block assists and a match-high 25.5 points. Jablonsky totaled 17 kills and five digs, while middle blocker Aaron Harrell tied his career-high with 14 kills and hit .650, committing only one error in 20 attempts. Thornton totaled 57 assists, six digs and four total blocks, while Asuka tallied his seventh consecutive match with double-figure digs, posting 10. Smith led all players with nine total blocks.

TWO SWEEPS TO START THE WEEK: UCI began the week with 3-0 sweeps of No. 10 Loyola-Chicago and No. 8 Penn State. The win snapped the Nittany Lions 10-match winning streak.

Versus Loyola-Chicago, opposite Matt Webber hit .636, totaling 23 kills on 33 attempts and committing only two errors on the night. Middle blocker Aaron Harrell recorded the second-best hitting percentage in a UCI match with a .917 mark in an almost perfect night (11-0-12). Middle blocker David Smith hit .733 (12-1-15), which is 12th best in the UCI match record books.

Webber recorded 23 kills for the second consecutive night to lead the Anteaters versus Penn State. Outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky totaled 16 kills, while Smith had 10 kills and hit .769 on 13 errorless swings. Setter Brian Thornton tallied 54 assists and guided UCI to a blistering .511 hitting percentage.

March 13, 2006

UC IRVINE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL RANKED NO. 1 NATIONALLY

Irvine, Calif. – The UC Irvine men's volleyball team moved to No. 1 in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll, the highest ranking of the season. UCI received all 16 first place votes.

The Anteaters were also ranked No. 1 for two weeks (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4) in 2003. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 91 consecutive weeks.

The Anteaters will host No. 12 USC Thursday (Mar. 16) at 7:00 p.m. at Crawford Court then take on No. 4 Pepperdine Saturday (Mar. 18) at the Bren Events Center at 7:00 p.m.

CSTV/AVCA Division I-II Men's Coaches Top 15 PollSM

POLL #10: March 13, 2006

Rank School (First-Place Votes) Total Points

- 1 UC Irvine (16) 240**
- 2 BYU 224
- 3 Hawai'i 207
- 4 Pepperdine 185
- 5 Long Beach State 182
- 6 Cal State Northridge 160
- 7 UC Santa Barbara 138
- 8 UCLA 128
- 9 Penn State 110
- 10 Loyola-Chicago 83
- 11 Ohio State 70
- 12 Southern California 69
- 13 IPFW 67
- 14 Pacific 23
- 15 George Mason 22

Others receiving points and listed on two or more ballots: Ball State (14-3) 12.

March 6, 2006

ANTEATERS HOSTS FOUR AT HOME INCLUDING 1-2 SHOWDOWN: UC Irvine (15-3, 10-2) will start an eight-match homestand with four important matches this week beginning with No. 10 Loyola-Chicago Monday (Mar. 6) and No. 9 Penn State Tuesday (Mar. 7). Both matches will be held at 7:00 p.m. in Crawford Court.

The No. 2 Anteaters will take on No. 1 BYU Friday (Mar. 10) at 7:00 p.m. in the Bren Events Center then entertain the Cougars again Saturday at Crawford Court at 6:00 p.m.

It is the second time UCI has hosted a No.1 vs No.2 match-up. No. 1 UCI battled No. 2 Hawaii Jan. 31, 2003 with the Warriors winning 3-1.

HOME SWEET HOME: The Anteaters are 7-0 at Crawford Court this season.

ANTEATERS STAY AT NO. 2 IN POLL: UC Irvine remained No. 2 in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. It is the highest ranking since Feb. 11, 2003 when they were also ranked second. The Anteaters were ranked second for three weeks during the 2003 season. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 90 consecutive weeks.

WINNING STREAKS ON THE LINE TUESDAY: If UCI can get past Loyola-Chicago Monday, Tuesday's match with the Nittany Lions will feature the nation's longest winning streak. Penn State enters the match winning the last matches, the longest in the nation this year, while the Anteaters enter the week on a nine-match streak, the second in the nation as well as in the program history.

SEASON SWEEP OF THE BRUINS: UCI defeated UCLA 3-0 last week, sweeping the season series with the Bruins for the first time in school history. It is the fifth win all-time against UCLA, four coming in the John Speraw era.

Junior Matt Webber led UCI against the Bruins with 17 kills, while outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky added 13 kills. Middle blocker Aaron Harrell pounded 12 kills and hit .611 (12-1-18). Webber, Jablonsky and Harrell each recorded five block assists. Middle blocker David Smith had a match-high seven blocks to go with seven kills.

DIGGING MACHINE: Freshman libero Brent Asuka recorded 17 digs versus UCLA and leads the MPSF with a 3.79 average. He is currently third in the country in digs totaling double-digit digs in the last four matches and 10 of the last 12 contests. Asuka has recorded 199 digs this season, which ranks fourth in the UCI season annuals and is 76 short of the school record of 275 set by Greg Ford in 2004.

SIMPLY SMITH: Over the last eight matches, middle blocker David Smith has committed only four errors in 98 attempts. He has hit .561 (59-4-98) in that span. On the season, Smith is second on the team with a .438 hitting percentage.

FABULOUS 15: UCI's 15 wins is the second most ever by a UCI team. The 2003 squad won a school record 20 matches.

February 27, 2006

UCI TRAVELS TO UCLA: UC Irvine (14-3, 9-2) will travel to UCLA in the lone match of the week Friday (Mar. 3) in a 7:00 start at Pauley Pavilion.

VERSUS THE OPPONENTS: The Anteaters trail the Bruins 35-4 all-time but defeated UCLA 3-0 earlier this season at home. It was the first ever win in Irvine and the first sweep of the Bruins in program history. Junior outside hitter Matt Webber pounded a season-high 23 kills and totaled six digs in the win. UCI's last victory at Pauley was a 3-2 win Jan. 17, 2003.

ANTEATERS STAY AT NO. 2 IN POLL: UC Irvine remained No. 2 in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. It is the highest ranking since Feb. 11, 2003 when they were also ranked second. The Anteaters were ranked second for three weeks during the 2003 season. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 89 consecutive weeks.

ON A ROLL: After defeating Long Beach State (3-1) and UC San Diego (3-0) last week, UC Irvine extended their winning streak to eight, the longest in the nation currently and the second longest in program history. The Anteaters began the 2003 season winning 10 straight.

Jayson Jablonsky led the Anteaters in both matches last week, recording 19 kills versus Long Beach State and 14 against UC San Diego. For the week, Jablonsky averaged 4.71 kills, 1.57 digs, 0.86 and 5.43 points per game.

Freshman libero Brent Asuka recorded 16 digs versus UC San Diego, the ninth best mark by an MPSF player this year.

FABULOUS 14: UCI's 14 wins is tied for second most ever by a UCI team. The 1999 (14-11) and the 2004 (14-18) teams also collected 14 wins. The 2003 squad won a school record 20 matches.

AROUND THE MPSF: Freshman libero Brent Asuka leads the MPSF with a 3.63 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky is ranked fourth in the MPSF in kills (4.75) and in points (5.43), is eighth in aces (.306) and is ninth in hitting percentage (.395). Opposite Matt Webber is ranked 10th in kills (4.08) and seventh (4.83) in points. Setter Brian Thornton is ranked third in assists with a 13.86 mark and Aaron Harrell is 10th in hitting percentage (.391) and eighth in blocks at 1.28 per game. Middle blocker David Smith ranks third in hitting percentage (.455) and fifth in blocking (1.39). As a team, UCI leads the league in digs (11.42) and aces (1.44).

ON DECK: After playing UCLA, UCI will return home to host four important matches beginning with No. 11 Loyola-Chicago Monday (Mar. 6) and No. 9 Penn State Tuesday (Mar. 7). The Anteaters will take on No. 1 BYU Friday (Mar. 10) in the Bren Events Center then entertain the Cougars Saturday at Crawford Court. Monday, Tuesday and Friday's matches begin at 7:00 p.m., while Saturday's match has been moved up to 6:00 p.m.

February 23, 2006

UCI HITS THE ROAD: UCI (12-3, 7-2) will travel to Long Beach State Friday (Feb. 24) for a 7:30 p.m. match at The Walter Pyramid then on to UC San Diego Saturday (Feb. 25) for a 7:00 p.m. start at the RIMAC Arena.

ANTEATERS MOVE TO NO. 2 IN POLL: UC Irvine moved up one spot to No. 2 in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. It is the highest ranking since Feb. 11, 2003 when they were also ranked second. The Anteaters were ranked second for three weeks during the 2003 season. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 88 consecutive weeks.

BATTLE OF BLACK & BLUE: Friday's match at Long Beach State marks the first men's volleyball meeting in the "Black & Blue Rivalry Series" between UCI and Long Beach State. The series is tied 11-11, which awards the winner two points during head-to-head meetings during Mountain Pacific Sports Federation or Big West play. An extra point is awarded for a road win.

HOME SWEET HOME: The Anteaters are 7-0 at Crawford Court this season. The team is 5-3 away from Irvine and 3-3 on opponents home courts.

ON A ROLL: After defeating Stanford (3-0) and Pacific (3-0) last week, UC Irvine extended their winning streak to six, the second longest in program history. The Anteaters began the 2003 season winning 10 straight. UCI's winning streak is tied with Penn State for longest current streak in the country.

SMITH SNAPS PERFECT STREAK: Junior middle blocker David Smith had not committed a hitting error in three matches (21-0-30-.700) before going 4-2-10 against Stanford last Friday night. Smith was errorless against Pacific on Saturday adding five kills in 11 attempts. In the last five matches, Smith is hitting .549.

AROUND THE MPSF: Freshman libero Brent Asuka leads the MPSF with a 3.54 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky is ranked third in the MPSF in kills (4.76) and in points (5.37) and is seventh in aces (.345), while opposite Matt Webber is ranked eighth in kills (4.17) and fifth (5.07) in points. Setter Brian Thornton is ranked fifth in assists with a 13.76 mark and Aaron Harrell is seventh in hitting percentage (.415) and eighth in blocks at 1.31 per game. Middle blocker David Smith ranks sixth in blocking (1.41) and eighth in hitting percentage (.409). As a team, UCI leads the league in digs (10.90) and aces (1.55).

February 20, 2006

UC IRVINE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL MOVES TO SECOND IN NATIONAL POLL

Irvine, Calif. – The UC Irvine men's volleyball team moved up one spot to second in this week's CSTV/AVCA Division I Men's Coaches Poll.

It is the highest ranking for UCI since Feb. 11, 2003 when the team was also ranked No. 2. The Anteaters were ranked second for three weeks during the 2003 season. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 88 consecutive weeks.

UC Irvine is riding a six-match winning streak and is 12-3 overall and 7-2 in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation. The Anteaters will travel to sixth-ranked Long Beach State Friday for a 7:30 p.m. match at The Walter Pyramid.

CSTV/AVCA Division I-II Men's Coaches Top 15 Poll

POLL #7: Feb. 20, 2006

Rank School (First-Place Votes) Total Points

1	BYU (16)	240
2	UC Irvine	221
3	Pepperdine	204
4	Hawai'i	192
5	Cal State Northridge	169
6	Long Beach State	165
7	UCLA	140
8	UC Santa Barbara	124
9	Penn State	119
10	Ball State	90
11	Loyola-Chicago	77
12	Ohio State	71
13	Southern California	51
14	George Mason	31
15	IPFW	15

Others receiving points and listed on two or more ballots: Pacific 6, Stanford 5.

February 14, 2006

UCI HOSTS TWO: UCI (10-3, 5-2) will host Stanford Friday (Feb. 17) and Pacific Saturday (Feb. 18). Both matches begin at 7:00 p.m. at Crawford Court.

VERSUS THE OPPONENTS: The Anteaters defeated Stanford 3-0 earlier this year at the Elephant Bar Tournament. Matt Webber led all players with 10 kills. The Cardinal are 4-10 overall and 2-6 in MSPF play and will play UCLA before heading to the Bren.

This will be the first meeting of the year with the Tigers. UOP is 4-8 on the year and 2-6 in league. They will also battle the Bruins before playing in Crawford.

JABLONSKY SWEEPS PLAYER OF THE WEEK HONORS: Junior Jayson Jablonsky has been chosen both the Sports Imports/AVCA Division I-II Men's National Player of the Week and the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Player of the Week.

The 6-7 outside hitter sparked the Anteaters to victories over fifth-ranked Cal State Northridge and 10th-ranked UC Santa Barbara last week. Jablonsky hit .449 for the week with averages of 6.29 points, 5.29 kills, 1.43 blocks, 1.43 digs and 0.29 aces per game.

The junior totaled 12 kills with a .417 attack percentage, five block assists and six digs in a sweep of Cal State Northridge. Jablonsky attacked at a .467 clip in a four-game victory over UC Santa Barbara as he compiled a career-high 25 kills, five block assists, four digs and two aces. He scored three consecutive kills to give the Anteaters a 31-29 game-three victory versus the Gauchos.

It is Jablonsky's first national recognition and second MPSF honor, earning the distinction in 2005.

ON A ROLL: UC Irvine defeated No. 5 Cal State Northridge (3-0) and No. 10 UC Santa Barbara (3-1) last week to extend the winning streak to four. The Anteaters are 10-3 on the year, surpassing last year's season total of 9.

HARRELL AT THE NET: Sophomore middle blocker Aaron Harrell leads the team in blocking with a 1.46 average. He had a career-high nine block assists and 11 total blocks in the win over UCSB. He is averaging 6.5 block assists over the last four matches.

AROUND THE MPSF: Freshman libero Brent Asuka leads the MPSF with a 3.64 dig average. Jayson Jablonsky is ranked third in the MPSF in kills (4.74) and points (5.37), while opposite Matt Webber was ranked sixth in kills (4.35) and fifth (5.07) in points. Setter Brian Thornton was ranked third in assists with a 13.78 mark and Aaron Harrell was fourth in blocks at 1.52 per game. Middle blocker David Smith ranks sixth in hitting percentage (.427), 10th in aces (.376) and 11th in blocking (1.22). As a team, UCI leads the league in digs (10.83) and assists (16.30).

February 13, 2006

JABLONSKY NAMED AVCA NATIONAL PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Irvine, Calif. -- UC Irvine's Jayson Jablonsky has been chosen the Sports Imports/AVCA Division I-II Men's National Player of the Week.

The 6-7 outside hitter sparked the Anteaters to victories over fifth-ranked Cal State Northridge and 10th-ranked UC Santa Barbara last week. Jablonsky hit .449 for the week with averages of 6.29 points, 5.29 kills, 1.43 blocks, 1.43 digs and 0.29 aces per game.

The junior totaled 12 kills with a .417 attack percentage, five block assists and six digs in a sweep of Cal State Northridge. Jablonsky attacked at a .467 clip in a four-game victory over UC Santa Barbara as he compiled a career-high 25 kills, five block assists, four digs and two aces. He scored three consecutive kills to give the Anteaters a 31-29 game-three victory versus the Gauchos.

On the year, Jablonsky is averaging 4.64 points, 4.29 kills, 0.67 blocks, 1.69 digs and 0.31 aces per game.

This is Jablonsky's first national recognition and becomes the fifth Anteater student-athlete to garner this award

February 7, 2006

ANTEATERS MOVE TO NO. 3 IN POLL: UC Irvine moved up one spot to third in the latest CSTV/AVCA Coaches poll. It is the highest ranking since Feb. 18, 2003 when they were also ranked third. UCI has been ranked in the top 15 for 86 consecutive weeks.

CSTV/AVCA Division I-II Men's Coaches Top 15 Poll

- 1 Pepperdine (15) 238
- 2 BYU (1) 225
- 3 UC Irvine 195
- 4 Long Beach State 187
- 5 Cal State Northridge 176
- 6 Hawai'i 156
- 7 UCLA 142
- 8 Ohio State 137
- 9 Ball State 94
- 10 UC Santa Barbara 87
- 11 Penn State 80
- 12 Loyola-Chicago 78
- 12 Southern California 77
- 14 Pacific 29
- 15 George Mason 10

Others receiving points and listed on two or more ballots: IPFW 3

February 6, 2006

IMPORTANT MPSF MATCHES THIS WEEK: UCI returns to Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) play this week hosting No. 5 Cal State Northridge Wednesday (Feb. 8) then traveling to No. 10 UC Santa Barbara Saturday (Feb. 11). Both matches begin at 7:00 p.m.

VERSUS THE OPPONENTS: Cal State Northridge, who won both meetings last year, are 6-3 overall and 2-2 in league play.

UCSB defeated the 'Eaters, 3-2 at the Elephant Bar Tournament earlier this year. UCI's Matt Webber led all players with 22 kills, while Evan Patak paced the Gauchos with 21 kills. The Gauchos are 6-6 on the year and 4-4 in conference and will travel to UCLA Wednesday before hosting UCI.

SERVING IT UP: Wednesday's match between the Anteaters and Matadors features the conference's best two serving teams. Northridge leads the league with 1.6 aces per game followed by the Anteaters with 1.4 per game.

UCI TAKES TWO NON-CONFERENCE MATCHES: Outside hitter Matt Webber led UCI to wins over Princeton (3-1) and UC Santa Cruz (3-0) last week. Webber recorded a career-high 26 kills against the Tigers then totaled 15 kills against the Banana Slugs.

Sophomore middle blocker Aaron Harrell recorded eight total blocks in each match. UCI hit .477 against UCSC, while holding the Slugs to a .135 percentage. Last week, UCI out-blocked the opponents 27.5-13.5.

ASUKA DA SCOOPA: Freshman libero Brent Asuka has totaled double-digit digs in the last five matches and is averaging 14.6 digs in that span. For the season, Asuka is averaging 3.08 digs per game overall and 3.93 versus league opponents which tops the MPSF. UCI is the best digging team in the league with an 11.50 average.

AROUND THE MPSF: Matt Webber is ranked third in the MPSF in kills (4.69) and second in points (5.47), while junior outside hitter Jayson Jablonsky was ranked sixth in kills (4.50) and fourth (4.97) in points. Setter Brian Thornton was ranked seventh in assists with a 13.31 mark and Aaron Harrell was 10th in blocks at 1.19 per game. Middle blocker David Smith ranks fifth in aces per game at .376.