



L&C Volleyball, Women's Tennis Welcome Hew Head Coach Jim Hunstein Will Also Serve as USTA Coordinator

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GODFREY – Following a record season at Lewis and Clark Community College in 2011-2012, the Trailblazers Volleyball team is rebuilding from the ground up and looking forward to a new season.

This year, Assistant Coach Melissa Bear and only one returning sophomore, Julie Ramsey of Troy, Ill., will welcome not only a new team of players, but a new head coach – Jim Hunstein, of Manchester, Mo.

Hunstein, who will also coach Women's Tennis in the spring and serve as USTA coordinator for this year's tournament in July, comes to Lewis and Clark from Washington University, where he worked as an assistant volleyball coach since 2008. His experience also includes coaching high school and club volleyball teams, attending and presenting at volleyball coaches clinics around St. Louis, and even announcing for and managing the St. Louis Spirits (National Volleyball Association). He has a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Tulsa, and is a published sports writer.

Since his arrival on campus, the volleyball staff has been hard at work with recruitment.

“It's going well. We have a very strong group of incoming freshmen to go along with our returning sophomore, but I'm still looking for a few good players who can contribute and make the team better. We're certainly in a strong position to compete this

year,” Hunstein said. “For both teams, I look for players who know their sport and who already have a high level of understanding of the game, and I want players who are willing to work hard to make themselves and their teammates better.”

Off the court, he stresses the importance of academics and focusing on future success.

“I want student athletes to come to Lewis and Clark, not just because we afford them the opportunity to play, but also because we afford them the opportunity to pursue their studies,” he said. “The same way coaches look for athletes who combine the skills and desire to improve on the court, we want students who are willing to work just as hard to get better in the classroom.”

Hunstein has been involved with volleyball for 35 years, and tennis for 40. Most of his tennis experience has been as a player – both at the high school and competitive levels. He’s even played in some local USTA tournaments and interclub leagues over the years.

“I have been playing competitive tennis since college on a variety of teams, playing mostly doubles. The last time I was rated by the USTA, I was a 4.5, but I’m probably closer to 4.0 now. Having played for so many years, I have developed certain strategies and game plans that I have found successful, and I know how to make adjustments based on what I see happening on the court,” he said.

No matter the sport, Hunstein’s coaching philosophy boils down to four main points: work hard, have fun, be fearless and trust your team. His goal for both teams this year is to “maintain the excellence they’ve already achieved” for a strong foundation, and still find room for growth.

“This position presented a great opportunity for me to coach at the college level, to help develop players to meet higher academic and athletic challenges, and it incorporated my background in both volleyball and tennis,” he said. “Coaching at the community college level involves more than just recruiting and coaching. I need to prepare the student-athletes to continue and succeed at a four-year program that meets their career, academic and athletic goals.”

Hunstein’s first USTA tournament as a coordinator will take place this July 19-29 at Lewis and Clark’s Andy Simpson Tennis Complex on the Godfrey campus.

“I look forward to watching some outstanding tennis played by all these young guns as they try to move up to the next level. I have tremendous respect for these athletes,” he said. “It has to be such a challenge to face that weekly grind, but they recognize that there is a price to pay for success and that starts right here at this level.”

Hunstein said his love of both games is what drives him on a daily basis, and has for several decades now.

“You just can’t spend that much time at anything without a strong passion and desire to get better,” he said. “I have tried to learn all the different ways I can improve as a player and a coach in those areas. I love to teach those same skills and strategies to others and I work hard at figuring out ways to do that better as well.”