

Memories of a First Year Coach
and
A Handbook for Club Athletics
An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)
by
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Thesis Advisor

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Memories of a first Year Coach

Taking a position as coach of the Ball State University mens' volleyball club was a large step for a person who had never taken on a team for an entire season. I can remember showing great hesitation as I told David Gelios, my direct supervisor, that I would take the job.

As practices began, I found that not only did I have less volleyball experience than several of my players, but also, I was younger than three of my walk-on players. The athletes with whom I was working included one hold-over from the previous year, a transfer student from a smaller college, and a fantastic athlete who was returning from a year out of school after not making the team that year. The remainder of the team consisted of eight freshmen. All of these people had come to Ball State with hopes and dreams of playing on the varsity team, but all were directed from this program to the newly organized extramural club team. All were determined to work hard, and make the most of this opportunity. I was in a similar situation, and just as intent to make the most of my chance as a coach.

My only idea, in the beginning, was to work hard and to pass on as much volleyball knowledge as possible to my players. One of the things I felt the team needed to improve was teamwork. Entering practices, our most obvious goal was to learn to play together as a team and not as individuals.

This also gave me an excellent chance to evaluate the members of the team. A problem with this team developed during the first few practices. This problem, too few players, was not

one that I could resolve, because the selection of available athletes from the varsity program was not made. Eventually, we played against the group of players still vying for the remaining varsity positions. The group we were playing included some of the players who would be eliminated from the varsity and placed on the club team for the remainder of the season to fill out the squad. The scrimmages helped immeasurably to resolve my problem with teamwork. The less obvious, but more elementary, problem was the lack of a setter. When the team was selected, a player who had played setter once before in a tournament a year before, was the only player selected with any experience at the team's "quarterback" position. The player turned out to be a good choice for that position, so much so, that he told me he was not as inexperienced as his teammates.

A few days after receiving the five players from the varsity, we were scheduled to play in a tournament in central Ohio. This tourney was to be played by a group of players who had played only a total of one half season of collegiate volleyball, but also were coached by someone who had absolutely no match coaching experience. The whole concept seemed a little ludicrous to me. Each of these teams had been together for a few years and had older players on them, but were not as well organized as our team was. Placing second in that initial tournament was a big accomplishment for a team who had played together for such a short time. In this part of the season, the

bonding that took place on this trip was one of the keys in solving the later obstacles and in dealing with future successes.

Shortly after Christmas vacation, injuries began to take their toll on the club team. One of the most promising players broke a vertebra and another initiated a series of ankle sprains that hit three separate players, all who played the same technique position. Eventually, it was necessary to make an adjustment to the basic passing formation, in order to play six players who were capable of playing their positions. Ironically, this line-up provided the most important victory of the season at Michigan State University. This was a perfect example of how a team can make a coach look like a genius.

About this time, other aspects of running a club team began to wear on me. Having no assistant coach or athletic director to handle the scheduling, it became my responsibility to arrange the rescheduling of several postponed matches. If the teams had been more cooperative, or easier to reach, it would have been a different story. However, one team refused to play if another team played in a three-way match. Then the second team rescheduled anyway. This occurred after several telephone calls to various parts of the mid-west to attempt to leave a message for someone who supposedly wished to talk to me. Finally, the second team failed to show up for a match, just one week after agreeing three times they would be there. Of course, these

events reflected poorly on the other schools, but also resulted in negative reflections on my organizational ability. After numerous disappointments in arranging home matches, one of the highlights of my coaching career was my ability to create a seating arrangement for the gym that allowed two matches to be played at the same time. Apparently, the most frustrating part of coaching is that one's results are often measured by the results of someone else's actions.

Toward the middle and end of the season, the financial resources of the team began to dwindle. Fortunately, friends of the program donated funds to help us rent vans from private car agencies. However, the next time I take over a team, I will do so early enough to prepare the finances well enough in advance that the preparation of the team will be my main concern.

I must say, however, that I have many good memories associated with the preparation of this team. Every coach loves to see the improvement of his players during the season and their ability to compete well in all matches. I also enjoyed the experience of getting to know my players. My memories include the final tourney where we found that the teams we competed against were the best competition available. The players then realized there was no shame in the 19-8 record we compiled. One of my fondest memories was when my players convinced me dressing

like an executive would not separate me from the team, but would command more respect from them and our opponents. Even the losses provided some good memories when I realize the players helped me get over the way we performed through our conversations during the trips home, and also helped me develop a coaching style that was both effective and comfortable. This style of coaching stressed improvement of the team as a whole through the development of the players as individuals. Teamwork drills were used to develop the sense of team unity and a family atmosphere. I always tried to be flexible enough to allow each player to grow, yet strict enough to maintain control of the team. The coaching staff at Ball State University helped greatly in the development of my coaching style and showed me, by example, players may not play at their potential at all times. If the team loses to a less powerful group, it may not be my fault. Players are mental as well as physical performers. A coach cannot play for the players, although he can put the best combination of players on the court. He can also persuade different people different ways. After all, players are still people even when they are on the court.

As with everything, there was good and bad involved with my coaching experience and there were things I will never forget. Of course, there are times I wish I could forget. I will try, at least, to continue coaching for the simple fact that my life has

changed for the better due to the experience. My outlook on life is more positive and I have more confidence in my ability to take on any challenge life may throw my way. My friends could not realize that the mornings they saw me sleeping with a frown were worth the victories over our poor performances and strong opponents. I only wish that anyone who has the opportunity to coach in a situation such as the one described previously in this thesis takes the chance. It is well worth the time and energy.

A Handbook for Club Athletics
Darrell Van Tilburg

Introduction :

This handbook should be followed with this thought in mind: "Do not try to be someone you are not." Also, remember that these are only guidelines, not rules, and that the most essential quality of a coach of any team is flexibility. Work within your abilities as a coach, and the limits of your players' potentials. The longest and most strenuous part of your job may be finding these potentials. On the other hand, your largest problem may be the finding of a court suitable for practice, or funds for travel. Finally, a coach may encounter his/her largest problem in dealing with the chief executives of other teams.

While the last problem presented is not covered in this text, and may never be adequately resolved for some, the other situations previously mentioned should be resolved through the use of this handbook.

Before team selection you should receive or assemble a mailing list of the representatives of the other teams of the league and the league commissioner. Also included in the mailing list should be the telephone numbers of these people for greater ease of attainment. Often they are more likely to return a telephone call than a letter due to the relative ease of the process. Also, the representatives will be more likely to pay attention to such a personal measure.

Send contracts to your opponents such as the one provided. Specify a date for the contracts to be postmarked by as a deadline for their return. Explain at the initial contact that the contract is for the mutual benefit of both squads and is to be followed for the security of both teams. Contracts tend to assure you of a set schedule as they act as confirmation of all matches. Remember to take into account vacations, and holidays when scheduling your opponents. If you fail in this regard player availability may become your largest problem. Failure in this regard would also place the financial burden of the contract on your team, and finances are never plentiful enough for a fine of any sort.

Finding financial support is the other major duty of the team's chief executive at any time before or during the season. Use of fund raisers may be the only matter of finding financial backing available to the club team director. Most athletic programs started in the club format

will do so in areas with either no emotional (and therefore financial) support, or an amount of budgeted fiscal support already earmarked for existing squads. Fund raisers most common to the squads polled for this report include T-shirt sales tournaments in the teams' chosen sport, and working as security or administrative personnel for someone else's tournaments. As will be shown in the appendix some mutually beneficial arrangements with local businesses may be the most effective means of lowering the amount of finances needed by the team. Transportation or uniforms will most likely be your main expense in creating a team and both lend themselves to mutually beneficial agreements.

If your team is acting as the developmental squad for a varsity team in the National Collegiate Athletic Association you are best advised to be aware of any current rules being enforced by this body and adhere to these rulings. A team such as this may outstretch its usefulness in such a situation. Once the varsity is penalized by the N.C.A.A. the club may become the chief means of developing players for a team no longer with purpose.

In closing, always remember that if your team is associated with a school your players are students first and athletes second. It does no good to develop a person for competition in only one asset of life. After all, this type of team is for the players, not the coach.

Appendix :

The following is a group of forms to be used as examples of various forms and ideas for mutually beneficial arrangements until better examples are available.

- p.1.....Match Contract
- p.2&3.....Maps of a given Locality
- p.4-6.....Sample tournament packet for
Athletes
- p.7.....Examples of Mutually Beneficial
Agreements
- p.8.....Sample Format of Uniform check- out

MIDWEST INTERCOLLEGIATE VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION

29089 U.S. 20 W, Suite A10
Elkhart, Indiana 46514

MIVA SPORTS CLUB CONTRACT

Host School: University of Michigan vs.
Visiting School: Ball State University
Location: Intramural Building (tentative)
Starting Time: 3:00 pm
Warm-up Time: 2:00 pm Date of Event: 27 Jan 1990
Other Specifics: _____

Host School Contact Person: Russ Rosenbaum
Phone: ~~313~~ 313-747-7437
Address: 916 Church St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Visiting School Contact Person: Don Shondell
Phone: 317-285-8151
Address: University Gym
Muncie, IN 47306

The rules applicable to play at the above described competition shall be those adopted by the NCAA Men's Volleyball Division for competition in the 1989-1990 season. Any applicable rules of the Club Division of the MIVA shall likewise be applicable to the above described competition. The reverse side of this Contract contains additional terms and conditions of this Contract.

Agreed to and accepted:

Russell S. Rosenbaum
Authorized Representative of Home School

Date: 15 Dec 89

Donell Van Tilburg
Authorized Representative of Visiting School

Date: 21 Dec 89

Ball State Copy

The Host School shall have the obligation of forwarding this completed Contract to the Visiting School. The Visiting School shall complete and return a fully signed copy of this Contract to the Host School at least one month prior to the scheduled competition, unless other written arrangements are made.

In consideration of the Home School supplying required facilities, equipment and Officials under the terms and conditions set forth above, the Visiting School agrees to timely attend and participate in this scheduled competition.

Failure by either School to meet the conditions of this Contract shall be a breach of this Contract unless waived, in writing by the non-defaulting School. Breach of this Contract shall, upon review by the Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association Commissioner, result in the assessment of a \$25.00 non-participation fee, which fee shall be paid by the defaulting School to the non-defaulting School by April 1, 1990 or within two weeks of the Commissioners assessment of the fee, whichever is sooner. The Commissioners decision shall be binding on both Schools, with no further recourse or rights of appeal.

Failure by any defaulting School to pay the fee in accordance with these terms shall disqualify the defaulting School from participation in the 1990 MIVA Championship Tournament, unless waived in writing by the non-defaulting School.

This Contract may be cancelled in it's entirety by either School giving verbal notice of a cancellation at least 14 days prior to the scheduled competition. Such cancellation shall not be effective unless communicated to the non-cancelling School at least 14 days prior to the scheduled competition. The 48 hour notice may be waived for any reason by the non-cancelling School, or by the Commissioner if in his sole discretion, it is determined that the reasons for the late cancellation were occasioned by a force majeure or if notice of cancellation could not be effected due to no fault of the cancelling School.

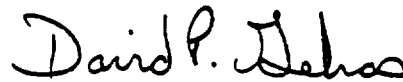
In the event of any default hereunder, the non-defaulting School shall notify the MIVA Commissioner. Such notice shall be made within 2 weeks following the date of the default, and specify the reasons for the default. Failure to notify the Commissioner of a default shall forever preclude the non-defaulting School from claiming the remedies provided for default in this Contract.

Upon receiving notice of a default, the Commissioner shall act with reasonable dispatch to review and, in his sole discretion, decide whether a default has occurred and what the appropriate remedy for such a default is. The non-defaulting School shall have an opportunity to present a defense to any claim of default, and the Commissioner shall consider this defense in his review and decision. Adequate notice of default, review and decision shall be provided to the Schools involved. The Schools shall cooperate with the Commissioner in his review and decision making process.

The following Ball State University Men's Club Volleyball team members are scheduled to compete in the Midwest Inter-collegiate Volleyball Association's Club Championships during the weekend of March 30 and 31. The University-recognized student organization has been scheduled for an early Friday afternoon start time, which will necessitate their being absent from several classes on Friday. The tournament is being staged in Battle Creek, Michigan.

As the club volleyball team's campus advisor, I would like to request your cooperation in allowing team members to make up work they may miss due to their being away from class on Friday, March 30. It remains each student's responsibility to inform you of his impending absence and arrange for the satisfactory completion of work missed.

Thank you,



David P. Gelios
Asst. Men's Volleyball Coach
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
UG 150M 285-1744

Head Coach Darrell Van Tillburg
Roger Snyder
William Moser
Derik Johnson
Tad Nickerson
Mike Rebber
Jason Magnus
Jim Park
Dave Pilkington
Dave Dander
Tony Engle
Robert Taliaferro
Dan Zollars
John Hunter

ANNOUNCING THE SEVENTH ANNUAL MIVA VOLLEYBALL CLUB TOURNAMENT!

DATES: March 30 and 31 - Beginning at 9:00 A.M. both days.

TEAM NAME:

BALL STATE

REPORTING TIME: FRIDAY, MARCH 30 - 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: All teams report to tourney headquarters at the Kellogg arena, Battle Creek, Michigan. Enter at the "McCamly Place" box office which is between the Arena and Stouffer's Hotel. (See attached map for directions and hotels).

FORMAT: Four team pools will play 2-15 point games in the round-robin.

The five team pool will play 2-11 point games in " "

All teams will participate in championship play.

All playoff matches will be 2 of 3, 15 point games with "rally scoring".

NOTES: USVBA rules apply in all situations.

Ten minutes ONLY between matches - 7 minutes open court and 2 minutes serving.

GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME! Be early for all matches - each match IMMEDIATELY follows the preceeding.

Check officiating assignments carefully; failure to furnish officials as assigned means FORFEIT of next game,

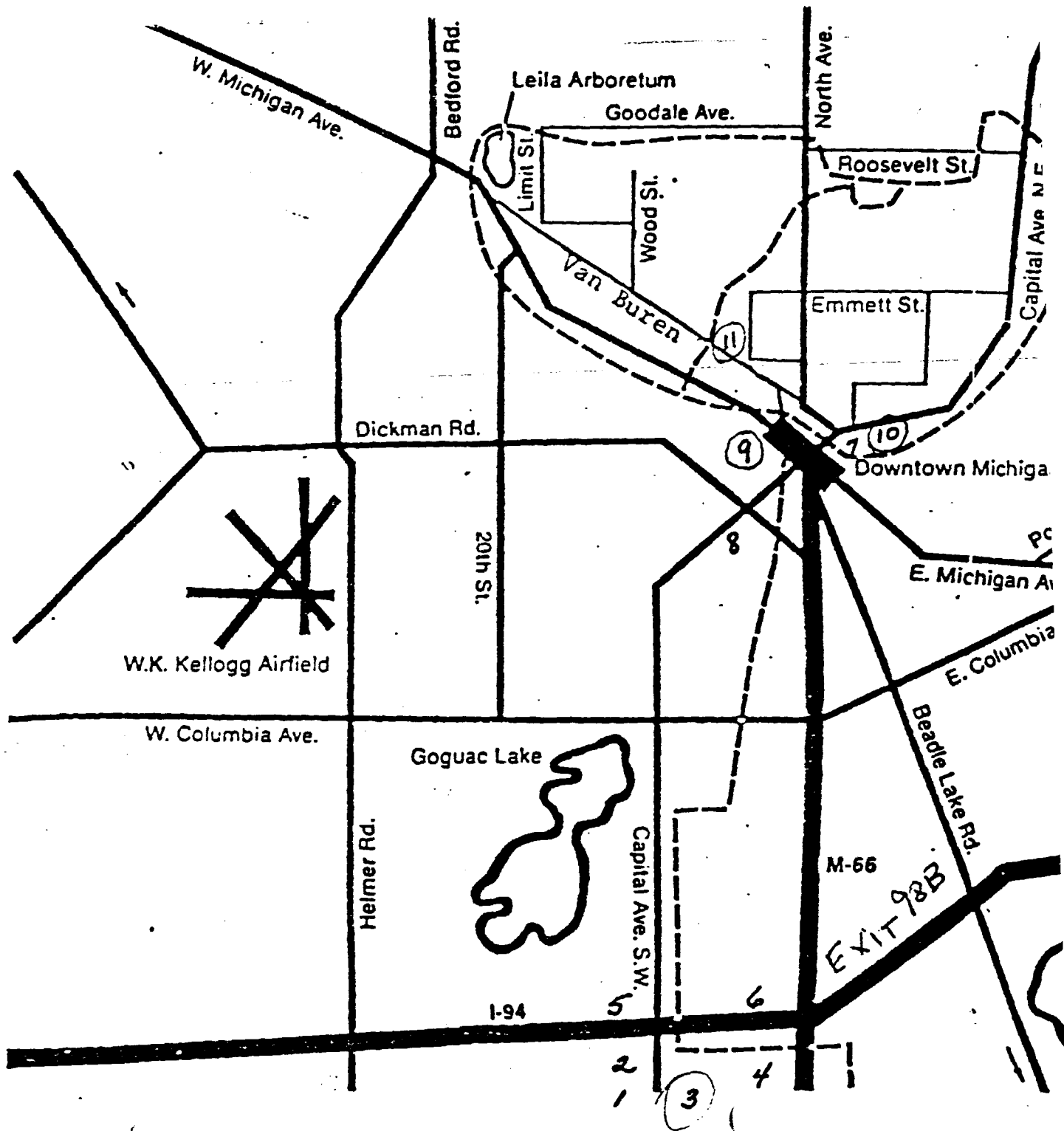
The 3-12 substitution rule is in effect.

POOR SPORTSMANSHIP will not be tolerated by the officials.

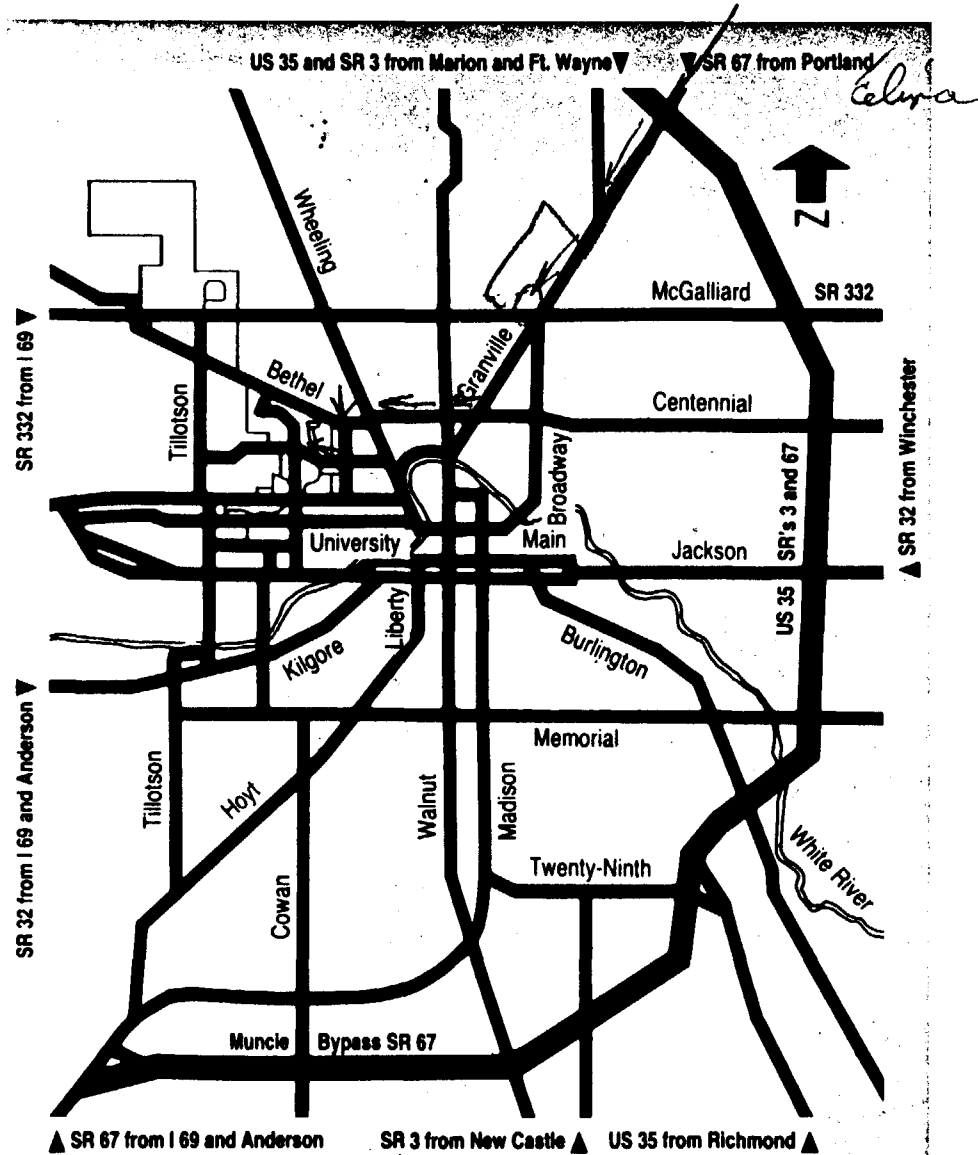
EIGHTY MATCHES will be played in the two days - please help the officials and the court directors keep things going.

Complete playing schedule with officiating assignments will be given to each team on check-in; schedules and results will also be posted in the three playing areas.

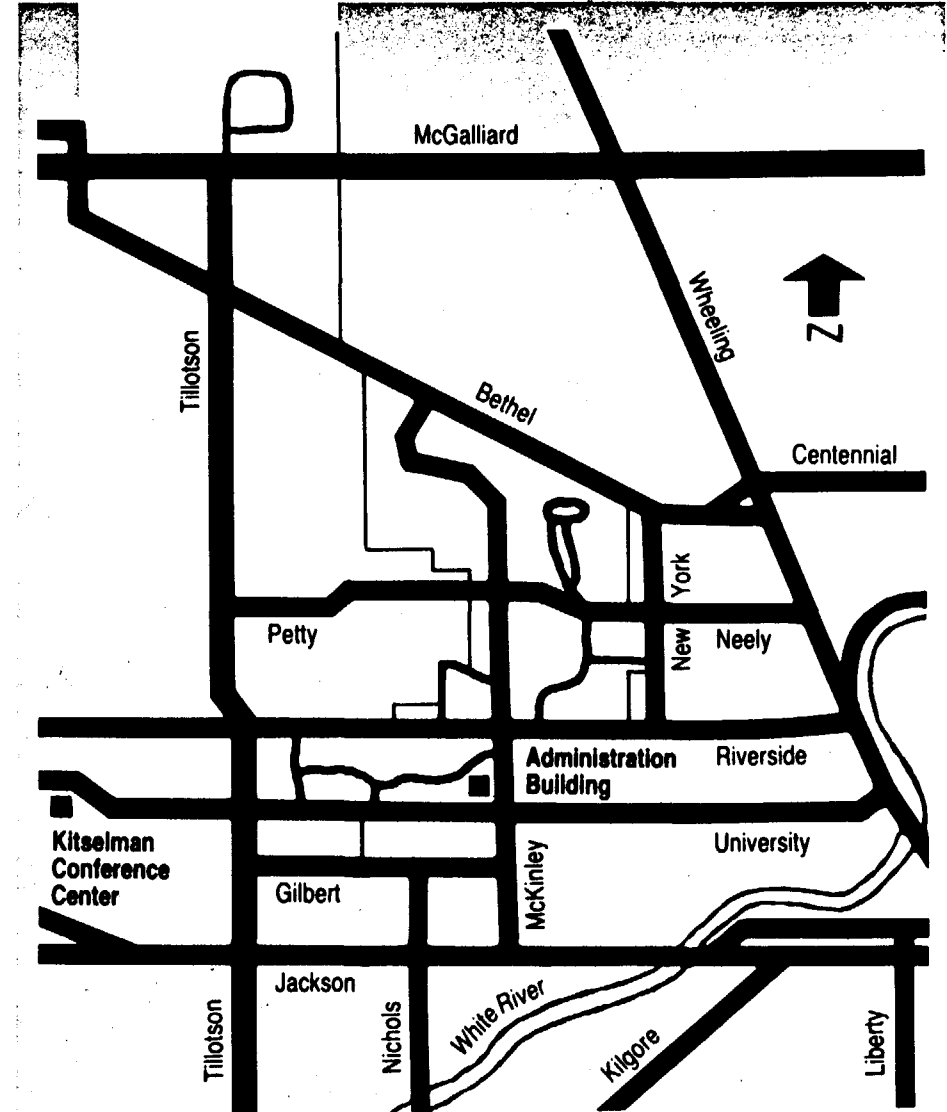
PLAY BALL!



Muncie, Indiana



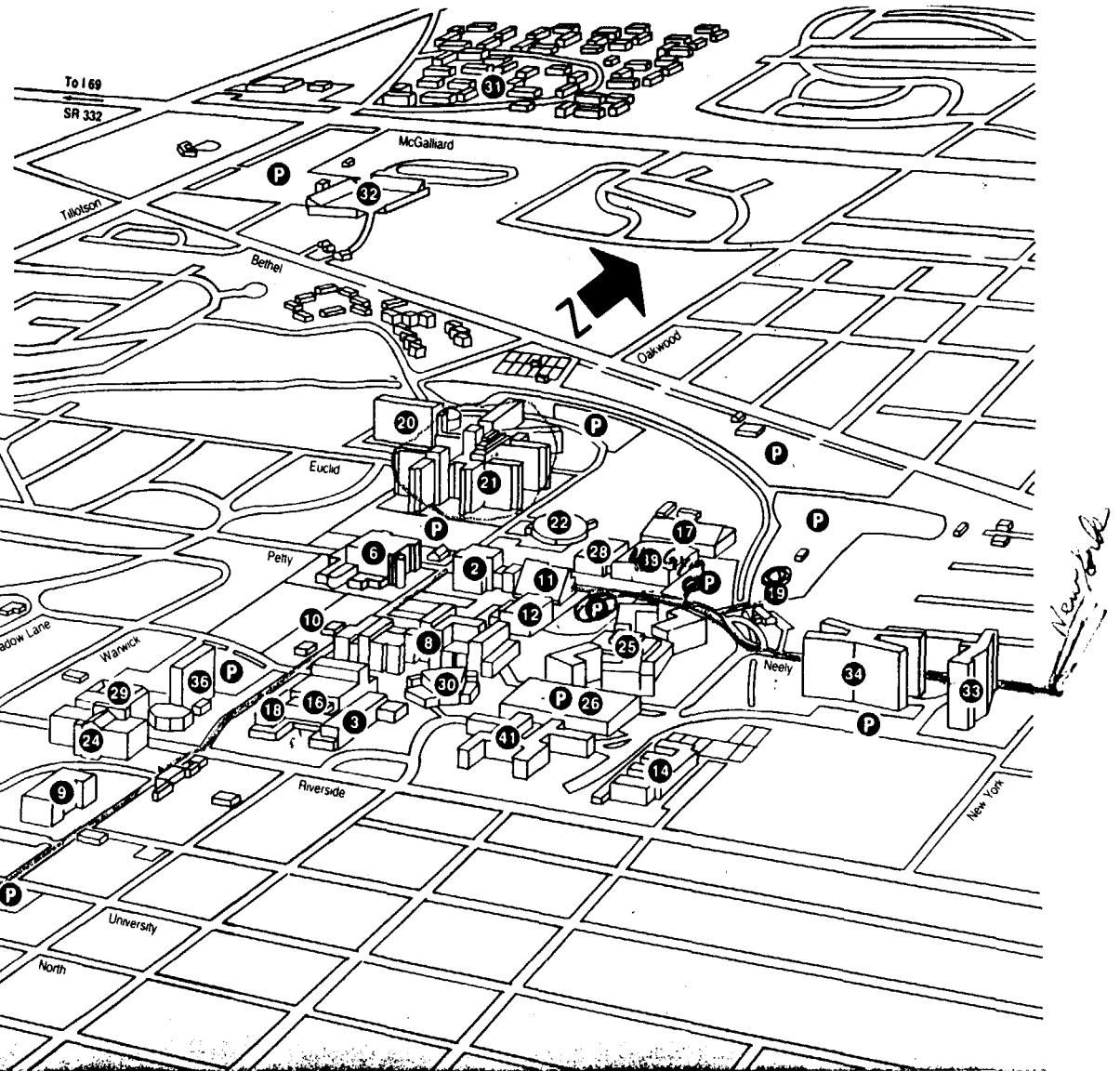
Ball State University



The Campus

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Administration Building | 15 Elliott Hall | 29 Practical Arts Building |
| 2 Architecture Building | 16 Emens Auditorium | 30 Pruis Hall |
| 3 Arts and Communications Building | 17 Field Sports Building | 31 Scheidler Apartments |
| 4 Art Building and Gallery | 18 Hargreaves Music Building | 32 Stadium |
| 5 Ball Gymnasium | 19 Health Center | 33 Studebaker-East Halls |
| 6 Bell Building | 20 Johnson Halls | 34 Studebaker-West Halls |
| 7 Beneficence | 21 LaFollette Halls | 35 Student Center |
| 8 Bracken Library | 22 Lewellen Aquatic Center | 36 Teachers College Building |
| 9 Burkhardt Building | 23 Lucina Hall | 37 Traffic, Safety, and Security |
| 10 Campus Visit Center | 24 North Quadrangle Building | 38 University Gymnasium |
| 11 Center for Energy Research | 25 Noyer Halls | 39 Wagoner Halls |
| 12 College of Business | 26 Parking Structure No. 1 | 40 West Quadrangle Building |
| 13 Cooper Science Complex | 27 Parking Structure, Student Center | 41 Woodworth Halls |
| 14 DeHority Halls | 28 Physical Education Building | |

P indicates parking



Orientation begins in Wagoner Halls.

Mutually Beneficial Arrangements

Transportation:

Any Rent-A-Car Co. gives a lower price scale
Volleyball Clubs of Anytown gives free program announcements for Any R.A.C. co.

Joe's Gas Station gives a discounted rate for the large bulk of business
Centerville All-sports Club gives banners at all club functions

Uniforms:

Williamson's graphics Co. provides uniform designing
Team C.L.U.B. provides uniform patches as publicity

Sweat Sox Inc. provides uniforms or elements of uniforms
Our V.B.C. wears Sweat Sox' logo for public recognition of support

Doner's Screen Printing prints numbers and logos at reduced prices
Big Racketball Club places an advertisement thanking their supporters by name in a well read newspaper

Equipment:

Bigtown Sporting goods donates kneepads
Bigtown Wrestling Club donates floor level banners surrounding the playing surface with the Sporting goods company logo

Uniforms

Player Signature

Shirt #

Shorts #

Sweat top

pants