

2024

AVCA Thirty Under 30 College



Whitney Seidel

Cairn University
NCAA Division III
Head Women's Volleyball Coach

Career Accomplishments to Date:

- Cairn University volleyball first ever conference coach of the year (Colonial States Athletic Conference) winner in 2022
- Tied for longest-tenured coach in Cairn WVB program history (8 yrs)
- 3 straight conference semifinal appearances (2021-2023)
- 14 total athletes named to all-conference teams including program's first ever conference player of the year in 2022
- 6x AVCA All-Academic team award recipient
- NCAA Region IV Regional Advisory Committee (2023-current)
- AVCA Region V All-Region Selection Committee (2023-current)
- Chair/Co-Chair of the CSAC and United East Conference Volleyball Coaches Sport Committees (2021-current)

Coaching Roles:

- Cairn University Women's Volleyball (Head Coach): 2017-present
- Cairn University Men's Volleyball (Assistant Coach): 2017-2019

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

Truthfully, it was a leap of faith. Right after I graduated from Cairn, the head volleyball coaching position opened up, and I decided to take the job on what at first was an interim basis. I fell in love with the coaching profession and the eternal impact I could have on the next generation of female athletes, both on and off the court. I knew how much I was personally impacted by playing college volleyball, and my ultimate goal was to rebuild the program at my alma mater and create a place that alumni like myself could be proud of.



What are your career goals in the sport?

Bring a conference championship to Cairn - a milestone that we've been getting closer to every year! Personally, I want to keep building my relationships within the volleyball community, serving within my conference, the NCAA, and the AVCA, and growing my own platform. I am particularly interested in administrative work, and would love to one day transition from coaching to working as an executive, creating support systems for coaches and athletes to promote the sport I love. In the meantime, I value the opportunity to serve as a mentor and resource for other coaches with whom I have built relationships.

Which coaches have influenced you the most?

Especially early on, (I started coaching at age 22), I looked up to Mary Wise, who started her storied career as the youngest DI coach ever at age 21. Since Day 1, I have had so many incredible coaches take me under their wing. To Deb Schendel, Henry DeTitta, Claudia Lapcevich, Abby Gearheart, Miriam Hartzler, Jen Mack, Denise Ginsburg, my FCA community, and the "Saving the Universe" AVCA/VCT Gang (BJ, Nicole, Ray, Lauren, Barb, Toby, Jenn, and Sean) (and so many others), thank you for validating my career as a coach, cheering me on, and letting me learn from you!

What do you enjoy most about your coaching job?

The relationships! As a young coach working with college students, I'm in the "sweet spot" where I am far enough removed from my athletes in age to serve as a mentor, but close enough where I can empathize with the challenges of their stage of life. It is personally rewarding to watch my athletes mature – not just in their skill, but in their faith, in their relationships, in their understanding of their God-given identity – over the time that I get to be their coach. To know that I play a part in that personal transformation is truly humbling.

