

1) Name: Taylor Tashima

2) New Trier sport(s): Varsity Volleyball

3) Suburb you lived in when you went to New Trier: Wilmette

4) What year did you graduate from New Trier? 2014

5) Where do you live now? Chicago

6) Who were your coaches: Katie Hielscher & Hannah Hsieh

7) What were your HS sports accomplishments/awards/honors?

- 4 Yr Starting Varsity Setter & 2x Co-Captain
- 2012 2nd Place finish at IHSA Class 4A state tournament (Record: 39-2)
- 2013 3rd place finish at IHSA Class 4A state tournament
- 2013 Central Suburban League South Player of the Year
- 2013 Chicago Sun-Times Player of the Year

8) Favorite high school *individual sports* memory:

My favorite individual sports memory is playing with my younger sister, Isabelle Tashima, for my Senior season, as that was the first and only time we've been on the same team. She was the starting sophomore DS, and I was the starting senior Setter. I loved competing with her because of her "hate to lose" mentality and our telepathic connection on the court. It was so special. Isabelle went on to play volleyball at Harvard University, and I couldn't be more proud of all her hard work and dedication on and off the court.

9) Favorite high school *team* memory:

My favorite team memory is beating Loyola at Home during our 2013 Road to State. It was my Senior season and the last game I ever played at home. It was so memorable because of the number of students, staff, and people in the community who came to support us. The energy in Gates Gym was electric and propelled us to a 3-0 Win. It was a great way to go out to say the least. When I was a Freshman, we played our Varsity games in the back gym, and the only spectators were our parents. There was no student support or awareness for the team. It was amazing to see the transformation during my four years with NTVB.

10) What was your biggest team rival? Evanston

11) Favorite class and/or teacher at NT: David Rhee (Sophomore year English professor)

12) Where did you attend college: Northwestern University

13) Compare your HS sports experience to your college experience:

New Trier athletics prepared me for Northwestern athletics, as both require their athletes to pursue high-level academics and high-level athletics. However, there was a big difference in the time demands and the pressure to perform. When I played at Northwestern, I was waking up every day at 5:00 a.m. or 6:00 a.m. for five hours of strength & conditioning, rehabilitation, court work, and film. By the time I finished all my volleyball responsibilities for the day, most students on Northwestern's campus were just waking up. In season, there were times when we would be on the road traveling 4 out of the 7 days of the week. It took a lot of hard work and sacrifice to perform at my best on the court and in the classroom. Even though a lot more is expected of you when you compete for a D1 University, it is far more rewarding than anything I experienced at New Trier. I loved being a part of Northwestern's tight-knit athletic community, just as I loved being a part of NTVB's family atmosphere.

14) College sports accomplishments:

- Currently ranked 4th all-time in assists in program history
- 4 Year Starting Setter & 3x Captain
- **2017:** Depaul Invitation MVP, Duke Invitational All-Tournament Team, VCU Invitational All-Tournament Team
- **2015:** All-Big Ten Honorable Mention, AVCA All-North Regional Team Honorable Mention, Wildcat Classic MVP
- **2014:** NIU Invitational All-Tournament Team, Big Ten Freshman of the Week

15) Favorite college sports moments:

Beating the University of Illinois (ranked No. 9 nationally) my Freshman year in 5 sets at home. It was the first big-time win of my college career. Our athletic director, Dr. Jim Phillips, also attended U of I, so it was great to get that win for him:

[https://nusports.com/news/2014/11/5/Northwestern\\_Snags\\_Bragging\\_Rights\\_From\\_Illini\\_in\\_3\\_2\\_Win.aspx](https://nusports.com/news/2014/11/5/Northwestern_Snags_Bragging_Rights_From_Illini_in_3_2_Win.aspx)

16) What was your area of study in college? Major: Economics; Minor: Business & Marketing

17) What do you do now?

I graduated as a student-athlete from Northwestern University in June of 2018 with a degree in Economics and a double minor in Business Institutions and Integrated Marketing Communications. Subsequent to graduation, I played professional volleyball for a year in Basel, Switzerland. While being a D1 athlete was no easy feat, playing professionally took it to a whole new level of intensity (as it is a full-time job). A typical day consisted of 2 hours of weights and 1 hour of individual setter training in the morning, and 3 hours of court work and film at night. We

had games 2x week (spanning from October to April) and competed in multiple countries, specifically Switzerland, Belgium, Hungary, France, and Germany.

I feel very blessed to have lived out my dream of being a professional player. I loved everything about the experience -- the volleyball centric lifestyle, the intensity and rigor, the exposure to new culture. There were many moments on the court that were challenging and uncomfortable, but it was very rewarding to see the power of habits, hard work, mental toughness, and commitment to the process.

I recently retired from indoor volleyball and returned to Chicago, pursuing my career aspiration in marketing and business development. I am currently an Assistant Strategist with OMD Chicago (a division of Omnicom Media Group). OMD recently earned the distinction of Adweek's Global Media Agency of the Year 2019.

18) If you could go back in time and give yourself advice/wisdom as you are starting Freshman year at New Trier, what would that advice be?

I would tell myself to be more assertive and aggressive. I was so nervous as a freshman on Varsity, especially at camp the summer going into my freshman year. If I had changed my mindset and been more confident, I would have accelerated my learning curve and played more consistently. Age is just a number!

19) What would you do differently if you could do it again?

I would have taken better care of my concussions, as I had 2 in high school, 1 in college, and 3 playing professionally. Concussions are a very serious injury and the healing process should never be rushed. Athletes need to be more transparent with their athletic trainers and coaches about their symptoms, and institutions need to establish pre and post-concussion protocols.







**Sm'Aesch**  
PFEFFINGEN

**TAYLOR  
TASHIMA**  
ZUSPIEL

Fotograf: Christoph Markwalder

