By Jared Vichko

Sports Editor

When many athletes lose, they are often left feeling sorrowful and heartbroken. However, in Iraq, when athletes don’t perform to the standards of Uday Hussein, Saddam’s son and the Iraqi Olympic President, their hearts aren’t the only things that get hurt.

For years, athletes that fail to measure up to Uday’s standards have been tortured, beaten and sometimes even killed.

“The Olympic building has a 30-cell prison where athletes and anyone else out of favor with Uday are beaten and tortured,” said Latif Yahia, one of Uday’s body doubles.

In 1984, Uday was given control of Iraq’s Olympic Committee, as well as its soccer federation by his father. Iraq once sent 46 athletes to the 1980 summer Olympics, compared with only four to Sydney in 2000.

“Iraqi sports are worse than ever. Our teams used to win,” said Issam Thamer al Diwan, a former Iraqi volleyball player. “There was once pride in playing for your country. But Uday’s approach to improve performance. He thought he could use his father’s sadistic approach to improve performance. He has failed.”

Beintema was named the MAAC Rookie of the Week for her wins against Niagara, Canisius, Dartmouth, Lafayette and Columbia.

“The younger girls have really stepped up and came through when we needed them,” said Burgos. “Having no seniors has done well.”

Burgos also became the first volleyball player on the other hand, who are blessed with height, are forced to squat in very small rooms.

“Torture is the method of psychological element to the kind of torture Uday employed,” said a senior U.S. State Department official. “[Volleyball athletes] are supposed to play like tall players, so feel what it is like to be small. For the soccer players, you are supposed to be fast and quick, so I am going to beat your feet and ruin your livelihood. That was his thinking.”

Charles Forrest, CEO of INDICT, a U.S. government funded human rights group in London, looks forward to the day that the truth will be brought to light.

“The problem for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is going to be when Saddam is overthrown and people walk into the Olympic headquarters and see the torture chamber and the blood on the floor,” Forrest said. “What will they say then?”

Note: All quotes from this article were given to Sports Illustrated in a recent article.