

# For the love of volleyball



**Heidi Moritz went from prep phenom to UPS record setter to inductee to first class of the Ephrata Hall of Fame**

**BY STEVEN SMITH  
of the Journal**

EPHRATA – Heidi Moritz could have played just about any sport she wanted. She excelled on the basketball court, was a champion on the track, and just to get her prep career a boost, she even took a turn on the softball diamond.

But Heidi Moritz loved volleyball, and by the time she was through with the sport, volleyball loved her back.

A three-sport standout that former Tiger football coach and athletic director Bill Betcher described as “the best female athlete I’ve ever seen,” Heidi (Moritz) Saville will be honored this year by her alma mater. At age 46, Saville will be one of 13 inductees in the inaugural class of the Ephrata High athletic Hall of Fame.

Saville and her fellow inductees will be the center of attention Sept. 27-28 as part of the first EHS Hall of Fame weekend, first on Friday Night (Sept. 27) at halftime of the Ellensburg at Ephrata football game. The main event will be on Saturday, Sept. 28, with the official induction banquet beginning at 5 p.m. in the auditorium at St. Rose of Lima Catholic school.

Saville lives in Spokane with her husband, Chad, and sons Ryder and Dekker – she works for the Spokane School District as an occupational therapist. When she got the call about her induction into the Hall, Saville said she was “so honored, and humbled.”

“At this point in my life, this has made me sit down and think about how it was to experience what I did. I don’t know if it could have happened for me anywhere but Ephrata,” she said. “I really am very grateful for the opportunity to share this with my children, to show them that I’m not just Mom.

“Being a three-sport athlete was all because of my parents (John and Margaret Moritz). They always supported their children in everything we wanted to do,” Saville continued. “They taught us that if you’re willing to work hard and be dedicated, you can do anything.”

Moritz stepped into the Ephrata spotlight near the end of the 1980s, the Decade of Dominance for Tiger athletics – she was a freshman in 1987 when she started working as a varsity athlete.

“We had so many multiple-sport athletes. We all grew up here together and formed close bonds with each other over those years,” she said. “When you see the talent we had, and the coaching we got, it just raised the talent up.

“You look at (fellow Hall of Famers) like a Becky Wiersma, a Gary Hagy – the kids before us put in the hard work and dedication to be great and our approach was that we could do it too,” Saville continued.

Some might have thought that track was the sport that would fall under “the best” for Saville, given her success on the cinders. She won the state triple jump title in 1991 – in 1990, she teamed with Kara Foianini, Angie Mayer and Sara Wiersma to capture the class “A” 400-meter relay crown.

Earlier that season, the same foursome set a school record in that same relay at 50 seconds, a mark that still stands today.

But then, basketball was also a sport where she stood out. She was a first-team all-Caribou Trail League selection for two years; was all state in her senior year; played in the state A/B all-star game; set the school record for most steals in a game (13) and season (130) and most free throw attempts in a game (17) and season (236); and ranks 11th in Tiger history for career points at 908.

In the end, however, it was volleyball that brought Saville her most satisfaction, the one she enjoyed the most. She was first-team all-CTL, an all-state selection – Saville was part of Tiger teams that brought home a third-place trophy in 1990 and played for the state title to finish second in 1991. She finished with 156 kills in her junior season, then came back in the state runner-up season to record 158 kills.

By her own admission, Saville was not the tallest hitter that ever donned the Tiger orange-and-black – as hitters go, she stood just 5-foot-7. But she also brought a 29-inch vertical leap to the party, a natural ability that made her the best hitter in the CTL at a time when the league had several top kill artists.

And after four high school years as a three-sport athlete, the final honor of her prep career came in 1991 when she was named as the North Central Washington Female Prep Athlete of the Year by the Wenatchee North Rotary.

“Really, it was kind of a hard decision which was my best, but the game of volleyball was my best sport,” she said. “I knew I could be part of a volleyball team in college, and I knew Puget Sound was the kind of place I could go to play right away.”

Volleyball and a 3.86 grade point average in the classroom took Saville to college. She played four years at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma where she won individual awards as both an athlete and a scholar.

Saville said she wasn’t heavily recruited coming out of high school but “at my tryout for UPS I thought I did pretty well. The coaching staff was very supportive and confident with my skills.”

“I had to go out and sell myself to colleges. It might have been easier to play basketball because the colleges were coming around to see (former Tiger ace) Amy Jo Silva,” Saville recalled. “In volleyball, I had to do the work to reach out and show the colleges what I had.”

The Ephrata hall will actually be the second for Saville – the 1993 UPS team that won the NAIA national championship was inducted in 2009, and with the numbers she recorded at UPS, Saville may be there some day. She is listed in the Loggerette volleyball team’s record book 12 times and is the UPS leader in seven of those marks:

- Most matches in a career (158, 1st) and season (50, 3rd).

- Most games in a career (454, 1st) and season (132, 4th).

- Most kill attempts in a career (4369, 1st) and season (1459, 1st); and most kills in a career (1581, 2nd) and season (518, 1st).

- Most service aces in a career (132, 3rd); most serve receptions in a career (162, 1st) and most digs in a career (4369, 1st) and season (462, 4th).

Through it all, Saville played in a time when Ephrata was deep in girls athletic talent. In addition to Saville, the school featured basketball star Silva (third all-time leading scorer, played for the women’s team at UCLA) and two-time state track individual champion Jennifer Kopko.

“I didn’t consider myself a natural leader like some of the girls were. I wasn’t a big talker, so it was a relief not having to shoulder that with girls like Amy Jo around,” she said. “I loved being a team player. I felt the most pressure in track and field because in other sports, it’s a matter of working together – in track, it’s you against the competition.”

With all the numbers she compiled in four high school seasons and four more years in college volleyball, the idea of finding Heidi Saville in the halls of fame at both of her schools some day is very understandable.

“When I look at how strong my resume for this kind of honor is – when I look back at the newspaper clippings my parents saved for me, I still didn’t really realize that I was a better-than-average athlete,” she said. “I showed a strong athletic ability and a mental toughness. To look at it on paper, to see it as a whole – I guess it’s a pretty tough resume to beat.”