

Comets Capture Fifth Consecutive Conference Title

By Connie Kiedrowski

It began as a year of hopes and high expectations as the Concordia Comet Softball team started the season ranked sixteenth in the nation by the National Association of Interscholastic Athletics (NAIA). Despite the loss of key players from last year's squad, Coach Tom Cross had a good recruiting off-season. The Comet's posted the most victories ever by a softball team. The ladies reached the thirty-win plateau. This accomplishment started in Florida where the team went 8-2 in pre-season play.

The Comets returned from Florida and began one of their most illustrious seasons ever. Much of the credit goes to the coaching staff of Cross and Tom Rubbelke. Without their dedication, the softball program would have never achieved such a high level of play. With an overall record of 30-13, the Comets posted an undefeated record in the conference giving them their fifth consecutive conference title. Coach Cross, last year's District 13 Coach of the Year, said from the beginning, "This



Josi VanLaecken gets ready for the pitch. -Photo by Dave Katzke.

team could be great with a lot of hard work and determination".

Unfortunately, the Comet's bubble burst at Districts with an unexpected loss to Southwest State University. Even though the Comets will not do what last year's team did, which was



Jane Wilkins serves the ball during a tennis meet. -Photo by Krista Henning.

going to National play-offs, in some aspects they have accomplished more.

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Baseball Season

By Brian Mielke

Although the baseball record might indicate a bad season with 7 wins and 11 losses, if a couple of bad innings and a few errors were taken away, the record might be 11 and 7. The team was coached by Paul Roth who returned to CSP after a nine year absence. His great leadership ability and knowledge of the game have made him probably the best coach the team has had the privilege to play for. Assistant coaches Garret Kramer and Joel Schuessler also did a fine job not only in their coaching abilities but also with their inspiration.

The team was led by four seniors. First of which is Jim Bartels (Jaspers). His .542 batting average and 7 homeruns were tops on the team. Jim will be missed not only for his production at the plate, but also for his leadership abilities.

Second, the team's regular catcher, Derek Wippich, who had only 11 at bats last season, proved he got his share of hits too by hitting 2 homeruns and batting close to .300.



Jim Bartels slams one out to the outfield. -Photo by Dave Katzke.

Third, Kevin (I cut my chin on the fence) Hobbie, the team's third senior, had another great year at the plate supporting a batting average above .450 all season. Hobbie also played great defensively and proved his versatility by playing first base, shortstop, and centerfield. Hobbie will be missed for his great attitude toward baseball and his leadership qualities.

Last and certainly not least, is Wayne (I forgot to tell my wife I was playing baseball) Bottiger, who finished his last year of baseball. Although Wayne didn't get much playing time, his positive attitude and ambitions have made it a pleasure to play with him.

The best way to describe the season was that it was a lot of fun. The team had a lot of different personalities which mixed pretty well. The team also has a lot of talent returning next year with people like Craig Herrmann, Mike Yahn, Chris Hahn, Marc Gingerich, Bill Zuelsdorff, Dean Podratz, and Stephen Krenz & Brian Mielke (Hardees' Players of the Week). ♣

Women's Tennis

By the Women's Tennis Team

After opening their season with 3 straight losses to Hamline, DMLC, and Bethel, the women's tennis team started to pull things together and managed to come up with their best season in 3 years. After the initial setbacks, the Comets came up with an impressive 7-2 victory over St. Teresa in Winona. #3 singles player Elizabeth Leckband and #4 singles player Sheri Anderson both played tough 3 set matches and both came up winners. Leckband's scores were 6-7, 6-5, 6-4, and Anderson's were 3-6, 7-6, 6-2. A week later St. Teresa visited Concordia where our own Comets handed all six of their singles' players straight set losses. The singles shut-outs combined with double victories by Jane Wilkins and Diana Potratz at #1, and Anderson and Leah Jesseski at #3 gave the Comets an 8-1 victory in the meet.

The Comets finished the regular season with a 4-5 loss to DMLC. In that meet #1 Wilkins won a 7-6, 7-6 heartstopper. Number three Leckband once again came up a winner in a 3 set marathon 6-3, 1-6, 6-2, and Freshman Deb Herrmann added a commanding 6-4, 6-2 victory. Wilkins and Potratz rounded out the win column with a 6-4, 6-4 victory at the No. 1 doubles spot.

The Comets ended their season on Saturday, April 30th at the conference tournament at DMLC in New Ulm. After 7 hours of tennis the Comets had produced two conference champions - Potratz at #2 singles, and Wilkins and Potratz at #1 doubles.

Next year's team should prove even better than this year's since all 6 of its members are returning. Veterans Wilkins and Potratz will provide strong senior leadership for the squad. With two years of experience behind them Leckband and Anderson will be valuable as well. Herrmann and Jesseski will add a new dimension to a promising team. In the words of Herrmann, "this season was fun - lots of fun, but next year ... LOOK OUT!" ♣

