

2024 AVCA Thirty Under 30 Beach



Lucy Pennington-Russell

University of Oregon
NCAA Division I

University of Oregon Assistant Beach Coach

Career Accomplishments to Date:

Coaching and getting to know these young athletes and helping them pursue all their ambitions both on and off the sand.

Coaching Roles:

- Carson-Newman University - Assistant Beach Lincoln 2019-2021
- Lincoln Memorial University - Head Beach Coach 2021-2022
- Emory and Henry College - Assistant Indoor Coach 2022-2023
- University of Oregon - Assistant Beach Coach 2023-Present

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

Becoming a Division I volleyball coach wasn't something I ever expected, especially since I never played the sport myself. But that unconventional path has given me a unique coaching perspective. My knowledge of the game comes from years of analyzing it from the sidelines, studying every detail with fresh eyes. Not having a player's background allows me to teach the sport differently, focusing on fundamentals and innovative strategies. What I love most, though, is the relationships I build with my athletes, helping them grow both as players and individuals. That's what makes coaching at this level so rewarding.

What are your career goals in the sport?

Right now my career goals focus on continuous growth and development within this competitive conference. I aim to expand my knowledge of strategies, enhance my ability to mentor athletes, and contribute to a winning team culture. My immediate goal is to become an impactful, trusted assistant coach who supports both the head coach and players. Long-term, I aspire to take on greater leadership responsibilities, while staying committed to player development and team success. My focus will always be to help my athletes be the best at which they are capable of athletically, academically, and personally.



Which coaches have influenced you the most?

- Jason Dillard - One of the most patient and devoted coaches that I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I am so grateful that I get to learn under a coach with such a vast knowledge of the game and of the beach community.
- Arica Nassar
- Erika Dillard
- Matt Ulmer
- Allison Williams
- Tom Black

What do you enjoy most about your coaching job?

As a coach, I have the privilege of witnessing athletes grow, not just as players but as individuals learning to trust themselves and their teammates. Helping them reach their potential and seeing the pride they take in their development makes coaching deeply meaningful. I also feel fortunate to work at the University of Oregon, where the community is truly exceptional. The program's culture is second to none, and I'm grateful to be part of such an amazing team. I genuinely believe I'm the luckiest coach in the world, working with incredible people in such a supportive environment.

