



Steamrollers With Sticks

RECORD-BREAKING
SEASON CATAPULTS
FIELD HOCKEY TEAM
TO NO. 18 IN NATION

By Craig Merriman



SCHOOL RECORDS WERE SQUASHED AS THE 2008 field hockey team steamrolled its way through conference play last fall. The Lady Colonels' 18 season wins set a record, as did their 10 consecutive wins. And along the way, they climbed to a No. 18 national ranking.

It was Aug. 17 when Wilkes field hockey head coach Sara Myers had a chance to meet with her team for the first time. Like all coaches, she set goals for individuals as well as the team as to what she expected in the upcoming season.

Kerry Battersby, Alyssa Koncelik, Devon McKay, Kristina Naveira and Diana Wright, the five seniors on the squad, were given the task of mentoring 10 freshmen, as well as two sophomores and six juniors. With a young team, the seniors shouldered a great deal of responsibility and demanded the best from their teammates from day one.

"This year's senior class was the first class that I started with four years ago," Myers notes. "Over the years, they have grown and developed into talented players and the kind of seniors the team wanted to play for. I have enjoyed coaching them, and I am very grateful for all they have given to the field hockey program at Wilkes. They have developed a winning tradition, which we hope to continue."

On Aug. 30, the 2008 field hockey team started on the road to accomplishing something no other hockey team in school history had. On that day they hosted Moravian in one of their closest and most exciting games of the year. The Lady Colonels eventually won 4-3 in penalty strokes after both teams finished regulation and two overtime periods deadlocked at 3-3. Wilkes would prevail 3-0 in the strokes with the game-winning goal credited to Devon McKay. It would be the first of 10 straight victories, marking the most consecutive wins to start the season.

The Lady Colonels finally lost their first contest against No. 13 Elizabethtown by a 3-1 margin, but it didn't take long for Wilkes to bounce back as it took a 3-1 convincing win over No. 18 Montclair State just a week later. The win would start another streak, this time five straight that would put the Lady Colonels on top of the Freedom Conference standings.

Wilkes finished the regular season with a 7-1 record and garnered the top seed in the Freedom Conference Championship. During their journey, the Lady Colonels knocked off two-time defending conference champions and cross-town rival King's College 4-3 in an overtime thriller in the final regular-season game to clinch the top spot.

Earning the No. 1 title gave Wilkes a first-round bye in the playoffs. Three days after they took the Lady Monarchs down, the Lady Colonels would do it again, this time in the semifinal round of the league tournament where Wilkes came out on top 1-0 in a defensive struggle. They would then play for the conference title against Eastern, a team they defeated earlier in the year.

The stress of three games in less than a week caught up to the Lady Colonels as they fell 2-1 in the conference championship. Finishing with a stellar 17-3 record, the Lady Colonels were invited to play in the ECAC South Championship.

Wilkes hosted Washington & Jefferson University in the opening round, where they would take a 2-1 win before falling to Kean University 4-3 in the ECAC Championship to close out the season.

For their efforts, four players were named to the All-Freedom Conference First Team, and Myers was named Coach of the Year. Freshman goal keeper Lindsey Davenport was named the Rookie of the Year after posting eight shutout wins. Earning spots on the all-conference first team were senior attack Alyssa Koncelik, junior midfielder Brittany Sines, senior defender Kerry Battersby and Davenport.

Opposite page: Center midfielder Brittney Sines, a junior captain, proved herself a playmaker and most consistent player. PHOTO BY CRAIG MERRIMAN

Inset: The team celebrates following a goal against Delaware Valley. The women went on to win 4-2. PHOTO BY KATHY DALTON

Below: Freshman goal keeper Lindsey Davenport posted eight shut-out wins to earn Rookie of the Year honors. PHOTO BY KATHY DALTON

