

2026

AVCA Thirty Under 30 College



Lainey Stephenson

Xavier University

Assistant Coach/ Recruiting Coordinator

Career Accomplishments to Date:

2025 Season (at Xavier)

- Coached 3 student-athletes to All Big East Honors
- Coached one athlete to AVCA All-Region Team
- NCAA Tournament Appearance for the first time since 2007
- Assisted in coaching the 2025 team to the best record in Xavier Volleyball program history (26-5)
- Set the record, in 2025, in Xavier's history books with the program-best Big East record (14-2) and non-conference record (12-1)
- Finished highest RPI in Xavier Volleyball history at 27

2024 Season (at Xavier)

- Assisted in coaching one member to All Big East Honors, along with the honor Big East Freshman of the Year

Coaching Roles:

Eastern Michigan University 2023-2024

Xavier University 2024-Present

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I have always wanted to be a volleyball coach. My mom was the one who got me into the sport. She coached and I knew from a young age I wanted to coach in some capacity. When I was a freshman in college, my college coach at the time, Allie Matters, encouraged me to look into college coaching. Since then, I knew I wanted to make an impact on young women and give back to the sport that gave me so much.

What are your career goals in the sport?

My career goal in coaching volleyball is to build a lasting legacy that goes beyond wins and losses. I want to leave every program better than I found it by creating a culture of hard work, accountability, and pride. In the gym, I strive to motivate and inspire players to reach their full potential, both on and off the court. Building strong, meaningful relationships with my student-athletes is a top priority. I aim to create an atmosphere in the gym that is competitive while consistently winning matches and developing confident, resilient young women.



Which coaches have influenced you the most?

Kathy Kennedy
Jill Hunt
Allie Matters
Travers Green
Kevin Foeman
Christy Pfeffenberger

What do you enjoy most about your coaching job?

I enjoy building connections with the student-athletes and being a support system for them on and off the court. I enjoy watching the players improve and battle with a skill, and then one day finally "get" it. It is rewarding to watch them grow over the years. Seeing how much the young women change from their freshman year to senior year is something I enjoy the most. I just am happy to be a small part on their journey. Yes, the winning is fun! But building connections and giving back to the sport is why I do it.