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VOLLEYBALL

## Sokolowski kept Lopers chasing after a title

By [Marjie Ducey](#) / World-Herald Staff Writer

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When the University of Nebraska at Kearney lost a match, it didn't take Katie Sokolowski long to bounce back.

"The next day, she's talking about winning the national championship," UNK coach Rick Squiers said.

Sokolowski kept the Lopers in the mix for that title again, leading the team to the NCAA Division II national tournament for the 15th straight year.

The 6-foot-2 right-side hitter from Kearney Catholic leads The World-Herald's All-Nebraska NCAA Division II team, which was determined by voting from coaches across the state. Midland University setter Megan Farley is the honorary captain of the NAIA squad. Central Community College hitter Skyler Erickson heads the junior college group.

Sokolowski bounced back from a foot injury to become one of UNK's best blockers and the team leader, Squiers said.

The senior helped lead the Lopers to a 28-7 record, 12-4 in the MIAA. UNK was knocked out of the NCAA tournament in the first round by league foe Central Missouri.

"She doesn't get easily discouraged, and having somebody like that around helps everybody else," Squiers said.

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Sokolowski averaged 2.83 kills, 0.77 digs, 0.51 assists and 0.44 blocks while hitting .306. She was named to the All-Central Region team.

Her career attacking percentage of .333 ranks seventh best in school history. She had 1,007 career kills.

Squiers said Sokolowski became a better athlete over four years, partly because of working hard in the weight room.

“She was always a really smart player, and you combine that with the fact that she's a four-year starter and literally played over 100 matches here, she really was ready for anything,” Squiers said. “She had enough elements to her game that if something wasn't working, she could try something else.”

Sokolowski was on the MIAA academic honor roll and was a scholar athlete with a 3.76 GPA. She hopes to become a doctor like her father.

H: Ashley Leitner, Nebraska-Kearney, Sr.  
H: Katie Sokolowski, Nebraska-Kearney, Sr.  
H: Ellie Pesavento, Nebraska-Kearney, Sr.  
H: Alyssa Frauendorfer, Wayne State, Fr.  
H: Cori Hobbs, Wayne State, Sr.  
S: Erin Seele, Nebraska-Kearney, So.  
S: Leisa McClintock, Wayne State, So.  
L: Liz McGowan, Nebraska-Kearney, Jr.  
Honorary captain: Katie Sokolowski, UNK  
Honorable mention: Barbie DeCent, Jessica Jester, Erika Roybal, Chadron State; MJ Massanet, UNK; Liz Gebhardt, Courtney VanGroningen, Wayne State

**Midland coach Paul Giesselmann said there are two things that stand out about Farley: her competitive drive and her ability to be a coach on the floor.**

“In my 24 years as a coach, she is without question as competitive as a player on the floor as almost anybody I've been around,” he said. “She just hates to lose and that's what makes her work hard.”

The second-team All-American, along with teammate Mackenzie Scheef, led the Warriors to a 37-5 record and the quarterfinals of the NAIA national tournament, where they lost to eventual national champion Texas-Brownsville.

It was Midland's first trip to the national tournament, coming after the Warriors won their first GPAC tournament title and made their first appearance in the national rankings.

“It was a season for a lot of firsts,” Giesselmann said. “I really like where we are with the program. I feel like it's moving in the right direction, and I'm really excited about the potential in the next couple of years.”

Farley, a junior from Syracuse, Neb., will be a big part of that.

She ranked third in the NAIA in total assists (1,701) and 10th in assists per set (10.7).

That ability to coach on the floor sets her apart, Giesselmann said.

“Great setters have to have a feel for the flow of the game,” he said. “Meg has really learned over the last year to be more of a coach as opposed to just a setter.”

Time to rip on 2013 in comedy roast - 6:18 pm

Cooks bring festive holiday meals to Iowa inmates - 5:43 pm

Court to review case of driving while license revoked - 5:42 pm

Lincoln man involved in gunfight gets prison term - 5:41 pm

Iowa gets more info in lottery jackpot mystery - 5:40 pm

Iowa appeals denial of disaster aid for electric co-ops - 5:37 pm

Nebraska State Fair honored at Las Vegas convention - 5:35 pm

Services set in Plattsmouth for 17-year-old crash victim - 5:34 pm

Family of Plattsmouth teen killed in accident to donate organs - 5:33 pm

Sculpture offers some Christmas cheer to passers-by - 5:32 pm

Some Iowans will get 8-year driver's licenses - 5:28 pm

Tax credits for Iowa apartment development hit cap - 5:27 pm

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TODAY'S LOCAL SCOREBOARD

Previous »

Game Time, TV/Radio Schedule

- Wednesday's Area Events
- Wednesday's TV/Radio Schedule
- Thursday's Area Events
- Thursday's TV/Radio Schedule

Prep Results

- NEPrepZone.com (mobile)

Others

- Holes in One
- Dog Racing Results
- Horse Racing Entries, Horse Racing Results

VIDEO »

H: Annie Benson, Bellevue, Sr.  
H: Symone Faulkner, Bellevue, So.  
H: Ashley Axmann, Doane, Sr.  
H: Mackenzie Scheef, Midland, Jr.  
H: Shayna Schacher, Hastings, Sr.  
H: Ashlee Harms, Midland, Fr.  
S: Megan Farley, Midland, So.  
L: Meghan Evans, Bellevue, Sr.  
L: Mackenzie Hite, Nebraska Wesleyan, Sr.  
Honorary captain: Megan Farley, Midland  
Honorable mention: Sydney DeBoer, Caitlyn Rueth, Beth Walker, Bellevue; Mallory Babic, Jamie Carlson, Baylee Collins, Jessica Kuehner, College of St. Mary; Carli Smith, Claire White, Concordia; Abby Sorensen, Karissa Blank, Doane; Libby Kissinger, Jess Osterhaus, Katie Zoucha, Hastings; KC Heimann, Molly Pettit, Heather Pribyl, Ashley Wheeler, Midland; Malory Dahl, Alyssa Stanek, Katelyn Walsh, Nebraska Wesleyan; Bre Brandt, Mallory Hull, Peru State; Tatiana Arvie, Nicole Gates, York

### Junior colleges

Erickson did it all for Central, which finished 34-12 and took seventh at the Division II national tournament.

She led the team in kills with 504 and was second in digs with 439.

Coach Mary Young said the 5-foot-9 outside hitter from Greeley, Neb., played well in the backcourt as a passer and defender, and she could also hit with power and finesse from the front row. After adjusting to the pace of the college game, Erickson became proficient in seeing the court and creating havoc for opponents.

"She really started to excel when she adjusted to the pace," Young said. "She's just a great athlete for us. We're really fortunate to have her in our program."

The first-team All-American is Young's first World-Herald captain in her 19 years of coaching.

"You get the complete package with Skyler," the coach said. "She works hard and is very humble. She would trade in any individual award for our team, and I love her competitive spirit."

H: Skyler Erickson, Central, Fr.  
H: Megan Anderson, Central, Fr.  
H: Morgan Heise, Central, So.  
H: Samantha Kennedy, North Platte, Fr.  
H: Kayla Martin, Western Nebraska, Fr.  
S: Luiza Martins, Western Nebraska, So.  
S: Brooke Robertson, Central, Fr.  
L: Rachael McCracken, Western Nebraska, Fr.  
Honorary captain: Skyler Erickson, Central  
Honorable mention: Kaitlyn Ernst, Molly Gotschall, Central; Vanessa Bartilla, McCook; Grace Ecklund, Brittany Sullivan, Nazya Thies, Northeast; Sandrina Hallahan, Joli Hopping, Shannon Liewer, North Platte; Caitlin Wuebbels, Southeast; Morgan Broussard, Leticia Silva, Allora Tanner, Western Nebraska

Contact the writer: Marjie Ducey

[marjie.ducey@owh.com](mailto:marjie.ducey@owh.com) | 402-444-1034

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