

Craig 4th BC3 athlete in 2 years to become an All-American

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Mackenzie Craig, center, a sophomore setter on the Butler County Community College volleyball team, has been selected as a National Junior College Athletic Association Division III All-American. Craig is shown during a Sept. 26, 2018, match against Penn State-Beaver in BC3's Field House. At left is Penn State-Beaver's Stephanie Stadjuhar. At right is BC3's Brooke Snow.

(Butler, PA) Mackenzie Craig, who helped to lead the Butler County Community College volleyball team to the 2018 National Junior College Athletic Association Division III Region XX title, has been selected as BC3's fourth All-American in two years.

Craig, a 5-foot-10 sophomore setter from Karns City, had a team-high 561 assists and 77 service aces for a Pioneers squad that finished 19-7 and with its 10th consecutive winning season. BC3 also captured its third Region XX crown in four years behind Craig, named the regional tournament's most valuable player after recording 33 assists in the Pioneers' 3-1 victory over Anne Arundel Community College, of Arnold, Md., in the championship.

Craig, who is also a forward on BC3's women's basketball team, is 118 points shy of breaking the program's career scoring record held by Julia Baxter. Craig has 953 career points through Tuesday. Baxter, a Butler High graduate, scored 1,070 through the end of the 2016-2017 season.

Craig's selection to the NJCAA's prestigious post-season squad follows those in 2017 of BC3 volleyball setter Brittney Bianco, of Freeport; of softball center fielder Nikki Houk, of New Castle; and of Baxter.

"Kenz was a difference-maker," BC3 volleyball coach Rob Snyder said of Craig. "She is the type of player that none of the other teams had. Other teams had good setters, but no one had an athlete with her size and attacking ability at the setting position."

Craig, a left-handed hitter who led the Pioneers with 180 kills in 2017, was picked by Snyder to learn the position of setter following the graduation of Bianco, who ranks No. 2 on BC3's all-time volleyball assist list with 1,254.

"I was apprehensive at first when Rob first presented the idea to me of becoming a setter," Craig said. "The setter is like the quarterback of the volleyball team. Setters have a lot on their plate. I was nervous about it, and I wasn't sure if I could handle the pressure. I knew it was going to be a big role. But it also made me push myself and made me a better player."

"He turned me into an All-American setter"

Craig joins 22 other BC3 athletes who have been recognized with a total of 26 All-American awards since Bob Wilson, of Chicora, won his first of two in cross-country in 1970. She is also the seventh BC3 volleyball All-American since 1999, and the sole player among the 84 volleyball All-Americans in the NJCAA's three divisions in 2018 to represent a Pennsylvania college.

"I think it says a lot about Rob because he was able to turn me, someone who has never been a setter, into a setter," Craig said. "I didn't set in high school. I really didn't have the hands for it. But he turned me into an All-American setter."

Despite her position change, Craig had 122 kills in 2018, which ranked fourth among the Pioneers behind Emily Magusiak, who had 166.

"The other teams would have as hard time because with her left hand she could tip it right over the net and they wouldn't know where it was going," said Magusiak, a sophomore from New Castle. "They would think it was going in one area but it would go in the opposite direction. She



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was a good hitter, plus she could set, and that brought a lot to the team. She deserves this award more than anybody.”

The award, Craig said, recognizes the entire BC3 volleyball program.

“I would not be able to be an All-American without my coach or my teammates,” she said. “Everyone did their parts and that is what made it so great for me.”

Craig also earned All-Region XX, WPCC honors

Craig was selected to the 12-member All-American honorable mention squad, as was Bianco in 2017. Baxter and Houk in 2017 became BC3’s first All-Americans in their sports. Baxter finished her BC3 career with 1,070 points and was an honorable mention selection. Houk, a center fielder whose .627 batting average was the highest among players on the 350 squads in the NJCAA’s three divisions, was a second-team pick.

Craig was also named to the All-Region XX first team and the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference all-conference squad after the Pioneers swept the Community College of Beaver County on Oct. 20 to win their fourth WPCC crown in a row.

BC3 has had 10 All-Americans in men’s basketball, including brothers Joe Lewandowski and Bryant Lewandowski, who with 1,311 points is the program’s all-time leading scorer; five in golf; two in cross-country; and one in each softball and women’s basketball.