

# SIUE Volleyball Welcomes Five New Recruits

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE volleyball welcomes five new players for the 2020 roster, all of whom have a strong combination of athletic and academic accomplishments already in hand.

The Cougars finished the 2019 season with a 9-7 record in [Ohio Valley Conference](#) play, and are looking to build on recent success with the additions of freshmen Alyse Drifka (Richfield, Wisconsin), Sydney Hummert (Quincy, Illinois), Jenna Taphorn (Pekin, Illinois), Julia Treichel (Brookfield, Wisconsin), and transfer junior Jessica Whiteley (Preston, Idaho).

"We have found five great individuals who will add to our team culture and the campus culture of SIUE. They are kind, competitive and passionate about SIUE," commented Head Volleyball Coach Kendall Paulus. "There's no doubt their volleyball knowledge and physical abilities will add strong depth in each position. I strongly believe SIUE attracts special people who have strong character, are academic-focused and want the best for those around them. Our next class certainly attests to that."

Drifka is a 5-9 setter who led Slinger High School to their first Conference Championship in 25 years. She set the school record for career assists (2,175) and season assists (857).

"Alyse is a physical setter who has played at the highest level of club volleyball," stated Paulus.

Drifka collected a few accolades during her senior season including 2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-State, Conference Player of the Year and County Player of the Year. Drifka has also played club volleyball for the Milwaukee Sting for seven years.

"With her background splitting time competing as a setter and attacker in high school, we can see how her mindset as a point scorer translates in her desire to distribute the ball to the right attacker in the right situation as a setter," added Paulus.

She is the daughter of Brian and Kendra Drifka. Drifka plans to major in Nursing.

Hummert is a 6 foot outside hitter who has notched 1,556 kills during her time at Quincy Notre Dame High School.

"Sydney is an exciting prospect who has enjoyed a lot of team and individual success in her high school career, and we expect her championship mindset to carry into her college career," commented Paulus.

Hummert has received many awards during her high school career. During her senior season she earned Hearld Whig Player of the Year, All-State Honorable Mention, All-Area First Team and All-Conference. She also earned All-State Honorable Mention her junior year and All-State Second Team her sophomore year.

She has played for both Quincy Elite and Jacksonville Network volleyball clubs.

"Sydney is a beast on the court with untapped potential," added Paulus. "Her ability to hit high and with power will challenge our gym immediately and we are excited to see how far we can take Sydney in the next four years."

Hummert is the daughter of Bill and Cathy Hummert. She is undecided on a major at this time.

Taphorn is a 5-11 is a six-rotation outside hitter from Pekin Community High School.

"Jenna is a strong, physical player with a high ceiling," commented Paulus.

Taphorn earned 1<sup>st</sup> team All-Conference and 1<sup>st</sup> team All-Area during her senior season. She also was named to the All-Tournament Team for both the Pekin Invitational and O'Fallon Tournament.

She ended her senior season with 346 kills and 286 digs. Taphorn has played for both Illini Elite and Central Illinois Elite volleyball clubs.

"Blocking is a huge strength of hers and is one of our favorite parts of her game," added Paulus. "Her eagerness to learn and her coachability are going to allow her to make gains early in her career and fit in great with our culture."

She is the daughter of Pat and Lisa Taphorn. Taphorn plans to major in Exercise Science or Pre-Med.

Treichel, a 5-9 outside hitter and defensive specialist, attended Wisconsin Lutheran High School.

"Julia consistently surprises us in the best ways," stated Paulus.

Treichel received many accolades during her senior season. She earned First Team All-Conference, First Team All-State (Division 2), Woodland Conference Player of the Year, State Semi-Finalist and All-State Tournament Team (Division 2).

Treichel finished her career at Wisconsin Lutheran with 1,422 kills and 1,083 digs. She has played for both Motion Volleyball and Milwaukee Sting volleyball clubs.

"We have always known she was a versatile player because she has a lot of court knowledge, is quick and athletic, but she's the type of player that can't be put into a box," added Paulus. "She has the potential to be utilized in the back row and front row, despite her size."

She is the daughter of Brian and Dawn Treichel. Treichel plans to major in Nursing.

Whiteley is a 6-1 Middle Blocker, transferring from Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Oregon.

"We wanted to add depth in the middle position and we were so lucky to find Jess," commented Paulus. "The first thing we noted when we watched her was how hard she works in all phases of offense and blocking."

Whiteley was a part of a historic 2019 season for TVCC. In addition to setting the record for most wins in a season, the team also finished fifth in the 32-team NWAC.

Whiteley has earned several accolades during her two short years at TVCC culminating in AVCA Two-Year College Second Team All-American honors following her sophomore season. Whiteley was named a NWAC Volleyball All-Star and recognized as AVCA Two-Year College Player of the week. She also has been named NWAC East Offensive Player of the Week three times during her sophomore year and two during her freshman.

"With her experience and high level of communication, we knew right away Jess would be a fantastic fit in our program's culture," added Paulus.

She is the daughter of Mitchell and Amy Jo Whiteley. She plans to major in Integrated Studies focusing on Nutrition and Public Health.