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Seward Connections in Opening Classic Almost Surreal

The Saints have descended on Roswell, New Mexico. This has nothing to do with UFO's or anything out of this world. But it is a testimony to the kind of volleyball program Seward County has been. The #14 Saints open their season at the New Mexico Military Classic Friday and Saturday. Three of the four opponents are coached by former Seward players or coaches.

The Saints play #11 Seminole State, Oklahoma at 9 a.m. Friday to open the season. Angie Byrd enters her second year after going 35-5 last year. She was Angie McLeod before marriage and holds Seward's record for all time blocks with 623 in 1998 and 1999 for coach Pat Stangle. She hit 43 percent in two years which is also a school record. She had a record 344 blocks in 1999 and is also second on the list with 279 in 1998.

The Saints play Odessa at 4:30 Friday. The former assistant for current Seward coach Bert Lewallen is their head coach. Alana Rowland enters her second season as head coach after going 14-21 in the program's first ever season. Rowland coached at Seward from 2006 to 2009 with Lewallen.

The Saints face the host New Mexico Military Saturday at 10:30 a.m. Former Saint Shelby Forchtner has coached NMMI since 2006. She played at Seward as Shelby Smith in 1999 and 2001. She ranks sixth in school history in assists and third in a single season with 1,545 in 1999.

Seward plays Yavapai at 3:30 p.m. Saturday and believe it or not, there really aren't any connections.

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