

CU Athletes Prove There is No Off-Season

By Nikki Hertel, contributing writer

The Gangelhoff Center's gym floors are squeaking with the sounds of hard work and are covered with the sweat of CU's men and women athletes. The weight rooms are at full capacity with sweaty athletes packed like sardines in a can. The track is busy with athletes pushing themselves harder and harder every lap. Our surrounding streets even echo with the footsteps of Concordia runners. What is that sound? It's off-season training time!

As the snow keeps blowing and the freezing temperatures continue to fluctuate, Concordia athletes are keeping busy with their off-season training. Division II sports are played in seasons, but Concordia athletes work hard all year long. There is no such thing as a break when it comes to improving on their game and striving to achieve excellence. All of Concordia's teams are working hard to get an edge on next season's opponents.

The national championship winning volleyball team is putting in their fair share of hard work this winter. They have been weightlifting, conditioning, and plyometric training with resistance bands to keep them on their toes and ready to jump for another victorious season. They also have open gym to work on their game and perfect their skills even more. Team practices will be starting soon, and the team will be on their way to preparing for next fall.

The football team has been charging head-on into their off-season training. When they're not pumping iron in the weight rooms and pushing each other to do better, they're conditioning as a unit to work on their speed and agility. Team practice will be starting up in March and spring ball will follow shortly after. The football team scrimmages against each other, offense versus defense, in the spring and works to bring out the best in every player.

Even though snow covers the ground and the beautiful fairways and greens are lying dormant, the golf team is still swinging away. They are all working hard practicing to perfect their swings and exer-

cising vigorously. They have regular workouts three to four days a week including running, intense leg workouts, and swing training.

Look out for those flying balls! The CU golf team is also hitting away at least once a week to keep their game up and their shots perfect. They'll be

every week. The coach has also implemented racquetball into their off-season training, so watch out for those flying blue balls. They will be starting up team practices in March to prepare them for some upcoming tournaments scheduled for the spring.

There is no such thing as a break when it comes to cross country either. Most of those running-lovers go from the cross country season straight into track without a break at all. There is a slight shift in the running that they must do, for they change from running up and down hills in the countryside to running swiftly around the track.

Many of the cross country/track runners are averaging between 30 and 50 miles per week. Even those cross country runners who don't run for CU's track team are working hard in the off-season to beat their times and gear up for next year.

Concordia's softball and baseball teams have been training hard in the off-season too. You can see them in the weight rooms building their muscles or in the GC working on their game to kick some serious butt in Florida next week. They have been conditioning hard and working diligently during team practices to make sure they're ready to face their opponents in this upcoming season. During their spring break, the softball and baseball teams will be traveling to tournaments in Florida, escaping the bitter cold of Minnesota, to play in the sun and show people what they're made of.

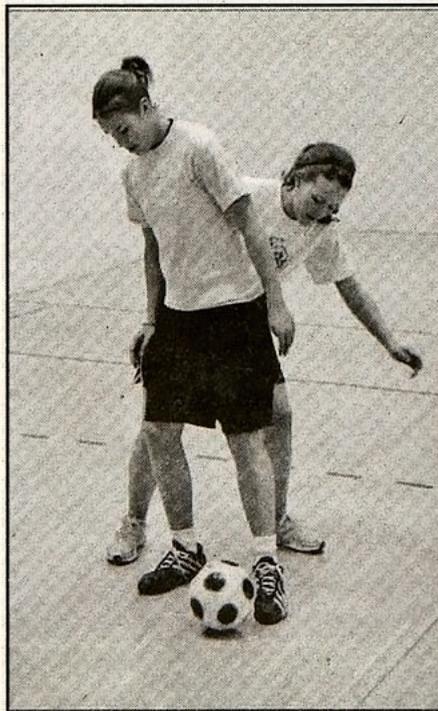
Concordia's athletes represent the true essence of hard work and determination. Not only do they give 100% effort during their seasons, but they also continue to improve and push themselves during the off-season. They are also the men and women that somehow manage to balance their lives between being a student and an athlete, a difficult task which becomes a true test of their character.

Off-season training is crucial in preparing for the next season as well as maintaining physical fitness and ability.

The womens soccer team has been no stranger to hard work during the cold winter months. Their off-season training is keeping them busy and active. They have weightlifting, conditioning, individual workout sessions, as well as a few one-on-one matches



Baseball players practice in the GC during winter break. Every single team on campus is constantly practice during the winter. Photo by Colby Reinking



Soccer players practice their technique in one of the racquetball rooms. Photo by Colby Reinking

Football Signing Day Brings Optimism

By Lance Meyer, sports editor

Even though football doesn't take over the athletic spotlight for another six months, it drew a lot of attention in the athletic department last week. Football's National Signing Day came and went with a flash, but the Golden Bear coaching staff has high hopes that the players who signed letters of intent will make a lasting impact on the program.

Signing day not only brought excitement to Concordia, but it also drew the attention of sports fans nationwide. Much like the draft is for the NFL, signing day gives fans of all levels an opportunity to see whether or not their favorite teams will improve or take a step back the next year.



"Recruiting is the heart and soul of any program," commented Head Coach Mark Mauer. "You need good athletes in order to be successful."

Golden Bear fans should be relieved to know that their favorite team was bettered by last week's signees. "This is probably the best overall class of recruits that we've brought in over the last three seasons," said Mauer. "They are character kids who are not only strong athletically but outstanding students as well which will help our graduation rate."

One area in which incoming freshmen will fill in and help right away is on the offensive line. Depth on the line was an obvious issue last season so Mauer and his staff made it a major point of emphasis this off-season and signed seven quality offensive linemen.

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