

Dixon excited for opportunity with U.S. Collegiate National Team



Kansas State freshman, and Louisburg graduate, Anna Dixon sends a shot over the net during tryouts for the U.S. Women's Collegiate National Team in March in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Six months ago, Anna Dixon had just finished guiding the Louisburg High School volleyball team to its second consecutive state runner-up trophy.

Dixon was always one of – if not the best – player on the court whenever the Lady Cats took the floor.

Back in the present, Dixon has now positioned herself as one of the best players in the nation at the collegiate level. On April 1, it was announced Dixon was named to the U.S. Women's Collegiate National Team after having yet to play a game as a college player.

She was named to Anaheim National Team roster and Dixon will train and compete for five days in late June as the coaches will split up the 24 players on the roster.

“It is really exciting,” Dixon said. “I honestly didn't expect anything to happen, but I was

excited, especially that I can go with three of my other teammates and that we are in California.”

Dixon, who graduated from Louisburg in December, joined the Kansas State volleyball program the next month and began training with her new teammates. The K-State coaches then gave Dixon the opportunity to try out for USA Volleyball in March in Colorado Springs, Colo.

So in early March, Dixon and some of her new Wildcat teammates made the journey and took part in the 3-day tryout at the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

Looking around the gym, Dixon was in disbelief at the different coaches and players she was competing against. The game was being played at a different level than she was used to, and it was a little stressful at times.

“We had two sessions the first day and three the second day,” Dixon said. “They usually evaluate you in one session and then regroup you with some other girls. Whenever I got moved up to the top group it was really nerve-racking because you are playing with All-Americans and girls who have been in the Final Four. The pace of the game was faster than I have ever played. They were really helpful with the adjustment.”

“I got used to the pace after a while. I actually usually play better when I am nervous and that helped me a lot. At first it was hard, but I had to just trust my training.”

Trust it she did.

Dixon continued to impress her coaches with her play as an outside hitter. After the tryouts were over, and before the rosters were officially released, she actually earned a spot on a higher-level team.

USA Volleyball has four collegiate national teams with the top team that goes to compete in Italy and a second-tier team will journey to Japan. Dixon earned a spot on the No. 3 team that goes to Anaheim, but was originally selected for the Japan squad.

Due to a conflict with Kansas State, Dixon was unable to make the trip to Japan and was put on the Anaheim roster instead. K-State is traveling to Brazil over the summer to compete against the Brazilian collegiate team, which overlapped with the Japan trip.

“The 20-and-under Italy team is basically the ‘A’ team for the collegiate national team so I made the second team that was going to Japan,” she said. “It was mostly girls who are juniors and seniors in college and there might be a couple sophomores. Japan would have been cool, and it was an honor to be named that high, but I get to go to Brazil with my team and I am really excited about that. We will be there for two weeks and it should be a lot of fun.

“I like getting to experience different things in different areas. It has helped me meet a lot of people and build connections with them. My goal at the end of college is to go overseas and play volleyball, so I am excited about all these opportunities.”

Dixon hasn’t actually competed in

an official event for USA Volleyball yet, but she is excited for the opportunity and what she has experienced so far.

“It was really cool,” she said. “I got a chance to meet a lot of the girls that I had been looking up to or watching on TV the last couple years, so being around them and playing with them was a great experience. We were playing with some of the best players in the country, and some former All-Americans, so it was cool to see how they learn and get to know them more.”

Dixon has been trying to get acclimated to her first semester in college and being a collegiate athlete. She has spent a lot of time training with the Wildcat team and hasn't had much free time to herself.

Working under the guidance of K-State head coach Suzie Fritz, Dixon has enjoyed her time in Manhattan so far and has learned a lot in just a few months time.

“It has been good,” she said. “It was overwhelming at first. Every day I leave my house at about 6:15 in the morning and I won't get back until like 7 at night. The time management has been a huge adjustment, but my teammates have been really helpful and made it pretty easy.”

As if playing on the collegiate national team wasn't enough, Dixon is currently waiting on a decision to see if she will earn a spot on the USA Junior National Team. The roster will be announced later this month.

If she earns a spot, Dixon will go to Colorado Springs for training and then will travel to Mexico to compete in the 2019 World Championships. Not too bad for a player who hasn't played an official collegiate match yet.

"It is a bigger deal for me because we will be playing teams from all over the world," Dixon said. "I am crossing my fingers that I will make it, but we will see."