SPORTS 4

HOCKEY
The amount of goals the Spartans scored against No. 1 Minnesota on Saturday after scoring only seven in the previous seven games. For more on the game, visit statenews.com/sports.

The Game

SPORTS EVENTS

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Aisha Jefferson
junior forward
women's basketball

Scored a career-high 34 points and 11 rebounds Saturday against No. 14 Notre Dame.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Spartans split their first two games against ranked teams this past weekend, knocking off No. 23 Old Dominion on Wednesday before falling to No. 14 Notre Dame on Saturday.

MSU outscored Old Dominion by 20 in the second half at home, beating the Monarchs 74-48 for the team's third 6-0 start in school history.

Three days after beating their first ranked opponent of the season, the Spartans were tripped up by the Fighting Irish, 78-72. Despite a 34-point outing from Jefferson, Notre Dame hit nine 3-pointers for the win.

WRESTLING

Senior 165-pounder Rex Kendle won his second tournament title in his weight class this year with five straight wins in the Mat Town Wrestling Open on Saturday in Lock Haven, Pa.

Junior 157-pounder Kyle Bounds placed second in his class by winning his first three matches before losing to Shippensburg wrestler Steve Fittery in the finals.

Senior 149-pounder Tim Hammer, redshirt freshman 197-pounder Tyler Dickenson and junior 285-pounder Alan O'Donnell each finished third in their classes.

RESULTS

Wednesday

Women's basketball 74, Old Dominion 48

Thursday

Men's basketball 62, Maryland 80

Friday

Men's basketball 94, Oklahoma State 79

Volleyball 3, Iowa 1

Hockey 1, Wisconsin 3

Saturday

Women's basketball 72, Notre Dame 78

Volleyball 1, Minnesota 3

Hockey 4, Minnesota 4

THIS WEEKEND

Friday

Wrestling at Eastern Michigan, 7 p.m.

Hockey at Michigan, 7:35 p.m.

Track at Michigan State Open, all day

Saturday

Hockey vs. Michigan, 7:05 p.m.

Sunday

Men's basketball vs. Bradley, 4 p.m.

Women's basketball at St. Bonaventure, noon

Young team falls short

PHOTOS BY ANGELI WRIGHT/THE STATE NEWS

Freshman setter Natalie Emro, center, sets the ball for junior middle blocker Vanessa King, right, while Minnesota middle blocker Kelly Schmidt gets ready to block it Saturday at Jenison Field House. The Spartans were defeated by the Golden Gophers during their last game of the season 3-1.

TOURNAMENT HOPES DASHED WITH LOSS TO GOPHERS

"We're a young team, which has kind of been in the back of our heads all season. I was proud to have led this team and I know they're going to do great things in the future."

Heather McDaniel, senior defensive specialist

By Joseph Terry
THE STATE NEWS

There was an outside shot at getting into the NCAA Tournament when the MSU volleyball team began play Saturday against No. 12 Minnesota. Halfway through the fourth set it looked almost possible. The Spartans needed to win both of this weekend's matches and have Indiana lose both of its matches to slide into the sixth spot in the Big Ten and have a shot at getting into the NCAA Tournament.

MSU did its part Friday, defeating Iowa 3-1. The team looked strong, as senior defensive specialist Heather McDaniel, playing her last weekend at MSU, recorded a career-high 12 kills and 14 digs on Friday to earn the first double-double of her career. MSU pulled away in the fourth set behind two monster blocks by freshman outside hitter Becca Zlabis, who also led the team with 15 kills on the night.

With Indiana losing to Michigan on Friday, the door was left open for a shot at the Big Dance on Saturday, even if it didn't look feasible it at the beginning of the match.

The Spartans stumbled out of the gate against Minnesota, committing nine attack errors in the set, falling behind 12-6 and never catching up, losing the set 25-18.

However, the team was resilient and fought back in the second set. After trailing 9-5 early on, the team went on a 13-4 rally to take a commanding 18-13 lead. The Spartans would ride the momentum into the break to win the set 25-20.

The third set was worse for MSU, as Minnesota showed the home team why it was so highly ranked. The Golden Gophers jumped out to a huge lead that they never relented, going up 24-9. The Spartans rallied off four straight points to make the set look respectable, losing 25-13, their second lowest point output of the season.

That's when MSU looked like it would take over. The Spartans dominated the first half of the fourth set and took a commanding 13-5 lead. At the same time, Indiana was down to Ohio State, having lost the first set of its match. Everything was lining up.

And then it fell apart.

"I think (Minnesota) just started serving very well," head coach

See RECAP *on page 4B*

DESPITE LOSS, SPARTANS HAVE HOPE FOR FUTURE

By Joseph Terry
THE STATE NEWS

Despite having a young team this season, the MSU volleyball team will be stacked with talent next season, as it will return its top eight point-scorers while losing only one senior.

"Losing Heather (McDaniel) is really hard — just because she's such a great leader and she has a lot of heart and she's so inspiring to all of us, but we're going to come on strong next year," sophomore libero Allyson Karaba said.

The team will be led by middle blocker Vanessa King, who led the team in hitting percentage, blocks and kills this season, while putting herself in the record books with a .348 hitting percentage, the fourth highest in school history. Karaba, who also is returning to lead the team, finished this season with 518 digs, the second-best in one season in school history.

"I think they're going to look good," McDaniel said of next year's team. "I think

See SEASON *on page 4B*

Redshirt freshman middle blocker Vineece Verdun, right, hugs the volleyball team's only senior, outside hitter Heather McDaniel, after the team's last match of the season on Saturday at Jenison Field House.

To view a photo gallery from Saturday's game, visit statenews.com/multimedia.

Year-end awards

ALEX DIFILIPPO AND SEAN ELY

2008 was year to remember for MSU soccer

After two successful 2008 soccer seasons for MSU, it's only right to give credit where credit is due.

The men's team finished 13-5-2 and was eliminated in its first NCAA Tournament game, yet the team played a lot harder and looked even better than those statistics showed all year long. The Spartans won the Big Ten regular-season title for the first time in program history and also won the Big Ten Tournament.

The women's team capped off its season at 14-7-3 and went undefeated at home, but was knocked out of the Big Dance in the second round by an undefeated No. 1 Notre Dame team.

But with some disappointment comes a lot more hope for the future, as each squad put MSU on the map, establishing East Lansing as a hotbed for soccer prowess.

Here is the list of awards coming from the two reporters who covered the teams through the highs and lows of the season.

Most valuable player: (tie) senior forward Doug DeMartin and freshman forward Laura Heyboer

For the sake of not wanting to ruin our friendship, we settled on a tie.

It's impossible to distinguish who had a bigger impact on their team. We're going out on a limb, not being able to decipher who was more dominant, handing the hardware to both Spartans leaders.

DeMartin and Heyboer are both up for NCAA National Player of the Year, scoring a combined 38 goals with 12 assists for a grand total of 88 points.

Both went up against extreme adversity as the seasons pressed on, finding themselves on every opponent's scouting report yet still managing to throw down tremendous statistics.

In double and triple coverage, the two were mirror images of each other, shedding defenders, slipping through small gaps and slashing to the net to do whatever it took to put the ball in the back of the net.

Unsung hero: men's team defensive line

Over the last eight games of the season, the Spartans defense didn't allow a single goal.

That totaled 812 con-

See SOCCER *on page 4B*