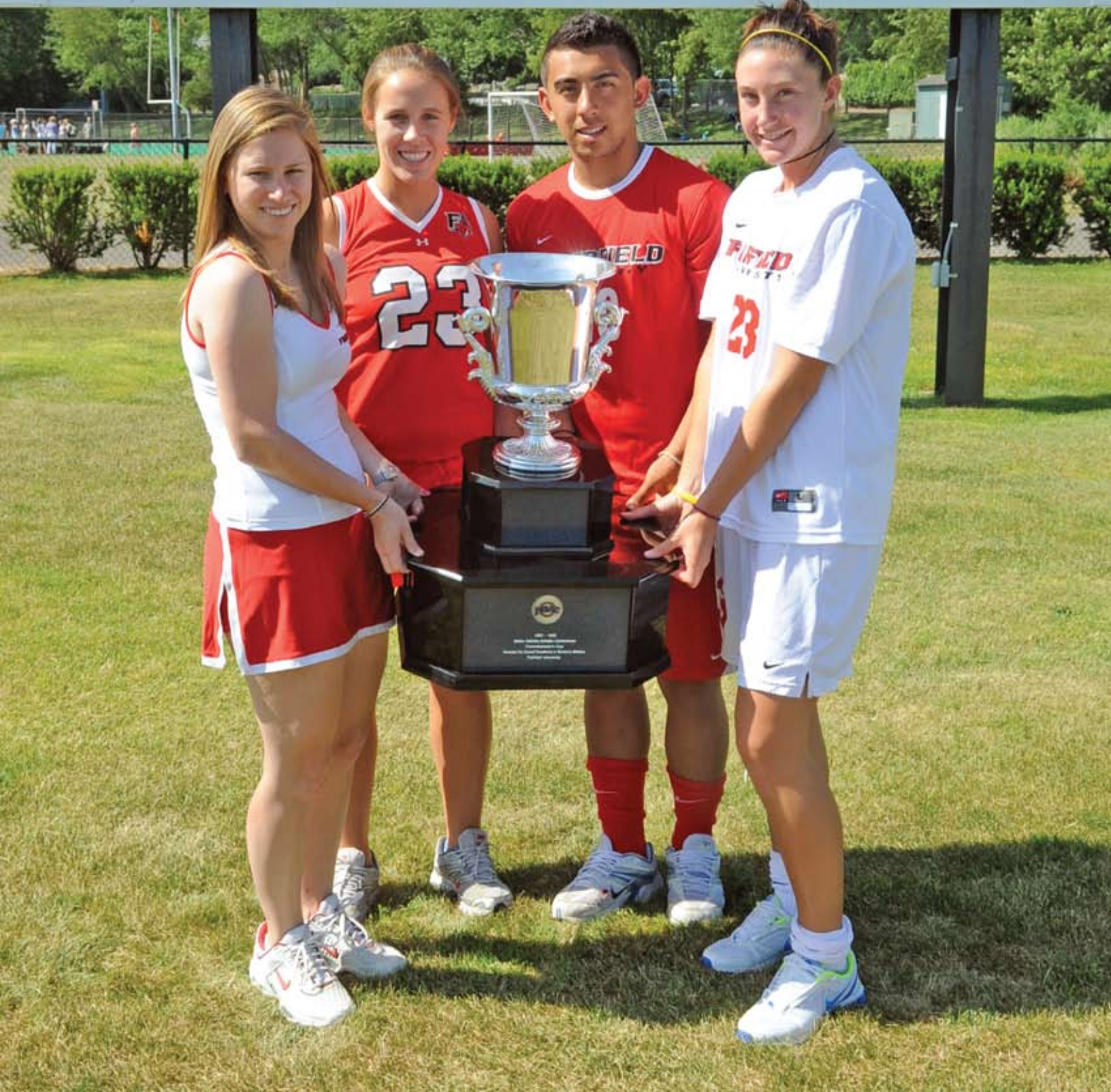




— HOME OF THE —
FAIRFIELD STAGS







Message from the Director of Athletics

Over the last year or so, I have been doing some major renovations to my home. During that time, I have become quite adept at measuring things to make sure all the dimensions are accurate so that all the pieces fit properly in place. Because of this, I can wield a ruler, a yard stick, and a tape measure with great dexterity these days, which has helped to make things move along on schedule. While the daily changes are most times not noticeable, the “before and after” photos are dramatic. And, there are those interim stages where change becomes apparent.

Like home improvement projects, college athletics can also be measured when it comes to success. Some years, the measurements of improvement are not noticeable because injuries, inexperience, or coaching changes can mask a team’s growth. But that “before and after” view can be dramatic because talent and experience come together to create a championship season.

This year, I took that “after” photo which showed that Fairfield’s athletic success was boundless. Four teams won their respective Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) championship and advanced to the NCAA tournament in 2008-09, while several other teams garnered success by winning a regular-season conference championship.

All these championships led Fairfield University to the coveted MAAC overall Commissioner’s Cup championship, which is given to the conference school with the best overall athletic success in a given year. And, the Stags won the MAAC Women’s Commissioner’s Cup as well.

Equally important, we had more than 200 student-athletes earn a 3.0 or higher GPA during the fall and spring semesters. As many as eight student-athletes achieved a 4.0 GPA and nearly 90 more were placed on the dean’s list over the course of 2008-09. Ahna Johnson, a senior on the women’s soccer team, received the St. Ignatius Loyola Medal, one of the top honors bestowed to a student by the Fairfield University Alumni Association.

Our athletic success was not an accident, but rather the result of many people coming together for a common goal. Our administration served as the architects of the project, and working with our coaches as the contractors, properly planned the steps necessary to reach the final goal. Our student-athletes took those blueprints and executed them to perfection, resulting in wins and championships on the field of play, as well as success in the classroom and the community.

But there were many others who contributed to that “after” photo of our success. Faculty, alumni, parents, and friends of our athletics program each played their role in the Stags success. With their help and support, we have been able to celebrate a great deal of success this year.

As you peruse this publication of “after” photos, I am sure you will find many interesting stories that reflect this wonderful year in athletics. Like any successful construction project, the goal is keeping it looking new and consistently upgrading it when needed. I hope you will help us sustain this year’s success into the years ahead through your financial and emotional support. With your assistance, Fairfield University athletics will prosper in 2009-10 as we strive for excellence.

I look forward to seeing you at many of our contests next year. I’ll be the one with the tape measure clipped to my belt.

Eugene P. Doris, Director of Athletics



Director of Athletics Gene Doris presents Ahna Johnson '09 with her MAAC Tournament MVP award.



Year of the Stag

Looking back at Fairfield during 2008-09, it was the type of season that every Athletics Director wants to achieve and build upon. The Stags collected four Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Regular Season Championships, four MAAC Tournament Championships, made four NCAA Tournament appearances, earned 45 All-MAAC selections, had seven MAAC Players of the Year, a triple-champion at the MAAC Swimming & Diving Championships, the MAAC Student-Athlete of the Year, and yielded 72 MAAC All-Academic selections in addition to 24 America East and ECAC Academic awards. The Stags also claimed dozens of regional and national academic and athletic accolades. For those teams that did not take home championship hardware, their impressive strides and solid performances helped contribute to Fairfield's clinching of the MAAC Overall Commissioner's Cup.

"Anytime you have what I consider to be an overall success, where you really had contributions from every one of our coaches and student-athletes, I think that's very gratifying," Athletics Director Eugene P. Doris said. "Certainly some teams got to the highest level by winning the MAAC tournament and going to the NCAA Tournament. But when you win a Commissioner's Cup, you have an overall level of success in which everyone played a part."

The year was not an overnight success for the Stags; it was the product of several years of hard work and deliberate focus. When Doris sat down with University administrators almost three years ago and discussed the strategic plan for athletics, the mission was to elevate the level of success of Fairfield Athletics, and regain the University's position as preeminent in the MAAC, and position Fairfield as Connecticut's premier mid-major program.

The Stags had not been 'stag'nant, with several programs sustaining success, but the focus was to bring Fairfield back to the top in all areas. There were mechanisms put in place in terms of funding and a redeveloped administrative support structure to

help the coaches bring their programs to new heights. The plan also emphasized fundraising and a greater visibility in the community through increased marketing opportunities.

"When you have success in a given year, you have to look at it as something that started three or four years ago and coming to fruition," Doris said. "The resources that were put in at that time were spent wisely as evidenced by the teams we were able to field. Decisions the coaches made in recruiting and scheduling were critical to this achievement.

"You cannot accomplish what we have achieved without synergy. It has to be a team effort on behalf of the student-athletes, the coaches, and the administrators to achieve our goals," Doris said. "If there's any one piece of the puzzle out of synch, you are not going to enjoy the level of success that we reached."

Certainly, the increased funding for the programs over the last few years and an increase in support staff helped lay the foundation. But it has been the coaching staff that has meant the most to the development and success of the program.

"Quite frankly, our coaches are the ones in the trenches. They recruit the student-athletes and convince them that Fairfield is the best choice for them to reach their goals both academically and athletically," Doris said. "Then when the student-athletes are here, the coaches have to mold them into a cohesive unit that is able to achieve success. So kudos go to our coaches who were able to maximize the resources they were given."

Fairfield did not remain unaffected by the recent national economic downturn and the Athletics budget had to be tightened. While never a pleasant situation, the head coaches remained focused and made the necessary adjustments to maintain their programs' standards. Whether it was the fall sports coming in for preseason later to ensure the winter and spring sports had the same opportunities, or scheduling a little closer to home, the coaches pulled together and supported one another as they always do.

Continued on page 4



Matthew Uy and Tucker Nathans

“Success motivates success. If one team wins a championship, I know they want to win another next year. If one team does not and sees their peers doing so, I know they are going to work harder. It really becomes contagious.”

— ATHLETICS DIRECTOR, EUGENE P. DORIS





Year of the Stag (continued)

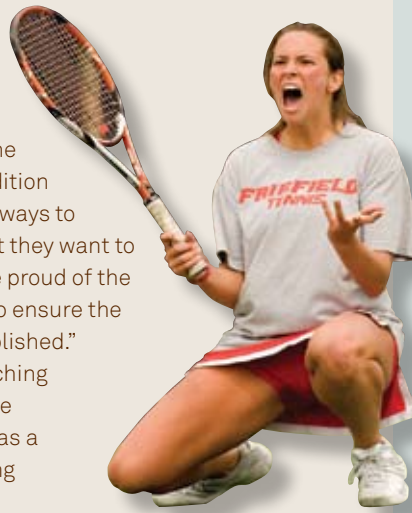
Continued from page 3

"There was an educational process that took place that enabled them to understand what we needed to do to make it work for the entire department," Doris said. "In addition to that, they began to look at creative ways to still maintain the level of achievement they want to have for their program. I can't be more proud of the way they all rallied together in order to ensure the sustainability of what we had accomplished."

The camaraderie of the entire coaching staff is an important component to the accomplishments of the department as a whole. "Our coaches probably get along as a group better than any of our peer institutions," Doris observed. "They all pull for each other and, when you can get to a point where everyone is happy for the success of everyone else, I think you've achieved a very good environment."

Success comes when the entire department works as one and coaches have their student-athletes performing at the highest level of their ability, as evidenced by the Commissioner's Cup. When that happens, winning seems to take care of itself. The next step for the Stags is not to look at 2008-09 as an end-all.

"Success motivates success. If one team wins a championship, I know they want to win another next year. If one team does not and sees their peers doing so, I know they are going to work harder. It really becomes contagious," Doris noted. "And, when being motivated to be successful is contagious, then it becomes sustainable. You can never get to a point where you are satisfied with one year of success. I do not think any of our coaches or student-athletes think that way. What we continually ask is that each of our coaches and student-athletes do the best they can with what they have. This year in particular, the results reflected their hard work."



Dana Postupack

MULTI-CHAMPIONSHIP SEASONS

The Stags have had several multi-MAAC Championship seasons, with 2008-09 stacking up among the best. Teams marked with a single asterisk (*) were MAAC Regular Season Champions only, teams marked with a double asterisk (**) took both the regular season and tournament titles, while teams marked with a plus sign (+) won the tournament title.

1992-93

Swimming & Diving
(3 individual titles)
Baseball+
Women's Tennis+

1993-94

Women's Soccer**
Swimming & Diving
(2 individual titles)
Men's Tennis+
Women's Tennis+

1994-95

Women's Soccer*
Swimming & Diving
(1 individual title)
Men's Tennis+
Women's Tennis+

1995-96

Women's Soccer+
Men's Basketball+
Men's Tennis+
Women's Tennis+

1996-97

Men's Basketball+
Women's Tennis+

1997-98

Volleyball**
Women's Soccer**
Women's Basketball+
Men's Tennis+
Women's Tennis+

1998-99

Men's Soccer*
Women's Soccer**
Volleyball**
Women's Lacrosse*

1999-2000

Men's Soccer+
Women's Soccer**
Volleyball**

2000-01

Volleyball*
Women's Lacrosse*

2001-02

Volleyball+
Softball*

2002-03

Women's Soccer*
Swimming & Diving
(1 individual title)
Women's Lacrosse*
Softball*

2003-04

Women's Tennis+
Softball*

2005-06

Women's Soccer+
Men's Soccer*
Volleyball*
Swimming & Diving
(1 individual title)

2006-07

Volleyball*
Men's Soccer**

2007-08

Volleyball*
Women's Lacrosse*

2008-09

Volleyball*
Women's Soccer+
Men's Soccer+
Women's Tennis+
Men's Tennis*
Softball*
Women's Lacrosse**



Joe Michalisin



Academic Honors

MAAC ALL-ACADEMIC

Fairfield University had 72 student-athletes named to the MAAC All-Academic Team during the 2008-09 season. To be eligible for the MAAC All-Academic Team, a student-athlete must complete two semesters at their institution and hold a cumulative GPA of 3.20 on a 4.0 scale.

Baseball

David Dudish
Chris Horning
Bill Rafferty
Mike Springer

Basketball

Sean Grzeck
Megan Caskin
Lauren Groom
Shireyll Moore

Cross Country

Ben Heslin
Kevin Manke
Caroline Conant
Ashley Doran
Eileen Smith

Golf

Jeff Bradke
R.J. Zielinski
Christiana DeStefano
Alicia Esposito
Annie Sperandio

Women's Lacrosse

Kelly Barnes
Kristen Coleman
Amy Kelleher
Renee L'Heureux
Brigid McEntee
Kylee Martin
Kate Reardon
Erin Rigby
Alyssa Vecchione
Rebecca White

Rowing

Matt McDonagh
Chris Melcher
Alexander Papa
John Tiene
Susan Clancy
Mary Crowley
Christina DiCioccio
Brianna Kouri
Michelle Mistretta
Samantha Rosen
Karisten Strong
Mary Catherine Taylor

Soccer

David Bartholomew
Erik Ilisije
Shane Kurtz



Mike Lentine
Jen DeBrincat
Casey Frobey
Ahna Johnson
Chrissie Sidie
Kelly Steele

Softball

Lisa Meringer
Sarah Minice
Jessica Stand

Swimming & Diving

Brett Carisio
Alex Connaughton
Jonathan O'Connor
Boris Romanovsky
Christina Brown
Kaitlyn Buckheit
Sasha Campbell
Meghan Carlson
Marina Meliones
Katie Merz
Allison Russoniello
Wanda Szarek
Colleen Wilson

Tennis

Ryan Berthod
Lauren Bonanno
Gabriela Davila
Dana Postupack
Marisa Voloshin

Volleyball

Katie Mann
Karlie Urbaniak

AMERICA EAST ACADEMIC HONOR ROLL

The Fairfield University field hockey team had 19 student-athletes represented on the America East Fall Academic Honor Roll. Students had to earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher to receive this recognition. Commissioner's Honor Roll status was awarded to student-athletes completing the fall semester with GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

Megan Ambrose
Sarah Borton*
Julianne Bosse
Molly Byrnes*
Taylor Callahan
Kaitlyn Devlin
Leah Furey
Brittany Gavin
Alexandria Hein
Amy Hosking*
Emily Janis
Melanie Leo
Amanda Love*
Carly McCullough**
Kristen McManus*
Anne Nieuwenhuis
Michelle Onofrio
Jill Piacquadio*
Marit Westenberg*

* Commissioner's Honor Roll

**America East Field Hockey All-Academic Team selection

ECAC ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM

The Fairfield University men's lacrosse team had five members on the ECAC All-Academic Team. To be eligible for the honor, a student-athlete must maintain at least a 3.20 cumulative GPA through at least four semesters of work at his current institution, be a significant contributor to his team, and have participated in at least 50 percent of the games (33 percent of the minutes for goalies).

Sean Bannon
Mike Gianelle
Steve Golmont
Billy Honovich
Doug Kuring

ESPN The Magazine/CoSIDA

To be eligible for Academic All-America honors, a student-athlete must be a varsity starter or key reserve, maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.30 on a scale of 4.00, have reached sophomore athletic and academic standing at his/her current institution, and be nominated by his/her sports information director. Since the program's inception in 1952, CoSIDA has bestowed Academic All-America honors on more than 14,000 student-athletes in Division I, II, III and NAIA, covering all NCAA championship sports.

Academic All-America First Team

Ahna Johnson (Women's Soccer)

All-District First Team

Ahna Johnson (Women's Soccer)

All-District Second Team

Chris Horning (Baseball)

MISCELLANEOUS

Numerous student-athletes and teams earned academic recognition from various coaching organizations.

Individual

National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA)/adidas Scholar All-America First Team
NSCAA/adidas Scholar All-East Region First Team
Ahna Johnson

National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) National Academic Squad

Megan Ambrose, Sarah Borton, Taylor Callahan, Kaitlyn Devlin, Emily Janis, Kristen McManus, Carly McCullough, Jill Piacquadio

Team

Cross Country

U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) All-Academic Team Award

Field Hockey

NFHCA Division I National Academic Team Award

Women's Swimming & Diving

College Swimming Coaches Association of America (CSCAA) Scholar All-American Award (fall and spring semesters)



NCAA/MAAC Champions

WOMEN'S SOCCER

For the second time in four seasons, and the sixth time in program history, the women's soccer team earned a berth to the NCAA Tournament. The Stags did so this season in dramatic fashion. Two overtime periods were not enough to shake a feisty Siena squad, so the game moved to penalty kicks. Kelly Boudreau snared the final attempt by the Saints, and Casey Frobey knocked her chance home, for a 5-4 penalty kick advantage, and a spot in the MAAC Tournament final.

In the championship game, Ahna Johnson provided all the offense the Stags would need with her first career hat trick. In addition, Boudreau and the Stags defensive efforts blanked top-seeded Loyola to capture the crown.

Fairfield drew the top-ranked offense in the nation, Oklahoma State, in the first round of the tournament. The two teams battled scorelessly into the second half, until the Cowgirls snuck home a goal in the 55th minute. The Stags had several chances in the final minutes, including two corner kicks in the final 60 seconds of play, but could not find the back of the net.



Fairfield finished the year at 15-5-3 and with its seventh MAAC tournament title. While Johnson received numerous awards, the team as a whole was recognized by coaches around the league and nation, bringing home over a dozen postseason awards as a group.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

The women's tennis team returned to NCAA Tournament play for the second time in the program's history, the first coming in 2004. The Stags earned the second-seed at the MAAC Championship and opened play with a convincing 7-0 win over Saint Peter's in the quarterfinals. The semifinal match was a nailbiter in singles, but the Stags domination, 3-0, in the doubles, earned the decisive point, and earned the squad a spot in the tournament final.

Against top-seeded Niagara, the Stags, for the third time in tournament play, swept the doubles matches for a 1-0 advantage. Fairfield then won at number one, three, and six singles to clinch the championship and berth in the NCAA Tournament.

The Stags drew one of the top teams in the nation in the opening round of play, traveling to Los Angeles, Calif. to take on #7 USC. Fairfield put forth a valiant effort in the match, but fell 4-0 against players all ranked in the top-90 in the

Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) national rankings at the time of the match.

All told, Fairfield posted a 16-5 record, with a 6-1 mark in conference play. Numerous players were honored by the league's head coaches, highlighted by Paulina Rys being named the MAAC Co-Player of the Year. The Stags' MAAC crown was the eighth title in the history of the program, including five straight from 1993-1997.



WOMEN'S LACROSSE

With the memories of a one-goal defeat on the same field, to the same Marist Red Foxes in the MAAC Championship game a year ago, the Stags were not going to watch a halftime lead slip away again. This time around, Fairfield jumped out to a 7-0 lead midway through the first half, and did not let up, on its way to a 19-9 championship victory.

While the Stags celebrated the program's second MAAC title, there was still work to be done. To earn a berth in the NCAA Tournament, Fairfield would have to defeat Sacred Heart in an NCAA Play-In Game. Once again the Stags jumped out early, taking a 5-0 lead, before the Pioneers came roaring back, closing within a goal, 9-8, early in the second half. The Fairfield senior class took over at that point, netting five of the next seven goals, as the team took an insurmountable lead, pulling away for a 16-10 victory.

Playing in its first-ever NCAA Tournament, Fairfield drew Penn in the opening round. The Stags gave the fourth-seeded Quakers all they could handle, scoring three of the last four goals to close within two with 81 seconds to play. Fairfield had several chances in the final 65 seconds of play to draw within one, but were unable to convert any more goals, falling 10-8.

For the second consecutive year the Stags won a program-



record 17 games, posting a 17-3 mark. For the first time in program history, Fairfield finished the year nationally ranked, being voted 19th by the nation's coaches. Kristen Coleman was named the MAAC Offensive Player of the Year for the second time in as many seasons, and was featured in *Sports Illustrated* May 25th 'Faces In The Crowd'. Rebecca White, the MAAC Tournament MVP, along with Coleman, was selected All-Northeast Region by the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association. All told, eight Fairfield players received MAAC postseason awards.



MEN'S SOCCER

With a national television audience watching, the Stags did what no other team could do in nearly two full seasons - defeat #6 Loyola. Jack Burrige headed a ball into the back of the Greyhounds net in the 26th minute and the defense stood tall, earning the Stags their second MAAC crown in the last three seasons. Christian Uy was named the championship's MVP and was joined on the All-Tournament team by Tom Clements, Matthew Uy, and Mike Lentine.

The win was more dramatic because it was the team's fifth consecutive win, all by shutout. Fairfield was 3-3 in league play after a 4-0 loss at Niagara. The Stags rebounded with a 4-0 win over Canisius, before heading home and knocking off Marist and Siena, by 3-0 tallies. The Stags ended up playing the Saints in the MAAC semifinal, and dominated them again, advancing to the final with a 4-0 victory.

The next night the Stags found out they would face off with in-state rival UConn in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. Fairfield had knocked off the Huskies in the first round of the 2006 NCAA Tournament, but were not as fortunate this time around, falling 1-0. The Stags played the Huskies evenly throughout the contest, but an own goal in the 15th minute gave UConn all the edge it would need.

Fairfield finished the season with an 11-8 mark, having posted a 6-3 record in conference action. Christian Uy was the lone Stag to be selected First-Team All-MAAC, while his brother Matthew, and Clements were both voted to the All-MAAC Second Team. The trio was also selected All-Northeast Region by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).



Indescribable

PROFILE: AHNA JOHNSON

There is a path that has been beaten to the door of head women's soccer coach Jim O'Brien's office this year by people in search of quotes to describe his senior captain, Ahna Johnson.

"There are so many words to describe the type of person that Ahna is," O'Brien said shortly after graduation. "But it was getting to the point that she had been honored so often, with truly deserved accolades, that I was beginning to run out of words to describe her."

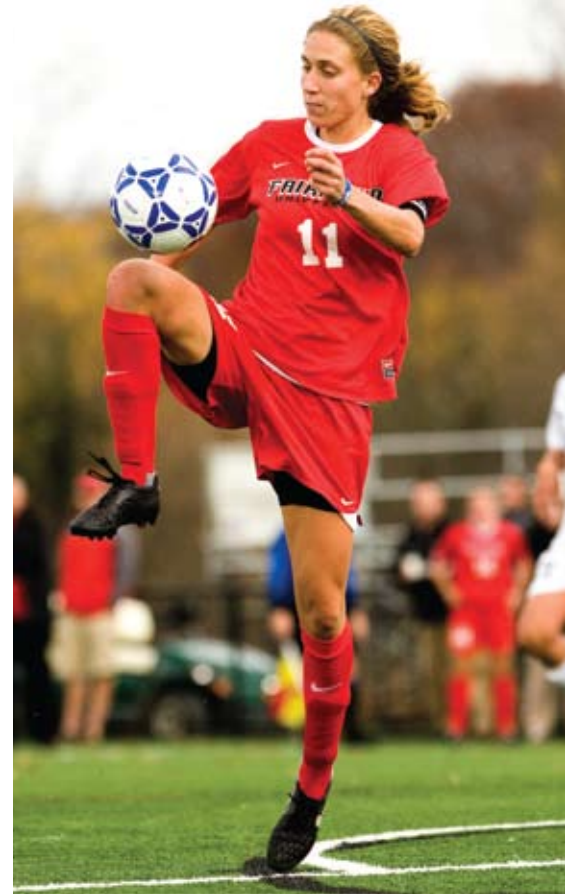
And the parade of awards may not be done yet. Johnson was named the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Female Student-Athlete of the Year in July, and is the conference's nominee for the NCAA Woman of the Year award. Each conference is eligible to nominate a candidate, with three finalists being honored at a dinner in October. The candidates are selected based on four characteristics: academic achievement, athletic excellence, service and leadership, and a personal statement.

As team captain, Johnson put together a career year as a senior, becoming the first player in the program's 17-year history to earn All-America accolades, picking up NSCAA/adidas Third Team honors. She touched net 15 times during the year, leading the Stags on the offensive end with 34 points. She was named the MAAC Offensive Player of the Year in leading Fairfield to the number two-seed in the conference championship.

It was in the two games of the MAAC Tournament in Loudonville, N.Y. that may have cemented her place in program lore. She notched a penalty kick after the Stags played Siena to a scoreless double-overtime tie, and advanced to the final. There she netted her first career hat trick, in a 3-0 upset of top-seeded Loyola, and was named the most valuable player of the tournament and led the Stags to the NCAA Tournament for the second time in her career.

With all of her on-field success, it is hard to fathom that Johnson may be even more impressive in the classroom. There she graduated with a double major in physics and information systems. She was selected an *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-America First Team selected by CoSIDA, the first player to do so in program history. She is also the first player in program history to be named to the NSCAA/adidas First Team Scholar All-America Team.





A native of Hamden, Conn., Johnson had been giving back to her community well before coming to Fairfield. But playing soccer at the Division I level, and maintaining a near perfect GPA as a double major, did not slow her down. She helped organize a donation of over \$2,000 to an elementary school in Nicaragua that purchased soccer uniforms and gear. She was a peer tutor in each of her years at Fairfield, as well as being the soccer representative to the Fairfield Student Athlete Advisory Committee, serving as co-president of the organization as a senior.

“Ahna truly represented what a Fairfield student should be,” said O’Brien. “She excelled in the classroom and on the soccer field, but also was involved in helping others, and that, in my opinion, is what makes her an even more impressive young woman.”

The Fairfield Alumni Association and Alumni Office recognized the impressive sum of Johnson’s all-around contributions to the University, and bestowed upon her Fairfield’s highest honor, the St. Ignatius Loyola Medal. The award is presented annually to an

“Ahna truly represented what a Fairfield student should be. She excelled in the classroom and on the soccer field, but also was involved in helping others, and that, in my opinion, is what makes her an even more impressive young woman.”

— HEAD WOMEN’S SOCCER COACH JIM O’BRIEN

outstanding full-time undergraduate senior who has committed him/herself to the Jesuit education ideals of maintaining high academic standards in addition to substantial involvement in community service and/or extracurricular activities. The recipients maximize opportunities for intellectual, emotional, and social growth throughout their time at Fairfield.

Johnson continues to play soccer, taking her show abroad this summer. She signed to play professionally in Switzerland, and with teammate Robyn Decker ’09, headed overseas just days after graduation.

“I envy their new coach,” said O’Brien. “I just hope he has a thesaurus handy for talking to reporters.”



Fall Highlights



Justin Burse

MEN'S SOCCER

- Men's soccer won its second MAAC Tournament in three years with a 1-0 win over #6 Loyola in the championship game of the MAAC Tournament, handing the Greyhounds their first defeat in 27 matches.
- The Stags advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the second time in three years, earning a first round meeting with UConn. Justin Burse made five saves in net for the Stags, while not allowing the Huskies to touch net. Still, the Stags suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss, falling on an own goal in the 15th minute.
- Tom Clements, Christian Uy, and Matthew Uy were named to the NSCAA/adidas All-Region Team, after garnering All-MAAC First-Team accolades. Christian Uy was named the Most Valuable Player of the MAAC Tournament, and was joined on the All-Tournament Team by his brother, Clements, and Mike Lentine.



Robyn Decker

WOMEN'S SOCCER

- Freshman Kelly Boudreau stopped Siena's fifth penalty kick attempt and junior Casey Frobey knocked her chance home, advancing the Stags to the MAAC Championship Game. There Ahna Johnson earned MVP honors after netting her first career hat trick and the Stags earned the program's sixth MAAC Tournament Title and NCAA Tournament bid.
- Fairfield advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the second time in four seasons, where it fell 1-0 to Oklahoma State, the nation's top ranked offense entering the postseason. It marked the Stags fifth NCAA Tournament appearance in the last dozen seasons.
- Ahna Johnson was named the MAAC Offensive Player of the Year after leading the team in offense, with 34 points. She became the first Stag in program history to earn *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-America First Team accolades, as well as being named to the NSCAA/adidas All-America Third Team.
- The Stags earned a dozen postseason awards, with Johnson, Robyn Decker, and Nicole Cavallaro earning All-MAAC First-Team honors. Rookies Spenser Allaway, Kelly Boudreau, Jasmin Corniel, and Alyssa Decker were all named to the All-MAAC Second Team and the All-MAAC Rookie Team.

VOLLEYBALL

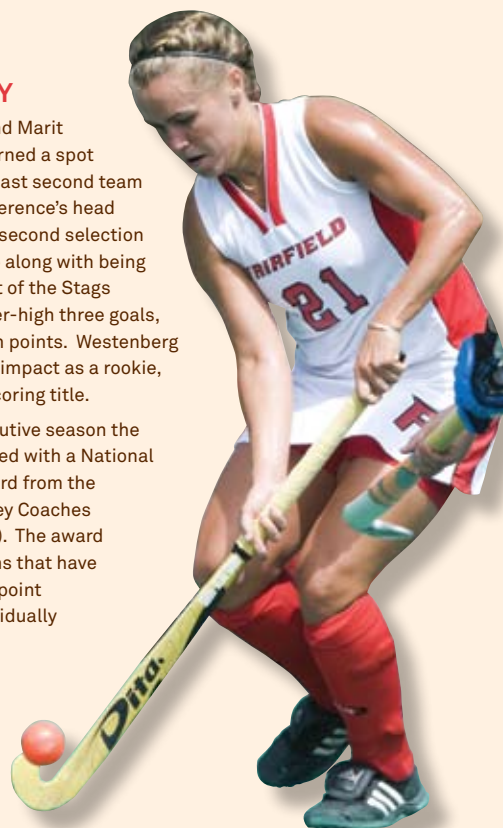
- The Stags won 20 matches for the third straight season and for the 10th time in the program's varsity history.
- Fairfield went 16-2 during the regular season against MAAC foes, capturing the program's fifth consecutive regular season crown, and the 10th all-time.
- Junior Katie Mann became the 10th player in program history to reach 1,000 career kills on November 9 versus Siena. She finished the season ranked ninth all-time with 1,069 kills, having never missed a set (347) during her collegiate career.
- Brandi Higa completed her Fairfield career with 1,361 digs, fifth all-time, and having made four appearances in the MAAC Championship Final.
- Alija Pittenger led the Stags to a 20-13 mark in her first year as a collegiate head coach, the second-best debut for a Fairfield volleyball coach.



Brandi Higa

FIELD HOCKEY

- Carly McCullough and Marit Westenberg both earned a spot on the All-America East second team as voted by the conference's head coaches. It was the second selection for McCullough, who along with being an instrumental part of the Stags defense, had a career-high three goals, one assist and seven points. Westenberg made an immediate impact as a rookie, tying for the team scoring title.
- For the sixth consecutive season the Stags were recognized with a National Team Academic Award from the National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA). The award is presented to teams that have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0. Individually the Stags had eight student-athletes named the NFHCA National Academic Squad.
- The Stags earned their first-ever America East Conference win on October 4, when Molly Byrnes netted the game's lone goal in the second half of play in a home game.
- Emily Janis finished her career ranked in the top-10 in all three offensive categories. Her 16 assists rank fifth all-time, while her 16 goals are ninth, and her 48 career points are good for seventh.



Emily Janis

CROSS COUNTRY

- The men's cross country team received the Academic Progress Rate (APR) Public Recognition Award from the NCAA for having an APR in the top-10 percent of all cross country programs in the country.
- The Stags had five student-athletes selected to the All-MAAC Academic Team. Kevin Manke and Ben Heslin were honored on the men's side, while Caroline Conant, Ashley Doran, and Eileen Smith were named from the women's squad.
- Both squads improved by two spots at the MAAC Championship, held this year at the Disney Wide World of Sports Complex. Freshmen Kristen Golen was the Stags top female finisher, crossing 19th out of 123 runners, while classmate Vin Ferrer was the team's top male finisher, finishing 38th out of 118 competitors.
- For the 32nd time, Fairfield hosted the Victor F. Leeber, S.J. Invitational, with 22 teams and nearly 300 competitors taking to the course on the Stags campus. Stags rookie Kristen Golen placed ninth overall to help the women's team to a fourth place finish while Vin Ferrer finished in 14th place to help the men to a fifth place finish.



Kristen Golen



Vin Ferrer



Far From Home

PROFILE: MICHELLE YOSHIDA

It's a typical December morning in New England – frigid with a biting wind, making it that much colder. It's silent on campus as swimmer Michelle Yoshida makes her way through a light snow from her dorm room to the RecPlex for 7 a.m. practice. Yoshida, bundled from head to toe in hopes of keeping out the cold, enters the building and is hit by the heat and thick chlorine smell permeating the building. Her stomach flips and she thinks fondly of home.

Prior to arriving at Fairfield in September, Yoshida had spent her days swimming at the storied Punahou School in Hawaii. She forged her name in the school's record book and collected state titles and All-American honors all while swimming outdoors in the fabulous Pacific weather.

"I knew that I would be competing in a very different environment, mostly due to the difference in weather. I dreaded walking to morning practice in the cold weather and having my wet hair get so cold when I walked to class after practice," Yoshida remembered.

She also had to adjust to swimming indoors, in facilities that not only get steamy but have the pungent chlorine smell (something which still makes her a little nauseous), and to swimming in a 25-meter pool as opposed to the yard pool she was accustomed to. The time commitment and level of competition were also things she would need to get acclimated to. There were bigger, life-altering adjustments to be made. She moved 5,000 miles from home, leaving the school she had attended since kindergarten, to the East Coast where almost every aspect of life was completely different.

"On the one hand, I was ready to meet new people and experience new things in college, but on the other hand, I was nervous because I would be so far away from the comfort and security of my life in Hawaii," Yoshida said. "I knew that Hawaii was very different from the East Coast and I was nervous about how I would adapt to the lifestyle, climate, and people."

She may have been nervous, but the freshman never had any doubts about Fairfield; she knew it was where she belonged.

"When I was deciding where to attend college, an important factor in my decision was finding a coach and swim team that I would enjoy training with and being around because I knew that I would be spending a lot of time with my coach and teammates," Yoshida said. "I already knew that Coach Bill [Farley] was a great person and coach, and he assured me that the swimmers on the Fairfield team were good people. I trusted his word. My teammates went out of their way to make me feel welcome and assured me that I would like attending college at Fairfield. They made me feel like they truly wanted me to be here."

Her teammates helped with the transition, giving her advice on



clothing and other gear she would need to get through the winter. From a swimming standpoint, they were also essential in helping Yoshida shift to collegiate swimming.

"They explained what to expect at dual meets and how they are set up – lane assignments, how every point counts for the team, and about competing for my school," she said. "The captains helped keep the team focused and spirited. My teammates would always cheer me on, encourage me, congratulate me, and make me feel that they were excited for me."

It was hard not to be excited for Yoshida as she made a statement right away.

"We tried not to put too much pressure on her at the start," head coach Bill Farley said. "But at times in practice, I'd look at her and think, 'My God, she can beat the guys.' We knew we had something special as she helped raise the competition level of the entire team."

All this from a young woman that was worried she had reached her potential.

"I had hit a plateau in my swimming times for several years. My lack of improvement was very frustrating. I was concerned that I had reached my full potential and was not going to get any faster," she said. "My primary goal was to improve my times but also to represent Fairfield well and be a good asset to the team."

Yoshida was certainly an asset to the team throughout the dual season, winning numerous individual events, anchoring relays, setting records, and earning Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Swimmer of the Week accolades three times. But it was the MAAC Championships that would indicate what a valued member of the team she, in fact, was.

For five months, Yoshida and the Stags trained for the biggest competition of the year. A few weeks before the meet, Farley stopped the long, hard workouts and started the swimmers on their taper, fine-tuning them for the meet. During that time, Yoshida contemplated her race strategy and thought about what her competitors could bring. It would be a pressure-filled situation and Yoshida was excited and ready for the task.

"I knew that it was possible for me to win the three events that I swam, but I was not really focused on winning," she said modestly. "I wanted to focus on improving my times. I knew that if I improved my times, that I would be good competition."

Just improving her times would prove to be an understatement. On the first day of competition, Yoshida blew the other swimmers out of the water in the 50 yard freestyle, posting a time of 23.76 seconds to set school, conference, and pool records. She was also a part of two Fairfield relay records.



The next night it was more of the same. This time, Yoshida won the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 1:51.56, setting a school and a MAAC record. It was the first time since 1994 in which Fairfield had a double champion at the event. She notched a time of 51.26 seconds in the 100 yard freestyle to set the Fairfield record and break the MAAC record by nearly one second.

In all, Yoshida came away from the event with three titles, three MAAC records, six program records (three individual and three relay), and qualification for the ECAC Championships in numerous events.

At the ECAC Championships, she continued to impress, finishing sixth in the 50 yard freestyle, seventh in the 100 yard freestyle, and ninth in the 200 yard freestyle, breaking her own school records that she had set just two weeks earlier.

Upon conclusion of the season, the Fairfield University Female Freshman of the Year had made an indelible mark on the Fairfield swimming program. In addition to her three MAAC crowns and

“We tried not to put too much pressure on her at the start but at times in practice, I’d look at her and think, ‘My God, she can beat the guys.’ We knew we had something special as she helped raise the competition level of the entire team.”

— HEAD COACH BILL FARLEY

impressive performance at ECACs, she was now a part of 14 program records.

It might be easy to become complacent with such a remarkable season, but that would be highly out of character for this humble swimmer from Hawaii.

“On a personal level, I would like to continue to improve my times. I want to see how far I can push myself and improve,” Yoshida said. “As a member of the Fairfield swim team, I want to do my best to contribute to building our team to become stronger.”

Yoshida is a perfect cornerstone for a burgeoning team.



Katie Mann

2008–09 Calendar

JULY 2008

- Mike Waldvogel joins the Fairfield University athletics staff as head women's lacrosse coach

AUGUST 2008

- Andrew Copelan named head men's lacrosse coach, joining the staff after serving as an assistant coach at the University of Maryland
- Men's basketball earns invitation to O'Reilly Auto Parts Puerto Rico Tip-Off tournament, facing National Invitation Tournament participant Virginia Tech and NCAA tournament participant Missouri

SEPTEMBER 2008

- Men's golfer R.J. Zielinski named a Cleveland Golf All-America Scholar by the Golf Coaches Association of America (GCAA). He becomes just the second player in program history to earn the national award
- Women's soccer earns points in NSCAA Coaches poll after posting a 7-1-1 record to start the season
- Cross country teams host Fairfield Invitational and Victor F. Leeber Invitational meets

OCTOBER 2008

- Field hockey posts first-ever win in America East play with 1-0 decision over the University of Vermont
- Rowing programs dedicate four shells to alumni Chris Duffy, Rick Fleitas, Jim Heneghan, and Father Laurence J. O'Neil, S.J.
- Freshman Joe Michalisin teamed up with Chip Palumbo to capture the back draw of the Connecticut State Championships. Michalisin goes on to earn the MAAC Tennis Rookie and Player of the Year awards in the spring

NOVEMBER 2008

- Men's soccer defeats sixth-ranked Loyola to capture the 2008 MAAC tournament title and advance to the NCAA tournament. The Stags play the University of Connecticut in the first round of the NCAA tournament
- Women's soccer earns the 2008 MAAC tournament title with a 3-0 win over Loyola College to return to the NCAA tournament. The Stags take on Oklahoma State University in the first round of the NCAA tournament
- Volleyball captures the MAAC regular-season championship and the top seed in the conference tournament

DECEMBER 2008

- More than 200 student-athletes earn a 3.0 GPA or higher in fall semester, including 90 dean's list student-athletes and six student-athletes with a 4.0 GPA
- Athletics, in conjunction with Fairfield University Media Center, produces first of five student-run broadcasts during men's and women's basketball seasons

JANUARY 2009

- Women's basketball defeats nationally-ranked Marist College in front of national audience (ESPNU), the third victory of an eight-game win streak
- Jim O'Brien earns the NSCAA/adidas Region Women's Soccer Coach of the Year
- Swimmer Kekoa Tapparra wins three events in MAAC tri-meet with Iona and Loyola, which will help propel the freshman to an ECAC championship berth

FEBRUARY 2009

- Women's swimmer Michelle Yoshida captured the 50, 100, 200-yard freestyle crowns and set school, MAAC, and pool records in the process at the 2009 MAAC championships
- Men's basketball appears on third ESPN channel when its BracketBuster game is televised on ESPN360. The Stags also appeared on ESPNU and ESPN2 during the regular season
- Women's basketball hosts National Girls and Women in Sport Day and raises breast cancer awareness with "Think Pink" game



R.J. Zielinski

MARCH 2009

- Co-host 2009 NCAA Men's Ice Hockey East Regional in front of sold-out crowd at the Arena at Harbor Yard
- Men's lacrosse earns a place in the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association (USILA) national poll, reaching 19th in the ranking
- Women's swimming and diving earns Academic All-America Team honors from the College Swimming Coaches Association of America (CSCAA) for the fall 2008 semester after posting a 3.39 GPA. The GPA ranked 15th out of 93 Division I programs

APRIL 2009

- Five teams honored with NCAA Public Recognition Award for academic success – baseball, men's cross country, softball, men's and women's tennis
- Women's lacrosse earns points in the national poll, and would eventually earn its first-ever ranking in the final national poll
- Women's tennis captures the MAAC tournament title and advances to the NCAA tournament for a first-round match up with the University of Southern California

MAY 2009

- Ahna Johnson and Christian Uy named Fairfield University's Female and Male Athletes of the Year by vote of the head coaches
- Softball captures the MAAC regular-season title and advances to the conference tournament
- Women's lacrosse finishes first in MAAC standings with unbeaten conference slate, win the NCAA play-in game against Sacred Heart University to advance to the NCAA tournament for the first time, and take nationally-ranked University of Pennsylvania to the limit before falling in the first round of the NCAA tournament
- Softball junior Jessica Stand represents Fairfield University at the NCAA Student-Athlete Development conference in Orlando, where student-athletes gather to discuss and explore viable solutions to critical issues facing student-athletes. She was one of 325 student-athletes selected out of a pool of 1,200 applicants
- Ben Andrews and James Jessup become first Fairfield men's rowing medalists at Dad Vails in over 15 years, placing third in the men's pair
- Baseball student-athlete Tucker Nathans featured on ESPN's *Campus Connection Show* with video produced by Fairfield students Frank Romano and Bryan Wrabel



Christian Uy, winner of Male Athlete of the Year Award, with Father Jeffrey von Arx, S.J. President.



Kristen Coleman

JUNE 2009

- Fairfield University wins 2009 MAAC Overall and Women's Commissioner's Cups
- Ahna Johnson named MAACs nominee for NCAA Woman of the Year
- More than 200 student-athletes earned a 3.0 or higher GPA in the spring semester, including 88 dean's list student-athletes and eight student-athletes with a 4.0 GPA
- Women's lacrosse student-athlete Kristin Coleman featured in *Sports Illustrated's "Faces In The Crowd"*
- Announced the formation of the Connecticut 6 Basketball Classic, joining Central Connecticut, Hartford, Quinnipiac, Sacred Heart, and Yale in the one-night event



Carolyn Downey



Winter Highlights



Greg Nero

MEN'S BASKETBALL

- Finished the 2008-09 season with a 17-15 overall record
- Ed Cooley became the first Fairfield men's basketball coach to post a .500 or better MAAC record in each of his first three seasons (30-24)
- Posted first winning season since the 2003-04 campaign despite missing four starters from opening day lineup
- Advanced to MAAC Tournament semifinals
- Greg Nero named to All-MAAC Third Team
- Televised nationally by ESPNU – Virginia Tech, Chattanooga, Connecticut, and Canisius; and by ESPN2 – Niagara.
- Traveled to San Juan for the 2008 Puerto Rico Tip-Off Tournament, and played Virginia Tech, Missouri, and Chattanooga

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

- Advanced to MAAC Tournament semifinals
- Baendu Lowenthal named to All-MAAC First Team; Stephanie Geehan collected All-MAAC Third Team honors; Desiree Pina earned MAAC All-Rookie accolades
- Megan Caskin, Lauren Groom, and Shireyll Moore earned MAAC All-Academic
- Registered first win in program history versus a nationally-ranked team with victory against 20th-ranked Marist
- Schedule placed Stags against Big 12 foe Kansas, Big East opponent Villanova, and the Atlantic Coast Conference's Boston College
- Tara Flaherty toured Europe with USA Athletes International during June and posted a 4-2 record against local, college, and professional teams in England, France, and Holland
 - Meka Werts and Sabra Wrice signed a professional basketball contract to play basketball in Europe for the 2008-09 season



Baendu Lowenthal

WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

- The team enjoyed a record-setting season led by freshmen Michelle Yoshida (14 school records) and Lauren Kennedy (7 school records)
- Finished fifth at MAAC Championships and 11th at ECAC Championships
- Michelle Yoshida became first Fairfield student-athlete to win three events at MAAC Championships
- Michelle Yoshida earned three MAAC Swimmer of the Week honors
- Earned Academic All-America honors as a team with a 3.39 GPA from College Swimming Coaches Association of America
- Christina Brown, Kaitlyn Buckheit, Sasha Campbell, Meghan Carlson, Marina Meliones, Katie Merz, Allison Russoniello, Wanda Szarek, and Colleen Wilson earned MAAC All-Academic honors



Lauren Kennedy

MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

- Brett Carisio, Alex Connaughton, Jonathan O'Connor, and Boris Romanovsky earned MAAC All-Academic
- Finished seventh at the MAAC Championships and 17th at ECAC championships
- Nine student-athletes qualified for the ECAC Championships, including eight first-time qualifiers
- Freshman Andrew Robinson set his seventh school record in the 100 freestyle during the ECAC Championships
- Taylor Stecko took sixth overall for diving at the ECAC championships
- Kekoa Tapparra posted the third best times among MAAC swimmers for the 100 breaststroke, 200 breaststroke, and the 400 IM



Taylor Stecko



NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S ICE HOCKEY REGIONAL

- Partnered with Yale University to bring the men's ice hockey regional to the state of Connecticut for the first time
- Partnered with city of Bridgeport and Fairfield County Sports Commission for SportsFest, an interactive sports festival located in downtown Bridgeport
- Hosted Air Force, Michigan, Vermont, and Yale in a four-team East Regional
- Played in front of a sold-out crowd (9,500), which represented the largest ice hockey crowd in Arena at Harbor Yard history
- Hosted more than 40 media outlets including national, regional, and local media



Digging Deep

PROFILE: BEN ANDREWS AND JAMES JESSUP

The bronze medals hung from the necks of Ben Andrews '11 and James Jessup '10, a serendipitous ending to one of the most successful rowing seasons in Fairfield University history.

It was the first time that the pair lost a race during the 2009 spring season, a slight disappointment to the duo. Yet, the third-place finish at Dad Vails - one of the most prestigious rowing events in the country - came against many of the nation's top rowers.

Although the streak ended, Andrews and Jessup felt that they had proven themselves with a medal at Dad Vails.

"We were very determined to get a medal," Andrews said. "We held second place into the last 400 meters when we unfortunately hit a log and lost a lot of our momentum. But we were glad to recover and still medal."

"I was excited but I wasn't ready to accept bronze," Jessup said. "I wanted more."

Although they wanted more, both student-athletes and head coach David Patterson knew that this type of performance would potentially alter the way Fairfield men's rowing team is viewed by others.

"When I coached at Iona, we were able to build a program based on the success of two guys who rowed to a silver medal in the pair in 2007," Patterson said. "I am hoping that the bronze medal that Ben and James earned at Dad Vails will do a similar job of putting Fairfield men's rowing program on the map."

Andrews and Jessup became only the second Fairfield pair to win a medal at Dad Vails. The first pair included Chris Duffy '93, who went on to row for the United States at many international events. This type of success was not something that would seem probable considering that the duo had not rowed together as a pair, nor did it have very much experience in the event overall.

"I had rowed the pair once or twice in high school," Andrews said. "I also rowed a single and a double in high school so I knew how to steer a small boat."

"I had no experience in a pair," Jessup said. "All of my experience was in bigger boats that require different technique. Still, I was excited about this season, but I really had no idea how it would turn out."

Yet, Coach Patterson saw something that these two student-athletes may not have seen in the early morning hours of practice. He witnessed both commitment and talent in these young men, which he felt would make them achieve beyond their own expectations.

"I suspected that the combination would be successful because I was well aware of the talents of the two oarsmen," Patterson said. "I had a good understanding of the relative standards of athletes that typically row the pair. With Ben and James, I knew we had two seasoned competitors who performed well in both college and high school, whom I could trust to do what was required."



Ben Andrews



James Jessup

As one can imagine, simply having talent without any training does not necessarily bring results. Because of that principle, Andrews and Jessup trained above and beyond what was asked of them by the coaching staff.

Their day would begin a little after 5 a.m. when the alarm clock announced it was time for practice. After a two-hour workout, the student-athletes returned to campus for class. After a full day of classes, Andrews and Jessup would meet up once again for another training session.

"Outside of practice, Ben and I would spend on average about two hours training by running, lifting, and using the ergs," Jessup said.

It is only through their training that this pair could be successful in such a long and grueling season. If you hear them describe a race, you might wonder why they engage in this activity.

"A race is the most intimidating thing there is in rowing," Andrews said. "It is 2000 meters of pure excruciating primal pain. When you approach the start line, the world goes silent. Then, the boom of the starter's voice says 'Attention, Row'. The first five hundred falls away quickly as your excitement drags you through. During the last part of the second 500 meters, we prepare for the mid-course in which we make an extra effort to pull away from the competitors. After this excitement, we settle into the most painful two minutes of our lives - the third 500 meters. Here, crews either win or lose the race. We persevere through that and enter the last 500 meters - the glory meters. We somehow muster the strength to sprint taking up the speed and power of our previous strokes until we hear the air horn that marks the end of the epic battle between our minds, bodies, and 2000 meters."

With such an arduous and strenuous demand on an individual's psyche, there needs to be a level of support between teammates.



There is no cheering section in the middle of a river or lake, as fans are relegated to the banks and are often times out of shouting range.

“During the race, it is all based upon trust with whomever is in your boat,” Jessup said. “The toughest part of the race is the middle and final sprints. It’s all about knowing that the guy sitting behind you is going through the same pain as you and is still fighting.”

It’s that type of commitment that has made this pair so successful in their first year as a pair. Coach Patterson hopes that Andrews’ and Jessup’s commitment to each other as well as the program will be able to inspire their teammates, which in turn will help the program continue to grow as it approaches its third season as a varsity sport.

“The most important quality that these two guys brought to the pair was a commitment to succeed, helped by their long-term investment to the conditioning required for the sport,” Patterson said. “The biggest contribution that Ben and James can make to this team is to spread their love and understanding of the sport to a whole new class of freshmen.”

Their love for Fairfield University does not pertain to just the

I actually love this University so much that I am also an orientation leader, among other things, and that kind of opportunity is not available for a lot of athletes at other universities. I have the opportunity to do everything that I want ... science major, be actively involved in student life, and be a student-athlete.”

— BEN ANDREWS

rowing program, as they show an equal amount of enthusiasm for the entire Fairfield experience.

“Fairfield is absolutely amazing,” Andrews said. “It gives me the ability to be an athlete, a scholar, and have a social life. At many of the big rowing schools, the athletes are separated from the general population, but not at Fairfield. We are able to mingle with a plethora of people. I actually love this University so much that I am also an orientation leader among other things and that kind of opportunity is not available for a lot of athletes at other universities. I have the opportunity to do everything that I want, such as the ability to be a science major, be actively involved in student life, and be a student-athlete.”



Spring Highlights

MEN'S LAX

- The Stags closed out the season with a 17-5 victory over St. John's to mark Fairfield's first winning season since 2005 with a 7-6 record
- Fairfield went 4-3 in the ECAC to finish third in the league, its highest finish in four years in the conference
- Rookie Brent Adams recorded at least one point in all 13 games in which he appeared
- Goalie Charlie Cipriano was named the ECAC Rookie of the Week on three occasions throughout the season for his stellar play in the cage
- Senior Matt Petre and freshman Brent Adams were selected to the New England Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association (NEILA) Second Team. Petre also earned NEILA Senior Scholar-Athlete accolades
- Seniors Matt Petre and Chris Ajemian were selected to play in the prestigious USILA North/South All-Star Game, marking the first time in five years that Fairfield had two players selected



Matt Petre

WOMEN'S LAX

- The Stags finished the season nationally ranked for the first time in program history as the final Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA)/Under Armour Poll listed Fairfield as 19th in the country
- Rebecca White was selected to play in the prestigious IWLCA North-South All-Star game
- Senior Rebecca White and sophomore Kristen Coleman were both named to the IWLCA Northeast Region Second Team. It marked the first time in program history that the Stags had two players earn the accolade in the same season and doubles the total number of honorees from the first 12 years of the program's history
- Sophomore Kristen Coleman appeared in *Sports Illustrated's "Faces In The Crowd"* in the May 25th edition of the magazine. Coleman was selected for her role in the Stags run to their first-ever NCAA tournament this season. For the second time in as many years she was named the MAAC Lacrosse League Offensive Player of the Year, as she led the team to its second consecutive undefeated regular season title
- Mike Waldvogel was named the MAAC Lacrosse League Coach of the Year while Lauren Chatnik was named the MAAC Lacrosse League Defensive Player of the Year. Seven Stags earned All-MAAC First Team honors while another earned Second Team honors
- The Stags finished the year with a 17-3 mark, equaling the program record for victories in a season



Rebecca White

BASEBALL

- Rob Gariano was named to the All-MAAC First Team for the second straight year
- Dan Gallagher set the program record for career appearances with 67
- The Stags posted 20 wins for the first time since 2002
- John Slosar coached his 1,000th career game at the helm of the Stags

SOFTBALL

- The Stags split the MAAC regular season title with Manhattan. It was the first time since 2004 that Fairfield captured the crown
- Sarah Minice and Meghan Borst were named to the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-Northeast Region team
- Sarah Minice was named the MAAC Pitcher of the Year and to the All-MAAC First Team
- Kayla Marth, Kristie Trifolis, and Kristina Lingo were named All-MAAC First Team, while Meghan Borst gained an All-MAAC Second Team nod



Rob Gariano

Sarah Minice

MEN'S & WOMEN'S GOLF

- The men's golf team finished in fourth place at the MAAC Championship, marking its highest finish at the tournament since 2004. Jeff Bradke was the Stags top finisher at the event, in a six-way tie for eighth place with a three-day score of 229
- Senior R.J. Zielinski was named the MAAC Men's Golfer of the Month for April after strong showings at the Charleston Southern University Spring Kick-Off and a sixth place finish at the New England Division I Championship

- The women's golf team finished as the runner-up at the MAAC Championships, just three strokes behind league champion Siena College
- The MAAC issued its Women's Golfer of the Month honor to Kristen MacDonald in March, the program's first-ever, after she finished as the runner-up at the Fairfield Spring Invitational
- The women's golf team captured the 2009 Fairfield Spring Invitational. The Stags also won the combined team title after a strong performance by the men was coupled with the women's effort



Kristen MacDonald



Paulina Rys

WOMEN'S TENNIS

- Juniors Paulina Rys, the MAAC Co-Player of the Year, and Dana Postupack each posted their 100th career victories
- Junior Gretchen Amberg went 16-0 during the spring
- Fairfield was 4-0 at the Walsh Athletic Center tennis courts
- Seven of the Stags wins were shutouts
- Fairfield was chosen as the preseason favorite in the MAAC Coaches Poll and did not disappoint, winning the MAAC Championship en route to its second-ever NCAA Tournament appearance

MEN'S TENNIS

- Joe Michalisin was named the MAAC Men's Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year
- The Stags went 18-2 on the season, setting the program record for wins
- During the season, Fairfield earned a national team ranking of 81st by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). The tandem of Ryan Berthod and Dan Sauter were ranked 61st while Chip Palumbo was ranked 106th in singles
- Chip Palumbo became the career wins leader with 126 combined victories



Chip Palumbo



MEN'S & WOMEN'S ROWING

- James Jessup and Ben Andrews became the second men's pair in Fairfield rowing history to earn a medal at the prestigious Dad Vail Regatta, taking third place in the event. Jessup and Andrews were undefeated entering Dad Vail
- The women's rowing team placed third at Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championships while the men were fourth in the event. The men's pair, the women's novice 8, and the women's second varsity 8 each picked up a victory in the championship
- Fairfield finished third in the 2009 Metropolitan Intercollegiate Rowing Association Spring Championship behind wins from the women's novice 4, the women's novice 8, and the men's varsity pair



Never Give Up

PROFILE: ANTHONY JOHNSON

Anthony Johnson had never missed more than one game due to injury in his entire basketball career. So when he felt a slight twinge on his right side, he thought nothing of it. It was part of playing the game – muscle aches and strains that proved to be more of a nuisance than a hindrance.

But then, Johnson began to see his game drop off. His shots weren't falling. He wasn't able to run the court without being winded. He couldn't get to those loose balls or block shots.

"I thought I hit a wall," Johnson said. "I never had a drought like that in my entire life. I talked about it with my mom and the coaches to see if there was anything that they could see in my game."

He thought he could play through it by working hard and spending extra time in the gymnasium.

"I feel that you can't achieve success without hard work," Johnson said. "By working hard, I thought I would be able to work my way back to where I should be on the court."

The twinge did not go away, however. After he scored nine points and grabbed nine rebounds against Manhattan, he went back to his room. He couldn't sleep that night because of his discomfort. He went to the Health Center the next day where he was examined.

"I only told them part of what I was feeling because I'm the type who will play through pain," Johnson said. "They thought it might be bronchitis but wanted to monitor it more closely so I couldn't practice. I went back to the Athletic Center and sat out during practice but was still thinking I needed to be

ready for the game."

Johnson returned to his room, but the pain now radiated from his right side to his left side. He felt pain whenever he moved, even when he tried to sit down.

"I was sitting in my room with Lyndon (Jordan) and Yorel (Hawkins)," Johnson said. "When the pain went to my left side too, I knew there was something wrong so I called Coach and Mark (Ayotte, director of sports medicine). Mark told me to get to the Health Center and he would meet me there."

Johnson returned to the Health Center and gave a more detailed description of his symptoms. He went to the hospital by ambulance for tests and a CAT scan.

"While I was at the hospital, I was thinking I'd get medicine and be able to get back on the court to get ready for Marist," Johnson said. "They took some x-rays so I was sitting there waiting for the results. Three or four hours went by and I was still waiting. Mark told me that I may need to stay overnight. I told him 'I am going home.'"

The doctors came into the room a little while later and broke the news to Johnson. He had a blood clot in his lungs and would need to stay two or three days in the hospital. He was not going back to campus.

"It still didn't hit me what was going on," Johnson said. "The doctors told me that they caught it in time. If I had continued to play, I could have died."

While that revelation was shocking to Johnson, what the doctors





told him next really hit him hard.

"They said I may never play again," Johnson said. "At the very least, I would miss four to six months. My first thought was I had been playing with this so why couldn't I continue to play with it? I just couldn't believe the possibility of never playing basketball again. But then coach and my mom told me how serious this was. Hearing it from them really hammered it home for me."

So, Johnson did as he was told. After being released from the hospital, Johnson sat on the sidelines and watched. He remained with the team and supported them any way he could. But it was difficult for him even though he was still around his teammates.

"Sitting out was tough, especially if the team was losing and I couldn't help," Johnson said. "I saw how hard Herbie (Allen) was playing and I felt bad that I couldn't help him. I tried to stay positive for them even though I couldn't physically help the team. I even called the doctor before the MAAC tournament to see if I could play just one weekend, but he said no."

Helping the team was something Johnson did from the first day he walked onto campus. Although he was a freshman, the center was thrust into the college game from the onset. He just missed

"Everyone at Fairfield has been so good to me ... When I was sick, everyone asked how I was doing and told me to stay positive. No one even mentioned basketball to me. It made me feel good to know that they cared about me as a person, not just as a basketball player."

— ANTHONY JOHNSON

a double double in his debut with eight points and ten rebounds, playing more than 30 minutes. He would continue to log around 30 minutes per game for most of the season.

"Coach told me that I would have a chance to play if I came to Fairfield, but I didn't expect to play that much," Johnson said through a smile. "I was having okay practices in the beginning, so I thought I would play a few minutes, but never anything significant."

Johnson's playing time did not diminish as the season progressed. In fact, he started 31 of his 32 appearances, averaging 8.6 points and 4.8 rebounds per game. His success surprised him throughout his first year.

"I thought I would be okay in the MAAC after watching film and seeing the players in person," Johnson said. "I didn't think early on

Continued from page 23



Never Give Up (continued)

Continued from page 23

that I would be a standout in this league.”

Rather than give up, Johnson drew upon his work ethic and began to spend extra time in the weight room and more minutes in the gym.

“I did a lot of extra workouts,” Johnson said. “I worked on shot selection because my choices were bad as a freshman. I worked on situations so I would be prepared for anything. I watched film to see what other players in the MAAC did so I could anticipate their moves. And, I even took some of those moves and put them into my own game.”

His sophomore season was just as successful for the center, averaging 9.6 points and 7.3 rebounds per game. However, it was his prowess of blocking shots that caught the attention of opposing coaches. He rejected 41 shots in 29 games, which ranked among the leaders in the MAAC.

Johnson’s sophomore year propelled him to a pre-season All-MAAC selection before his junior year, the first of his career. He lived up to that accolade by averaging 9.2 points and 7.4 rebounds through 21 games, and appeared to be on his way to a post-season All-MAAC berth before the blood clot ended his season.

The blood clot has long been dissolved which opens up the possibility that Johnson may be able to return to the basketball court this coming season. He has cleared several medical obstacles, with very few remaining, before he can get full clearance by his doctors.

“I was cleared to lift light weights over the last couple weeks of the school year,” Johnson said. “I was only lifting half of what I normally lift, but it still felt good to get back in the weight room. I was also able to start running again, which really helped my mindset.”

The possibility of returning to the court brings one of Johnson’s trademark smiles, one that literally stretches across his entire face.

“It will be crazy when I step back on the court,” Johnson admitted. “I felt we were robbed last year because we had a great team. We will have an even better team this year and to be able to be part of that will be just great.”

He will have no reservations when he returns to the court. While his medical history will be in the back of his mind, he feels that he will be able to go full force whenever he is given the opportunity to play basketball again.



“I’m not the paranoid type,” Johnson said. “The doctors have been very positive about my playing basketball again. When I’m cleared, I’m going all out. I won’t be able to give the team anything if I am going to play on egg shells. That’s not the type of player I am.”

Fairfield basketball fans look forward to seeing the type of player Johnson is in 2009-10. Those fans long for the alley-oop dunks and game-altering blocked shots for which Johnson has become known throughout the MAAC.

“Blocked shots and dunks are my favorites,” Johnson said. “Those types of plays are momentum changers. It gets my teammates and the fans hyped. They also get me up too, which

really gets me going because I get excited when the fans get excited.”

Another thing that will get Johnson excited is when he walks at graduation. Johnson is on target to earn his degree following his senior season, a goal which he has had since he first considered Fairfield University as his choice to continue his education.

“Getting my degree at graduation is going to be crazy too,” Johnson said. “I wouldn’t have believed you if you told me that I would be on target to get my degree this year. Coming out of high school, I was so young that I thought I would only last a couple of years and then go pro.”

Those visions were dispersed on one afternoon during his sophomore season. He was called into Coach Cooley’s office, which is not always a good thing.

“I walked in and there was coach sitting at his desk,” Johnson recalled. “He picked up the phone while I sat there and called my mom. He told her that I had missed some classes. I heard her start to cry. There are two things I hate in this world – losing and seeing or hearing my mom cry. That was what really got me serious about my academics. That

phone call changed everything. It made me a better man.”

It’s those kinds of stories and that kind of interest that makes Fairfield University so special to Johnson.

“Everyone at Fairfield has been so good to me,” Johnson said. “It’s not just about playing basketball. People don’t just ask me about the game. They ask about me as a student and as a person. When I was sick, everyone asked how I was doing and told me to stay positive. No one even mentioned basketball to me. It made me feel good to know that they cared about me as a person, not just as a basketball player.”

For Johnson, that slight twinge of emotion beats a slight twinge of pain anytime.



Community Service/SAAC



GIRL SCOUT DAY

For the ninth straight year, Fairfield hosted Girl Scout Day on February 1. The Stags welcomed over 130 Girl Scouts to Alumni Hall for the opportunity to meet the Stags female student-athletes. The Girl Scouts participated in clinics with 10 of the Stags varsity teams, providing them an opportunity to be introduced to new and different athletic opportunities.



GIVE 2 THE TROOPS

For the second consecutive year, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) participated in the "Stags Boxes for the Soldiers" program. All 20 Stags varsity athletics teams collected food, movies, and other goods for the U.S. troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. In December, each team was responsible for filling two boxes with items for troops overseas and had the opportunity to include personal touches, such as letters and notes. Overall, the Stags collected approximately 40 boxes of goods and delivered the items to a Give 2 The Troops collection.



WOMEN'S SOCCER RAISES MONEY FOR NICARAGUAN SCHOOL

The women's soccer team donated nearly \$2,000 to Enrique de Osso, a school in Managua, Nicaragua. Team captain Ahna Johnson was approached by former teammate Alex Caram '08 about helping purchase jerseys for a girl's soccer team at Enrique de Osso where she was volunteering. Johnson and her teammates agreed, and decided to take the generosity to the next level. The Stags, who had just raised money for new travel gear, decided that instead of purchasing new sweatsuits, they would donate that money to the school, bringing the grand total to nearly \$2,000. The money the Stags donated provided uniforms for the girls' and boys' squads, as well as balls and other equipment.



SERVICE LEARNING

Men's lacrosse player Pat Hovey (right) spent June and July of 2008 in Rwanda helping at the Kagugu Primary School as part of the International Education Exchange (IEE) Program.

Several student-athletes spent their Spring Breaks on service learning trips. Field hockey players Ashton DiDonato and Taylor Callahan (left), and women's swimmer Wanda Szarek travelled to New Orleans to work with Camp Restore to help rebuild the city post-Hurricane Katrina. Women's swimmers Colleen Wilson and Megan Reilly went to Washington, D.C. and worked in a soup kitchen and in an after-school program for inner-city youth.



THINK PINK

For the second straight year, Fairfield participated in the WBCA Pink Zone initiative to raise awareness about breast cancer. A silent auction took place with the proceeds benefitting the Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer fund, in partnership with The V Foundation.

READING DAYS

Throughout the year, Fairfield student-athletes traveled to elementary schools in Bridgeport and Fairfield County to read aloud to students.



Alumni Hall of Fame

The Fairfield University Alumni Association Athletic Hall of Fame was established in 1982 to honor those alumni who achieved excellence and distinguished themselves in Fairfield's athletic programs. The inaugural class was 11 members strong and with the induction of two members of the Class of 2009, the Hall of Fame is 114 Stags strong. Of that group, 101 are student-athletes, along with 11 coaches and supporters of the program.

Adam Ferreri '01 and Mellissa Santos '03 comprise the Hall of Fame Class of 2008. The duo was recognized at the Athletics Department's Annual Awards Ceremony May 1 at the Trumbull Marriott.

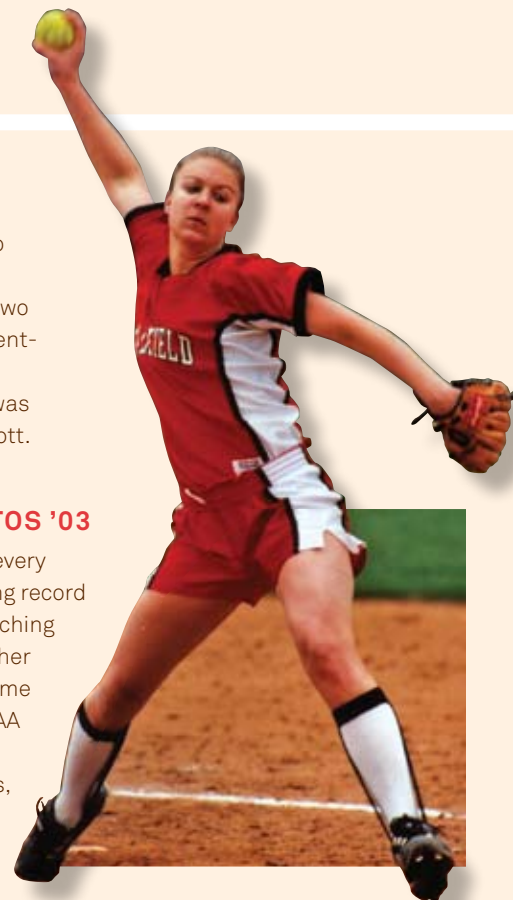


ADAM FERRERI '01

Ferreri finished his career with the Stags football program with 1,555 total yards, and 13 career touchdowns. Upon his graduation, he was the program's all-time leading rusher, and also held the school record for longest run from scrimmage (80-yard touchdown run against Holy Cross). He rushed for more than 100 yards in four games during his career, including a personal-best 152 yards against Holy Cross in 1999. He led the team in rushing in 1999 with a career-high 675 yards. Adam's honors include graduating from the Dolan School of Business Summa Cum Laude, CoSIDA Academic All-District, and CoSIDA Academic All-America honors as a senior, as well as being voted captain of the team by his teammates.

MELLISSA SANTOS '03

Santos still holds every career softball pitching record and single-season pitching record six years after her graduation. She became the 16th player in NCAA Division I history to reach 1,000 strikeouts, finishing her career with 1,156. During her senior year the Stags won the MAAC Championship. Santos struck out a personal best 401 hitters as a sophomore and had more than 200 strikeouts in each of her four seasons. She still owns the career records for career winning percentage (.669), career earned run average (1.12), career innings pitched (890.2), career appearances (147), career complete games (106), and career strikeouts. She is the only pitcher in program history to appear in 100 career games. She also holds the school single-season standards for strikeouts (401), complete games (36), innings pitched (279.1), appearances (42) and wins (27). Mellissa's honors include All-Region honors three times, MAAC co-female student-athlete of the year award in 2002, MAAC pitcher of the year in 2002 and 2003, as well as MAAC co-pitcher of the year in 2001. She was a four-time All-MAAC First Team selection, and earned two All-ECAC awards.



Nominations for the Hall of Fame are solicited from all alumni, University faculty, and staff via an announcement in the alumni e-newsletter, *Currents*, the athletic web site and on the alumni web page. Nominations can be mailed to the Office of Alumni Relations, or may be submitted via an online nomination form. A plaque of each of the Hall of Fame inductees hangs on the Hall of Fame, outside of the bookstore, as well as on the mobile Hall of Fame display which is in the Walsh Athletic Center.



Coaching Milestones

VOLLEYBALL

Alija Pittenger, in her first match as a collegiate head coach, leads the volleyball team to a 3-2 win over Hofstra in the team's season opener.

TENNIS

For the second straight season **Ed Paige** is named the MAAC Coach of the Year for both men's and women's tennis.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Mike Waldvogel is named the MAAC Women's Lacrosse League Coach of the Year, the third in program history and first since 2001, after leading the Stags to their second consecutive MAAC Regular Season Title.

MEN'S LACROSSE

Andrew Copelan earns his first win as head coach of the men's lacrosse team, with a 10-9 defeat of Delaware, in the team's season opener.

BASEBALL

John Slosar leads the baseball team to a 16-3 win over Maine in Winter Haven, Fla., the program's first win in Slosar's 25th season as head coach of the Stags.

SOFTBALL

With a 5-2 win in the first game of a double-header at Iona, the softball team won its 20th game of the year for the 13th straight season, the last 12 under **Julie Brzezinski**.



Ed Paige



Julie Brzezinski

New Faces

Andy Copelan became the Stags third varsity men's lacrosse head coach on August 25, 2008. He came to Fairfield after three seasons at perennial power Maryland, where he was the program's recruiting coordinator for two seasons, notching a pair of top-ranked recruiting classes. He began his coaching career at Marist in 2004, where he was the youngest coach in Division I, and led the Red Foxes to their first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance.



Alija Pittenger enjoyed her first season at the helm of the Stags volleyball team, posting the second-best rookie record in program history. The eighth head coach in program history, she had firsthand knowledge of the Stags when she stepped on campus. Pittenger was a four-year letterwinner at Michigan, and a member of the Wolverine squad that defeated Fairfield in the first round of the 1999 NCAA Tournament.



Mike Waldvogel assumed the reigns of the women's lacrosse program on June 2, 2008, after serving as an assistant coach for the 2008 campaign. He brought with him a lengthy resume, capped by his induction into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1996. Waldvogel has been associated with the game of lacrosse for over 40 years, as a player or coach. He won 166 games as the head coach of the Yale men's team, while twice being named a First Team All-America at Cortland State.





Corporate Sponsors

The partnership between Fairfield University and Nelligan Sports Marketing (NSM) continues to grow and foster new sponsorship opportunities. Through these sponsorships, Fairfield University continues to provide unique marketing opportunities for businesses and corporations at the local, regional, and national level.

NSM provides sales and marketing expertise for sports properties nationwide. NSM is dedicated to building long-term relationships with clients through management of the properties represented and by maximizing revenue growth through corporate relationships. NSM's experienced sales executives have a proven track record of exceptional revenue growth and management of the sports properties represented.

NSM has developed, as part of its unique partnership model, a campus-wide marketing program to maximize revenues for collegiate institutions and their partners. This program fosters long-term corporate relationships, furthers institutional initiatives, and promotes the brands of the college/university and its corporate partners.

In conjunction with NSM, Fairfield University athletics saw its corporate program double in the last year by adding IBEW, AFLAC, LA Boxing, and Holiday Inn Bridgeport to its stable of sponsors. Currently, Fairfield University athletics has seen its corporate sponsorship revenue grow to over \$220,000 dollars since teaming with NSM.



www.NorwalkHospital.org







For more information, contact the
Sports Information Office

phone: (203) 254-4000, ext. 4116
toll-free: (888) 488-6840
fax: (203) 254-4073
web site: www.fairfieldstags.com