

Harding wins academic award at NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship

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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. -- A standout student-athlete in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences [1] recently received a prestigious academic award.

Maggie Harding, a redshirt sophomore on the women's volleyball team, was named the recipient of the Elite 89 award for the 2012 NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball Championship.

Harding, of State College, Pa., who is majoring in food science [2], carried a 4.0 grade point average into the tournament. She was presented with the award during the women's volleyball banquet on Dec. 12 in Louisville, Ky.

A serving and defensive specialist, Harding redshirted her first season as a Nittany Lion. She is a two-time Academic All-Big Ten selection and was the 2011 Big Ten Sportsmanship honoree for the women's volleyball team.

The Elite 89, an award founded by the NCAA, recognizes the true essence of the student-athlete by honoring the individual who has reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in his or her sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among his or her peers.

The Elite 89 is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's championships.

"I take school very seriously," Harding said. "It's nice to be recognized for having good grades and being a part of an amazing team."

It's a stiff challenge to achieve the right balance between academics and varsity athletics, Harding noted. She decided on her major after years of watching the Food Network and after a teacher had given a lesson on making bread.

"I loved the connection between food and science," she said. "I looked for a

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college with a good volleyball program and food science program. I picked Penn State because it is one of the top food science schools in the country and has a great volleyball program.

"I got the best of both worlds and never looked back."

Top-seeded Penn State finished its 2012 season on Dec. 13, losing to Oregon in the NCAA semifinals.

For more information about the Food Science major at Penn State, click here [3] or contact Catherine Cutter at 814-863-6132 or by email cnc3@psu.edu.

Links:

[1] <http://agsci.psu.edu/>

[2] <http://foodscience.psu.edu/>

[3] <http://foodscience.psu.edu/majors>

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