



II Women Volleyball Pan American Cup in Saltillo, Mexico.



2003 USA Women's National Volleyball Team Biography

The USA Women National-Volleyball team enters the third year of the quadrennial intent on building upon the success it has enjoyed in its first two years with head coach Toshi Yoshida.

In 2001 the United States captured the gold medal at the World Grand Prix. Last year Team USA raced to a silver medal at the Women's Volleyball World Championships. While those achievements are nice, the 2003 season is the most important year of the quad because that is when the teams can begin qualifying for the 12 available slots at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. The first qualifier is the World Cup in Japan from Nov. 1-15.

USA Team will be one of the eight National Teams participating in

the next Pan American Cup to be held in Saltillo, Mexico from June 28 to July 5.

This season Yoshida will have everyone back from the team he took to the 2002 World Championships to make that critical first step towards Athens, including the tournament's Best Blocker Danielle Scott; outside hitters Logan Tom, Keba Phipps and Tayyiba Haneef; middle blocker Heather Brown; and libero Stacy Sykora. All but Haneef have prior Olympic experience.

Despite the recent success, Yoshida will not let his team rest of the laurels of those two medals. Instead, he insists that the players maintain their focus on the ultimate goal -winning a gold medal in Greece.

"Even though we got second, everybody thinks USA is good enough to maintain this level," Yoshida

revealed. "I don't think so. The players know, I know, everybody knows: We have to keep working hard."

"I think last year it looks like we did a really good job, but we did not peak," he continued. "We can be better. That is my prediction....I think that 2002 wasn't too bad. But you have to be careful. Anything can happen."

To be one of the 12 teams to qualify for the World Cup the USA Women, ranked No. 3 in the world to start the year, must perform well at the NORCECA zone championships in September. World Cup invitations are given to the host country, Japan; the winners of the five respective continental confederation championships; and the next six top teams in accordance with the World Cup regulations.

The top three teams at the 2003 World Cup qualify for the 2004 Olympics along with the host country, Greece, and the five winners of the continental qualification tournaments (Africa, Asia, Europe, NORCECA and South America) held immediately after the World Cup. The final three spots will be determined at the world Olympic qualifier tournament held in Japan in May or June 2004.

I am looking forward to (this) year," said Yoshida. "2003 is a crucial year. We still have a lot to do. We have ways to go. Right now, the World Cup qualifier in September is our most important tournament of the coming season."