



Nick Gavolas

Head Diving Coach

11th Season

A former standout as a member of the Youngstown State men's diving team, Nick Gavolas has built the YSU diving program into one of the top programs in the state and region as he enters his 11th season as an assistant swimming coach and head diving coach.

Gavolas, the 2002-03 and 2003-04 Horizon League Diving Coach of the Year, has helped YSU divers win nine conference titles in the past seven years. He has also coached three NCAA Zone C Championship qualifiers in the past six years and two YSU Student-Athletes of the Year.

Last season Gavolas worked to build a strong foundation for the upcoming years with a relatively young group of divers. Kelly Reese, who worked with Gavolas and Timberbrook Diving as a prep at nearby Canfield High School, was named the Horizon League Diver of the Week twice during her freshman campaign. Reese also posted scores to rank third in YSU history in the 3-meter and fourth in the 1-

meter. Junior diver and team captain Cortney Harless also showed improvement and posted career-best marks.

Two years ago, Gavolas watched diver Kalyn Leveto cap off her career with her fourth Horizon League crown and the distinction of YSU's Vindicator Female Student-Athlete of the Year. Leveto, who also did her club diving with Gavolas at Timberbrook Diving, was named Horizon League Diver of the Year her sophomore and junior years. As a sophomore she won both diving events, and she claimed the title in the 3-meter and placed second in the 1-meter as a junior.

Prior to Leveto's string of championships, Brandi Goettsch was a mainstay on the diving championship podium for the Penguins. Goettsch was a three-time conference Diver of the Year, earning the mark in 2001-02 in the Horizon League and twice in the Mid-Continent Conference. She won the Horizon League's three-meter competition in 2001-02 and won four conference championships in the Mid-Con.

Mandi Smail also had an accomplished career under Gavolas, placing second in the 1-meter as a senior at the Horizon League Championship in 2003. She was also a four-time Zone C qualifier and finished in the top three twice at the Mid-Con Championship.

Gavolas, a YSU Athletics Hall of Fame inductee, competed for the Penguins from 1967-72 and became YSU's first three-time All-American in diving. He earned national runner-up honors at the College National Swimming and Diving Championships in 1969 and was a national qualifier for the AAU Diving team.

Gavolas has spent 23 seasons as a coach and became YSU's first diving coach in 1973 with the men's diving team. He was named Northern Ohio Coach of the Year three times and was awarded a Mentor Scholarship through the United States Diving Association. Gavolas also went through extensive coaching training under Dick Kimball, a six-time Olympic coach and former diving coach at Michigan.

For over a decade, Gavolas has been the owner, director and coach of Timberbrook Diving. He has also earned his coaching certification to be a U.S. Diving coach.