

JORDAN RADICK SHARES STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING

Life Blocks

BY CYNTHIA LOGAN

“Montana Hasn’t Had Enough Resources For Girls Who Want To Go Collegiate.”

A slap tear in your shoulder joint can really put a cramp in your volley. MSU standout Jordan (Jojo) Radick knows that all too well—she dealt with the repetitive injury for years before having surgery this past winter. “It had hurt for a long time, but the pain elevated as I’ve gotten into the collegiate level,” she comments. “During the Cat-Griz game last September, I realized I had to have it checked out.”

For Radick, recovery is more about the mental aspect than the physical rehab. “Having to watch and listen to girls play and lift is hard,” she admits. “During lift, especially, I work in the back alone, but I listen to them inspire each other and max each other out. With new coaches, it’s hard not to be able to to perform the new skills everyone else is learning. Each coach has their own way of teaching different skills, of interpreting what studies say you should or shouldn’t do.” She particularly likes doing ‘push-jerks’ or ‘snatches,’ and is hoping she’ll be able to do them asap. “I love to clean, back squat and front squat, but we’ll see how it feels on my shoulder... I’m using a ‘pitt shark,’ a modified



squat machine with a belt that connects you to weights. Getting on that is a big stress reliever. It keeps me happy and positive.”

Matt Houk, MSU volleyball’s new head coach, appreciates Radick’s effort and attitude, and applauds both: “First off, Jordan is an awesome human being. I have been so impressed with how she shows up every day, engages with her teammates and the process, and does whatever the team needs. It must have been frustrating to not be able to train this spring. A new staff came in and was teaching new techniques and systems, and all she could do was watch from the sidelines. But she watched intently, asked what she could do to help, and got out there and did footwork whenever allowed to.”

Radick was recently cleared to slowly start returning to volleyball activities, and, says Houk, “is itching to get going and make some progress this summer, so that she can be one hundred percent by the time August rolls around.”

Born in Bozeman, Radick grew up in Big Sky, and also lived in Florida, where she had to choose between volleyball or basketball. She chose volleyball over basketball because, “I didn’t like the physical aspect of basketball as much. I like the team aspect of volleyball—you rely on someone to pass, rely on a good set. It’s very skill oriented.” After her first playing season, she aced the club tryout, then headed straight into that competition. Radick considers her best skills to be blocking and hitting. “We’re not big setters or passers [at MSU], but sometimes we have to step in, says the middle blocker. “I love hitting! It’s one of my favorite skills.”

As a true-freshman in 2021, Radick averaged 1.82 kills and .93 blocks,



photo courtesy MSU Athletics

while hitting .306, and was named Big Sky Conference Freshman of the Year. Under Matt and Jen Houk, and Assistant coach Taylor Els, she’s working on improving consistency in power, range, and the ability to hit every shot in different situations. So far, her most challenging game was the 2021 match up against the Griz. “It’s very emotional,” she says, “and if you’re on you’re on; if you’re off, you’re off. It’s challenging coming to opposing courts, hearing the nasty things

fans are yelling. It’s very hard.” She recalls last year’s match up against Boise State as one of the more exciting games, along with (she smiles) UM in the Brick. “Even though we lost, we had 6500 people show up, and seeing the student section full was fantastic.”

A Junior this year, Radick is majoring in Exercise Science, with a track in pre-med. She wants to attend PT school to continue working with athletes. “I’ve always had my eyes set on

possible surgery as well,” she notes. “Orthopedic surgery has a big impact... and has meaning for me, having had shoulder surgery. You can help physically, and affect the mental side as well. The only downside is all the extra years of school.” In addition to working at The Ridge Athletic Club and in local restaurants, Jordan was a patient care tech at a women’s health clinic “to get my feet in the water and get to know the doctors. I want to build my resume to work with professional athletes.” She also coaches for Big Sky Volleyball’s 16-3, 1st AU team, and has earned high praise from Club Director, Kandice Gregorak. “I’ve known Jojo for a long time; she played with Big Sky for at least four years. She’s a student athlete completing morning practices, attending school all day, doing homework, and competing on weekends—and she still took the time to give back. She’s kind, respectful, and accountable. She is very modest, but the fact is, she is a stud on the volleyball court. She is a-may-zing!”

Radick looks up to former University of Nebraska’s All

American Lauren Stivrins, impressed with “the phenomenal way she moves.” (Stivrins debuted as a middle blocker in 2022 with Athletes Unlimited, a startup pro team in the U.S.) Radick also admires Olympic bronze medalist Kerri Walsh. “I did an English report on her one time,” she says. “Volleyball has always been a big part of my life. “I thought of taking an extra year and ‘going beach,’ but now I want to hone in on my future and my next chapter.”

That next chapter involves coaching the next generation. “I want to help the new generation get recruited and develop skills and attributes they can take to the collegiate level,” says Radick. “Montana hasn’t had enough resources for girls who want to go collegiate. Getting them on a HUDL (social channel) is a start, and I’m going to bring my iPad and a stand to record their games for them.” She shows up in Belgrade, Bozeman, Manhattan, Livingston, Billings, and Helena. “The high school teams have the same season as I do, but I do try to go to high school games,” she says. Spring season goes until

beginning of May. The team has May off, then starts training again in June—but it’s just us working out with our strength trainer,” explains Radick. “The coaches can’t talk volleyball with us until late July or early August.”

At 6’2,” Radick is just an inch shorter than her boyfriend, Kyle Yonker, an MSU track team member. “A relationship is time consuming, and half the school year I’m in another state, so we don’t hang out with each other a lot, but it’s great to understand what we need to be for each other,” she says. “I used to be self-conscious about my height, but I’m pretty confident now; it’s allowed me to be where I am. As a hitter in the front row, you need to be pretty tall.”

She doesn’t mind the significant amounts of homework that consume many hours, but in her free time, Jordan enjoys “hanging with family and friends.” She loves to hike (Lava Lake, Cottonwood Trail, Drinking Horse, and the M are favorite routes), paddleboard, and walk/ run with Zephyr, the Jack Russell she shares with her mom. “He keeps me active during the summer,” says Radick, who also enjoys camping. “I inherited it from my parents, who are very active people,” she says. She also likes to fly-fish, which she learned from her grandfather and dad.

Family and faith are her bedrock; she has grandparents in the area, as well as aunts and uncles. “It was a big factor in my decision to come here,” she says. Volleyball tasks your mental health. Those 6-10 am practices can be rough, so getting myself in the right head space is really important. I need to have a same day routine to set myself up for a positive game. Pre-hab (even before surgery) includes taping her shoulder and using heat on it. “Bible study groups



are another big stress reliever for me,” says Radick. “Knowing there’s a path for you, you’re in the right place at the right time, that there’s a reason for everything can really help get you through. I try to follow God in morals and values, live and project faith, hope and love onto other people—that needs to be spread more.” She also enjoys reading motivational books—“women-empowerment things to keep me inspired.”

The women on MSU’s volleyball team have been great comrades and role models, and, while Radick expresses gratitude for everyone’s talent and contributions, she cites senior middle blocker Emma Pence in particular. “She’s amazing, a kind person, and a great player. I got to look up to her coming in; she’s someone I’d look to for advice.”



photo courtesy MSU Athletics

She found Kacy O’Dell (who graduated last year) “an amazing mentor.” As far as the upcoming season, Radick is enthusiastic, and embraces the changes: “It’s great getting to know each other

and get a feel of what the team is going to be for this new era. I think we’re gonna do big things this season; it’s exciting to watch everyone grow. I feel there’s no limit to how good you can be.”

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