

PROVEN ADVERSARIES

Whether they're playing for the title or just bragging rights, for these teams it all boils down to one thing...PRIDE

BY JENNIFER ARMSON-DYER

Rivalries. All athletes have that one opponent they circle on their schedule, despite what their coaches say about all matches being equal. It's those one or two matches a year that can make or break a season, regardless of your overall win-loss record. But rivalries can come in all shapes and sizes. Some are ingrained in the culture of the school, a contest that attracts the non-sports fan just because of the name on the opposing jersey. Some involve non-traditional match-ups among the powerhouses in the sport, a match with so much history behind it the numbers are staggering. Some play for a trophy, a small yearly token that far exceeds its size in state pride. Some are renewed rivalries, formed when two programs meet at the top of their game and the winner earns bragging rights along with a conference title and NCAA Tournament implications. And some not only are battles on the court, they set new marks off the court with record crowds.

Anyone can look up the definition of "rivalry" and get the standard answer: "a competitive or antagonistic state or condition," or "competing for the same object or goal as another, who tries to equal or outdo another." But neither statement encompasses the passion and emotion that comes with a rivalry. They don't explain the feeling of the butterflies in your stomach that are just a little bigger for this match than others. They don't tell why, in this match, you can jump just a little bit higher and move just a little bit quicker. They don't account for the fact that you know, deep down, there's something extra you can pull out for this contest that just might make the difference.

It doesn't matter the size of the school or the length of the rivalry, all will agree that even though they look forward to every match, they look forward to this one just a little bit more. Read on to learn a little bit more about five notable rivalries in the women's volleyball world.



Calvin v. Hope

Harvard vs Yale

These two institutions started intercollegiate athletics with a crew race in 1852 and ever since then, the two schools have upheld the tradition befitting two of the oldest schools in the nation. (For the record, Harvard is the oldest school in the country and Yale is the third-oldest, but who's counting?) The football contest between the two schools is known simply as "The Game" and every year the establishments are competing not only on the field of play but in the classroom as well. But even though in women's volleyball the scale is tipped in Yale's favor (33-19), that doesn't stop Harvard-it makes the players work harder. "There is definitely an unspoken electricity that lights the air



when we prepare to play Yale," said Crimson senior Kat Kocurek. "There exists an extra sense of urgency, or passion, when the rivalry is at hand. Playing against Yale has the ability to compel Harvard athletes to accomplish tasks they may not have thought imaginable."

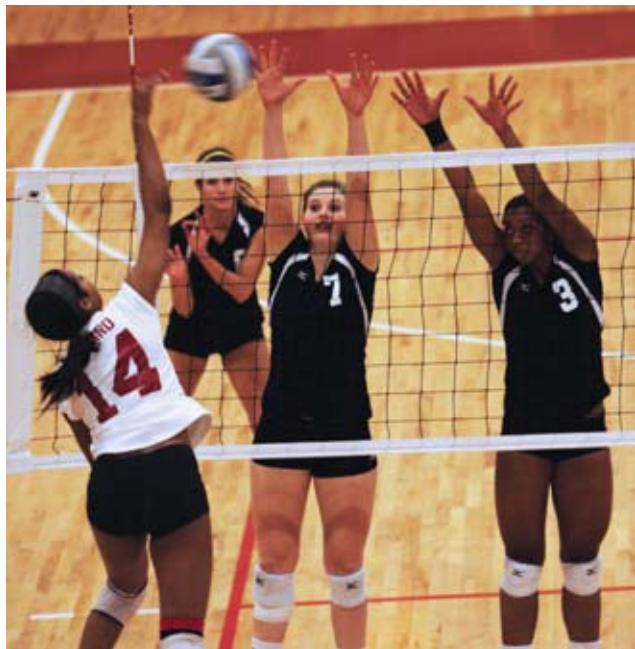
During the 2009 season, Yale swept the first meeting in three games, yet in true rivalry fashion, the second match of the year lived up to the billing. Yale captured the match in five games,



HARVARD

with the fifth set going to 19-17. Ironically, each team scored a total of 105 points in the contest.

"Two of the oldest schools in the country playing against each other with all of the history and the deep roots makes it very exciting," said Yale senior Alexis Crusey. "Everyone has that



YALE SPORTS PUBLICITY

competition and deep drive to win, but it comes out a little more during the Harvard match. A lot of the recruiting for athletics and academics goes between Yale and Harvard because we're so equally matched, so when we get a chance to play, it comes down to who wants it more."

Do the non-sports fans get involved in the rivalry? Absolutely, says Yale head coach Erin Appleman.

"You always get a bigger crowd for the Yale-Harvard contests, regardless of the sport," she said. "Some of the fans don't know volleyball, but they're at the match because they're anti-Harvard or anti-Yale. We're so close academically that those students who are looking at one have looked at the other. There's a real history and emotion there."

But what makes the Harvard-Yale rivalry different? Harvard head coach Jennifer Weiss has an idea.

"The rich traditions across the league and the two schools are not only historical but so great to be a part of. The Harvard-Yale rivalry started so long ago and since then all of the sports have developed the same rivalry. Participating in a Harvard-Yale match, you can just sense the energy specific to the rivalry. Both institutions are amazing and our student-athletes take such pride when wearing Crimson. I have to say there is a little extra spark when it comes to the Bulldogs."

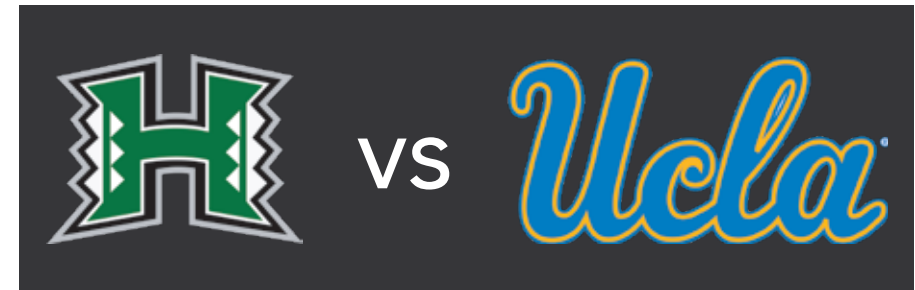
Hawaii vs UCLA

While those outside of the volleyball world may not view this as a rivalry, the history behind it certainly raises some eyebrows. The two teams have met 67 times beginning in 1974 and have played at least once a season since then. The Rainbow Wahine lead the all-time series 35-32, including taking the 2009 preseason meeting in three games, which was a pretty big accomplishment in the eyes of the Hawaii players.

"Speaking on behalf of the seniors, it is just awesome," Wahine senior Aneli Cubi-Otineru told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin after the match. "Beating UCLA has been our goal. We knew it would be a tough game, not handed to us. We had to follow the game plan and stay disciplined."

The coaches of the respective teams certainly know something about game plans and staying disciplined. Hawaii head coach Dave Shoji and UCLA head coach Andy Banachowski are the only two coaches in NCAA Division I history to have recorded more than 1,000 career victories. And they have seen it all during this series.

The only two losses Shoji suffered



UCLA

in his first season of coaching the Wahine in 1975 came against UCLA, including one in the AIAW final. Six of Hawaii's eight losses between 1974 and 1976 were at the hands of the Bruins. The Wahine's first victory over UCLA was in 1977 and it took the squad until 1983 in the NCAA title match to grab the series lead at 17-16.

After a three-game sweep of UCLA in 1996, in which Hawaii won in 79 minutes and allowed only 16 total points (15-5, 15-2, 15-9), Shoji's excitement was evident.

"I don't think these [players] understand how much it means to beat UCLA like this," he told the Star-Bulletin. "They see UCLA as just another team. It's been such a great rivalry through the years, and for me to beat Andy [Banachowski] this easily is pretty gratifying."

The players at UCLA also see the tradition as gratifying. "We have gone to Hawaii every year at least once and it's such a cool environment because they have so many great volleyball fans," said UCLA senior Kaitlin Sather. "You can tell the spectators know the sport and Hawaii is one of the most fun places to play because they cheer for good plays, regardless of the team. They definitely respect good volleyball."

As far as the rivalry between the two schools, Sather explains that it's different from traditional rivalries, like UCLA-USC.

"The rivalry between us and Hawaii is kind of unspoken," she said with a laugh. "With USC it's really out in the open and all around campus, but the rivalry with Hawaii is a lot more focused on the court."

"A win means a lot, especially because they are such a great volleyball school," continued Sather. "Beating Hawaii is always important because they're one of our first preseason matches every year. The rivalry isn't appreciated as much on campus as it is within our program, but it's definitely there."



HAWAII

Indiana vs Purdue



The Monon Spike

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPORTS INFORMATION

The battle for state pride comes down to a link on a chain. Or at least that's the representation. The Indiana and Purdue women's volleyball teams have met 84 times since 1975, with the Boilermakers leading the overall series 51-33. But every year, one of these matches carries a little more weight and the winner walks a little taller. It's the Monon Spike match.

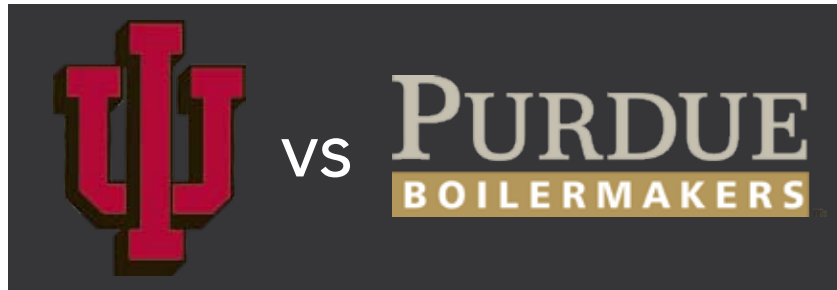
Started in 1981 by Purdue seniors Donna Hardesty and Anne McMenemy, the traveling trophy is presented to the winning team after one of the two annual matches. They chose the Spike from the Monon Railroad, which originated in Indiana in the late 19th century. It was taken from a portion of the railroad near Indianapolis, marking the halfway point between Bloomington and West Lafayette.

And as with its sister trophy, the Old Oaken Bucket (football's version), a "P" or "I" link is added to the chain signifying the season's winner. Currently the chain has 24 "P" links and 12 "I" links, with Purdue adding the latest in a four-game victory in 2009 in Bloomington, Ind.

The battle for the link and its meaning is instilled from birth in some. Indiana junior Ashley Benson, a Bloomington native and daughter of IU basketball great Kent Benson, states the rivalry quite plainly: "The Indiana-Purdue rivalry is all about pride and showing the state who is best. If you

grow up in Bloomington or are a fan of Indiana, you don't like Purdue. It's that simple."

Purdue head coach Dave Shondell has received numerous emails from former Boilermaker players, both recent and not-so-recent, to try to help fuel the rivalry and keep it as intense as it was when it first started. And Shondell, an Indiana native, certainly recognizes the history between the two schools.



"Growing up in the state of Indiana, I recognize the bitter dislike that Indiana and Purdue fans have for each other. I think it helps if you have a lot of players from within the state because they recognize what that rivalry means. It's fun. It's something that we look forward to and I think the Monon Spike plays a big role in that excitement that we have. I think there is more hype for that match than the one where we don't play for the Spike. There is a big difference in the intensity in those matches."

Even though Purdue senior Carrie Gurnell is from Texas, she's been through enough Purdue-Indiana battles that she understands the significance.

"Anytime you play IU, you have to bring your 'A' game. The most fun thing about the Monon Spike match is that you're playing for something, you have something to show for your win. It doesn't matter if one team is ranked first in the nation and the other is last in the NCAA, it's still going to be a good match. It's not about NCAAs, it's not about the Big Ten. It's 'us versus them' at that point, and that's why it's such a good match."



PURDUE ATHLETICS

Calvin College vs Hope College

This Division III rivalry has a little bit of everything. It has the long-standing tradition between the two schools, the state pride, the top-level competition with conference and NCAA implications. And it also has NCAA regular-season attendance records.

In the Oct. 28, 2009 match at Calvin, an NCAA Division III regular-season record crowd of 2,725 fans witnessed Hope take a hard-fought five game win. But Calvin responded in the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) conference finals with a four-game win to take the league title over

Hope. Hope entered the championship final with a 30-2 record as well as a perfect 16-0 match mark in regular-season conference play. But records don't matter in rivalry matches.

In the last five years, Calvin leads the series 10-6 over Hope, with 13 of the 16 matches going four or five games. It's a rivalry that excites those involved in it.

"As a Hope fan all my life, I grew up in the rivalry and know that there is nothing like it," said Hope head coach Becky Schmidt. "There is incredible spirit of both sides, but what really makes the rivalry special is the competitiveness of the teams. Every year both teams are competing for a conference championship and both programs have talented and hard working student-athletes. When you think about the next year in the off-season, you dream about the Hope-Calvin match—the competitiveness, the atmosphere, the history—hopefully that motivates our student-athletes to work a little harder and give a little more in their preparation and training."

The two teams have met in the MIAA conference tournament four times in the last five years, with Calvin holding a 4-0 advantage.

Hope senior Teresa Borst feels like the Hope-Calvin rivalry



CALVIN ATHLETICS

goes beyond traditional sports rivalries.

"To be a part of the Hope/Calvin rivalry is a unique thing. I, personally, feel very honored to be a part of it. When we play each other it's truly a contest of character and heart and that's something I love. When we play against each other, both teams really give it all they've got on the court and it's a match that brings out the best in each team."

While on the other side of the rivalry, Calvin head coach Amber Warner echoes those same sentiments.

"We are all made from the same cloth, as far as what our colleges stand for, but this rivalry has been rooted in our schools for years and years. I think this rivalry is about having the desire to beat someone you really want to beat, but at the same time having respect for what they've accomplished."

And the accomplishments keep piling up for both teams. Hope defeated Calvin in three games in the NCAA Regional Semifinals in front of more than 2,400 fans on Hope's campus. The rivalry continues.

San Diego VS San Bernardino

made us work harder but I'm sure it probably did. We never overlooked an opponent but deep down it probably gave us a little more drive."

Current Tritons senior Sylvia Schmidt also admits to getting a little more hyped for the CS San Bernardino matches.

"We treat every match the same, or we try to. There is an excitement when we play CSUSB."

It doesn't get much closer than an even 12-12 series record in nine years. Ever since UC San Diego moved to Division II in 2000, the rivalry with Cal State San Bernardino has taken off. Of the 24 total matches, only six have been decided in three games. Nine have gone to four games and nine have lasted five games. Only one year – in 2002 – did San Bernardino sweep the yearly series. Otherwise the two teams have claimed at least one match a year over the other.



Winning streaks have been snapped. Sure-wins haven't happened. Rankings have crumbled. NCAA hopes and conference championships have been crushed. It certainly makes a rivalry happen a little quicker than normal.

A certain match between the two schools still sticks out in the mind of former Tritons libero Natalie Facchini. UC San Diego had defeated Cal State San Bernardino twice already in 2004, once in four and once in three. But when the two teams met up for the NCAA Regional title at UC San Diego, San Bernardino came out on top in five.

"Starting then, personally, I had a little more rivalry towards them the next three years," she said with a laugh. "It's a good rivalry. All schools need a rival. It makes it more fun and competitive and it's been a rivalry since before I got there. When you get into the program you are just indoctrinated into that mindset. It's fun. And they're always a really good team so that always makes it that much better, because it's always a really good match."

The conference title and more is always on the line when it comes to these two schools. In 2001, UC San Diego won the NCAA Regional title over San Bernardino in five games, at San Bernardino. In 2002, the Coyotes defeated the Tritons in four games in the NCAA Regional Semifinals at San Bernardino. In 2004, San Bernardino claimed the NCAA Regional title in five games at UC San Diego. In 2006, the Tritons defeated the Coyotes in four to advance to the NCAA National Championship match.

Facchini admits that the San Bernardino matches stood out a little bit more to her.

"Playing against San Bernardino probably shouldn't have



UC SAN DIEGO