



Matt Rigg
No shelter from recruiters

By Ann Miller
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Matt Rigg's eyes and mind are open. And this week's International Men's Volleyball Classic can only open them wider.

Rigg, a high school senior, is called the top college prospect in the country by his volleyball coach at Punahou, Chris McLachlin. And the word — fueled by Rigg's performances in the junior nationals, National Sports Festival and junior Olympics — has gotten around.

Rigg won't be another good local athlete who is sheltered from recruiters by the Pacific Ocean. UCLA, USC, Pepperdine, UC-Santa Barbara and Stanford already have offered him scholarships. Rigg's problem is which to accept.

The Classic should help him make his decision. He'll play for Outrigger Canoe Club alongside some of the best collegiate players of the past 20 years.

He'll play against the University of Hawaii — fifth in the country last year — and USC, which finished third. And the reason Rigg really wants to play is to see Waseda, one of Japan's strongest collegiate teams and the final team in the tournament.

The Classic begins today at Klum Gym, with Hawaii playing Outrigger at 2 p.m. and USC meeting Waseda at 4. Tomorrow, Outrigger plays USC at 6 and Hawaii takes on Waseda at 8. The tournament ends

An 'open' event

Rigg faces multiple-choice test

Wednesday, with Waseda playing Outrigger at 6 p.m. and USC and Hawaii meeting in their California Intercollegiate Volleyball Association opener at 8.

What Rigg learns in the next four days will be added to the extensive research he already has done. In early May, when the NCAA finals are pau, his final decision on a college will be made.

"It's hard," he admitted. "I like Pepperdine because my brothers (Mark and Scott) went there. I watched them play and got kind of inspired. But educationally that's not as strong as USC and Santa Barbara. UCLA, well, I don't really want to go there. My brothers played against them all the time."

Rigg has visited USC. He plans to visit Pepperdine, Santa Barbara and possibly nine-time champion UCLA.

Marv Dunphy, the Waves' coach, is a friend of the family and won the NCAA title with Mark and Scott in 1978. Santa Barbara's Ken Preston coached Rigg two years ago. UCLA coach Al Scates has been in touch with the Riggs since last May, but Rigg sounds doubtful.

He's sure about two things — he wants the experience of being away from Hawaii and he wants to play for a strong team. "Why go somewhere to get an education and then be unhappy because you're los-

ing?" he reasoned. He admits that "volleyball is in my blood."

So is winning. Punahou won the state title for the third consecutive year in November. Rigg, an emotional, expressive player, was a major reason. He's a 6-2 hitter with an exceptional jump. But it's instinct, something nurtured on the sand courts of the Outrigger Canoe Club since he was 11, that moves him a level above most high school players.

His hitting and blocking are strong. His ballhandling and defense are much stronger. "I pass the ball good," he said. "That's why I'm out there. I'm small compared to a lot of guys, but I go all out. I'm an all-around player, not just a pounder."

But all that isn't the reason he gives for his position now. "I've just had the exposure — the junior nationals (he was MVP the last two years when Outrigger was national champion), the junior Olympics. We've got guys on our team who are about the same (in terms of talent). . . . Punahou could have won the title easily without me."

Emotions play a major part in his game. The ideal result of a match is "having the team totally correlate mentally and physically," he said. "Sometimes you play with a team and don't really feel it. You don't know if you're going to get the ball back. Other times you know."

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