

BIG TEN MEDIA DAYS

TUESDAY, AUG. 1 - WEDNESDAY, AUG. 2

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

About The 2023 Minnesota Golden Gophers

- The University of Minnesota announced on Dec. 12, 2022 that Keegan Cook had been named head volleyball coach. Cook is the eighth full-time head coach and ninth individual to lead the Gophers, which first competed in 1972. He is just the third full-time head coach to lead the program since 1996, following Hugh McCutcheon (2012-22, 277-74 record) and Mike Hebert (1996-2010, 381-137 record). Laura Bush served as interim head coach in 2011.
- Minnesota (22-9, 15-5 Big Ten) finished tied for third in the B1G last season and won 15-or-more conference games for the eighth straight season. The 'U' fell to Ohio State in the Sweet 16 after defeating SE Louisiana and UNI in the first two rounds.
- The 'U' won eight matches against top 25 teams, including sweeps vs. then No. 6 Wisconsin and No. 5 Nebraska. The Gophers also beat No. 8 Ohio State (away) in addition to No. 13 Florida, No. 18 Oregon and No. 12 Purdue at the Pav.
- The Gophers return seven athletes who started matches last year in the 2022 run to the NCAA Regional Semifinal. First Team All-American and Big Ten Player of the Year Taylor Landfair and First Team All-Big Ten selection Melani Shaffmaster return to pace Minnesota. Landfair was the only Big Ten player to be named AVCA First Team All-America in 2022.
- Middle blocker Arica Davis (1.23 bps) and Freshman All-Big Ten selection McKenna Wucherer (2.73 kps) could see increased roles in their second seasons at Minnesota in 2023. Wucherer was the No. 1 overall recruit in the class of 2022.
- Three transfers joined the mix this summer as Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year Kylie Murr (5th Year Libero, Ohio State), Phoebe Awoleye (Senior Middle, Loyola Marymount) and Lydia Grote (Senior Outside/Opposite, California) come to campus. Awoleye was First Team All-WCC in 2022 while Grote led California in kills and points.
- In 2022, the 'U' finished No. 10 in the final AVCA Poll, its eighth straight top-10 finish nationally, one of three programs in the country to accomplish this feat during that time period.
- The Gophers have had eight straight Sweet 16 or better finishes dating back to 2015.
- All eight of Minnesota's 2023 non-conference opponents made the 2022 NCAA Tournament. Five made the Sweet 16 or better, including 2022 national champion Texas, who visits Minneapolis on Tuesday, Aug. 29.

**KEEGAN COOK**ST. MARY'S, 2007 | PLEASANTON, CALIF.
1ST SEASON**Career Path:**

- Hired at Minnesota on Dec. 12, 2022
- Spent the last eight seasons as the head coach at Washington (2015-22)
- Spent 2013 and 2014 seasons as an assistant at Washington
- Promoted to head coach at UW when former head coach Jim McLaughlin left for Notre Dame
- Before Washington, he was an assistant from 2007-12 at his alma mater, St. Mary's

Accolades and Accomplishments:

- 198-56 (.780) record as a head coach at UW (107-33 in Pac-12 play)
- Eight NCAA Tournament appearances
- Six Sweet 16 appearances
- Four Elite Eight appearances
- One Final Four appearance (2020-21)
- Four Pac-12 Regular Season Championships
- 2020-21 Pac-12 Coach of the Year
- 37 All-Pac 12 Selections
- 19 All-America honors (12 individuals)
- Coached one Pac-12 Player of the Year and two Pac-12 Setters of the Year
- In 2016, he was the head coach for the U.S. Collegiate Women's National Team for its tour of China
- In 2018, Cook led the U.S. Junior Women's National Team to compete in the NORCECA Championships in Mexico
- In the summer of 2022, Cook was an assistant on the U.S. Girls U19 Team that won gold at the Pan American Cup. He was the head coach for the U19 Team in 2023 that won the gold medal at the Pan American Cup.

Personal:

- Has a one-year-old son, Oliver, with his wife, Sarah.



TAYLOR LANDFAIR

REDSHIRT JUNIOR | OUTSIDE HITTER
PLAINFIELD, ILL. | PLAINFIELD H.S.

2022 Big Ten Player of the Year
2022 AVCA/VolleyballMag.com First Team-All-America
2022 AVCA North Region Player of the Year
Two-Time All-Big Ten First Team Selection (2020-21, 2022)

Other Accolades and Accomplishments:

- Academic All-Big Ten (2021; 2022)
- AVCA First Team All-America (2022); AVCA All-America Honorable Mention (2020-21)
- AVCA North Region Freshman of the Year (2020-21); AVCA Player of the Week (11/29/22)
- Big Ten/Big 12 Challenge All-Tournament Team -- Most Valuable Player (Aug. 27, 2022)
- Big Ten Freshman of the Week (2/1/21; 4/5/21)
- Big Ten Player of the Week (10/10/22; 10/24/22; 11/7/22; 11/28/22)
- Female Breakthrough Athlete of the Year at Minnesota (2022-23)
- Freshman All-Big Ten (2020-21); Preseason All-Big Ten (2021, 2023)
- VolleyballMag.com First Team All-America (2022)
- Played in all 31 matches, 110 sets in 2022. Held 28 double-digit kill matches and led the team, Big Ten in both points (4.91) and kills (4.35) per set. Averaged 1.63 digs, 0.65 blocks, 0.23 service aces per set Had a Big Ten-best five 20+ dig matches.

Get to Know:

- Oldest of four siblings. Parents are Tonya and Alexis Sr.
- Fav. Food: Tacos. Restaurant: Chick-Fil-A. Shows: Outer Banks, Manifest, Vampire Diaries. Vacation Spot: Australia.
- Major: Graphic Design (wants to be a graphic designer after her volleyball career).
- Attended BIG Life series in Selma, Alabama in 2022; Black Student-Athlete Summit at USC in 2023.
- Only played in nine games in 2021 due to an abdominal injury and took a medical redshirt.
- Played basketball, soccer and was a dancer when she was younger.



MELANI SHAFFMASTER

SENIOR | SETTER
NEW CASTLE, IND. | NEW CASTLE H.S.

2022 All-Big Ten First Team
3x AVCA All-North Region (2020-21, 2021, 2022)
4x Big Ten Setter of the Week
No. 8 All-Time in Assists at Minnesota (3,034)

Other Accolades and Accomplishments:

- Academic All-Big Ten (2020-21; 2021-2022)
- All-Big Ten First Team (2022)
- AVCA All-North Region (2020-21; 2021; 2022)
- Big Ten/Big 12 Challenge All-Tournament Team (Best Setter Award)
- Big Ten Setter of the Week (2/8/21; 4/5/21; 8/29/22; 11/28/22)
- Big Ten Freshman of the Week (Jan. 25, 2021); Freshman All-Big Ten (2020-21)
- No. 8 all-time in assists at Minnesota (3,034)
- Played in all 31 matches, 110 sets in 2022. Averaged 10.42 assists per set, a mark that ranked second in the Big Ten and in the top-50 nationally. Also posted 2.66 digs, 0.83 blocks and a team-best 0.27 service aces per set.

Get to Know:

- Second of four siblings. Has an older sister, Morgan. Two younger sisters are Mabrey (plays at UNC) and Macy.
- Parents are Patrick and Wendi Shaffmaster.
- Fav. Food: Popcorn. Sport to Watch: Tennis or Soccer. Shows: Lucifer, Vampire Diaries. Vacation Spot: Aruba and Hawaii.
- Major: Accounting (Carlson School of Management). Would love to work at Nike after she graduates.
- Committed to Minnesota in eighth grade on an unofficial visit.
- Played with now Gophers libero Kylie Murr for over five years growing up for Munciana Volleyball Club.
- A member of Minnesota's No. 1 overall recruiting class with Landfair in the class of 2020.