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'Cat Tracks

Linfield Magazine Staff

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Kimura captures 500th volleyball victory

A recent win by the Linfield College volleyball team was sweeter than most for head coach Shane Kimura ’78. Kimura earned his 500th career coaching victory during a game against La Sierra in early September. “It’s a good milestone to reach,” said Kimura, a third grade teacher at Wascher Elementary in Lafayette. “We’ve had great teams throughout the years at Linfield, and that makes me feel good.”

Now in his 27th year as volleyball coach at Linfield, Kimura has won more games and coached in more matches than any active Northwest Conference coach. At press time his record stood at 504-364.

What’s his secret? “Recruiting good players who make you look good,” he said with a laugh. He went on to stress the importance of communication, attracting and retaining solid students, being a positive role model and motivating athletes to play hard.

Kimura is relying on team leadership from Lindsay Harksen ’06 of Sublimity, the only returning starter on the team. “Lindsay leads by example,” he said. “This year we’re asking more of her, to set as well as hit, and she’s going about it with a great attitude. She’s a team player.”

Harksen, who carries a 4.0 GPA with majors in finance and math, works hard to balance academics and athletics. “I’ve always been devoted to academics,” said Harksen. “It takes a lot of organization. I have very little free time so I know when I’m off, I have to do homework.”

Kimura has earned the respect of his players on and off the court, according to Harksen, who praised more than just his coaching ability. “Coach Kimura is a great communicator and knows what he’s talking about,” she said. “But more than that, he’s a good person and role model outside of volleyball, too. He sets good examples and he’s easy to talk with.”

Seven athletes, one team to be inducted into Hall of Fame

Seven former athletes and one national championship team will be inducted into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame on Nov. 13. Those to be honored at the seventh annual Hall of Fame banquet are:

- The late Don Hansen ’43, who once scored 44 points in a single basketball game, twice led the Northwest Conference in scoring and played on two championship teams.
- Three-time national pole vault champion Curt Heywood ’93, a six-time All-American and two-time Academic All-American,
- Former All-America distance runner Melanie Leckenby ’90, who competed in cross country, track and swimming, earned 12 varsity letters and was the 1987 NAIA District 2 cross country champion.
- Kris Muddler ’83, a conference 10,000-meter champion and district marathon champion who still holds conference records in the 5,000 and 10,000 events.
- Two-time All-America football player Bernie Peterson ’74, who starred at tight end for the Wildcats and was a member of two NWC championship teams.
- Football and baseball standout David Rohrer ’64, who helped lead Linfield to the national playoffs in both sports.
- Al Wills ’52, a football tackle who blocked for All-America running back Ad Rutschman ’54 in the early 1950s; and
- Linfield’s 1984 national championship football team, which came from 32 points down in the second half to beat Northwestern (Iowa), in the NAIA championship game.

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