Baseball reigns over Division III

32-year title drought ends
Scott Carnahan
CARNEY’S CORNER

All national championships are significant for those who directly participate in them, but they are also very important to all of us who bleed cardinal and purple. I have observed throughout my Linfield experience as a player, coach and administrator that the pride of being a Wildcat or supporter of our teams is magnified all the more when one of our teams celebrates a national championship.

The significance of a national championship also carries considerable weight and helps all our sports programs break the mental barriers of competing at a national level. It enables each of our teams to believe that the lofty goal of a national championship is realistic and reasonable. As an example, Linfield’s two national softball championships in 2007 and 2011 (and nearly two more in ’10 and ’12) directly led to the baseball team’s realization that with the right amount of talent and by putting the team above all else, an NCAA Division III national championship title could and would happen.

Keeping a positive mental approach when being faced with adversity is also apparent in most championship teams. As an example, the 1982 football national championship team trailed 22-0 at halftime of the NAIA title game, but because they believed in the words of Coach Ad Rutschman and remained steadfast in their belief, they overcame that deficit and went on to win.

This spring, three baseball players were lost for the season due to injury. Had they been healthy, each certainly would have played a major role in our success. Losing them was traumatic, but by keeping a positive approach, others picked up the slack and rose to the occasion when called upon to perform.

All the attributes of success are exhibited within the character of a championship team. This baseball team was talented, but more than anything else, these Wildcats showed exemplary character on and off the field.

FOOTBALL SEASON TICKETS MIGRATING ONLINE

For the first time, ordering season tickets for football will be an online experience.

Using a new electronic format, season-ticket holders will be able to renew their previous seats and order additional tickets, pending availability. Beginning July 1, ticket holders will have a four-week window to renew their seats before unpurchased seats are released for open sales on Aug. 1.

“As all good businesses do, we continue to adapt to changing times while keeping the customer experience in the forefront,” said Linfield director of athletics Scott Carnahan. “It is our expectation that the new season ticket purchasing process will be streamlined, secure and convenient for our fans.”

Once reaching the season ticket portal, users will be asked to create an online account and password. The online environment is similar to the one already in use for registering participants for the Wildcat Open golf tournament. Packages for Linfield’s four home football games are priced at $60. At the time of ordering tickets, ticket holders will be asked whether they intend to purchase tickets for any potential home playoff games at Maxwell Field.

Ticket holders will receive their traditional printed tickets in the mail a few weeks later. Single-game tickets under the covered grandstand go on sale Aug. 26. More information will be communicated in late June.

Linfield football No. 1 in preseason poll

If one grocery store magazine’s preseason college football prediction holds true, Linfield will be celebrating a second national championship in 2013.

The Sporting News, in its annual summer preview issue, pegged the Linfield Wildcats as the No. 1 team in NCAA Division III.

Defending national champion Mount Union, which returns just five starters, is second in the poll. Perennial title contender Wisconsin-Whitewater is third.

St. Thomas, whose only loss last season was to Mount Union in the national championship game, is picked fourth, followed by another one-loss team, Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Mount Union and Wisconsin-Whitewater have combined to win the last eight Division III championships. Outside of those two Division III kingspins, Linfield is the last program to capture a title, that coming in 2004.

Nineteen starters return for the ’Cats, 10 of them on defense. Smith welcomes back three senior All-Americans in end Brynnan Hyland, tackle Tyler Steele and linebacker Dominique Forrest.

Leading candidates at quarterback are senior Josh Yoder and junior Matt Yarbrough.

The season begins Sept. 14 at Hardin-Simmons, rated 21st in the poll, followed by the Wildcats’ home opener Sept. 21 against preseason No. 14 Cal Lutheran.

THE SPORTING NEWS Preseason Top 25

1. Linfield
2. Mount Union
3. Wisconsin-Whitewater
4. St. Thomas
5. Mary Hardin-Baylor
6. Wesley
7. Wittenberg
8. Wisconsin-Oshkosh
9. Johns Hopkins
10. North Central
11. Pacific Lutheran
12. Hobart
13. Bethel
14. Cal Lutheran
15. Widener
16. Wheaton (Ill)
17. St. John Fisher
18. Ohio Wesleyan
20. Coe
21. Hardin-Simmons
22. Waynesburg
23. Rowan
24. Wisconsin-Platteville
25. SUNY-Cortland
Linfield’s timeless wonder, Tara Lepp, is retiring. Well, sort of.

After 31 years of treating untold muscle pulls, broken bones and bruised psyches, Lepp will no longer be working hands-on with student-athletes as head certified athletic trainer. She will, however, continue in her role as full professor, leading athletic training majors toward careers in sports medicine. And instead of treating injured student-athletes, she plans on expanding her missionary work in Africa, providing free medical care for the poor.

ROOM TO GROW AT LINFIELD

A young Lepp arrived at Linfield as the college’s first, and only, on-staff athletic trainer in the fall of 1982. She was led to a janitor’s closet and told the dark, cramped space would have to serve as a treatment center. A broken-down ice machine and a malfunctioning whirlpool were the tools she was asked to work with, and a few rolls of tape were provided.

At Lepp’s gentle but persistent urgings, Linfield’s infrastructure, and later staffing, eventually improved. She helped design the present-day treatment facility, opening in 1989.

“Before we moved in, I remember standing in the middle of the new treatment center and wondering ‘What am I going to do with all this space?’ It was three times bigger than what we had previously. And now, our current space is no longer big enough.”

Sports medicine was an emerging field in the early 1980s and trainers became necessary components within modern college athletic departments. New techniques, technologies and equipment came into vogue and soon schools were educating students in the profession.

Using conservative estimates, Lepp has overseen care and managed medical information for more than 400 athletes a year, or approximately 12,400 athletes during the course of a career that recently included Most Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award from the National Association of Athletic Trainers.

Spanning four decades of Linfield sports, Lepp has experienced just about everything imaginable in small-college athletics.

“The best memories come from the times when we work really hard to get the athletes back on the field and they end up scoring a touchdown, making a bucket, or hitting a home run,” Lepp said. “A lot of times, we’ll be on the sidelines patting each other on the back when we see of our wounded warriors return to the field, court, or pool and achieve success. We live for seeing someone get healthy and get back out there.”

A NEW CALLING TAKES ROOT

Since 2005, Lepp has spent her summers and an occasional January Term in Kenya, leading medical teams as a volunteer for Open Arms International.

“We try to find the poorest of the poor, those who wouldn’t be able to receive medical care if we didn’t provide it for them. There might be doctors or hospitals in their town but many of the people are too poor to afford care.

“We go to the slum areas, set up makeshift medical clinics and partner with local physicians. Word of mouth spreads and people start lining up.”

A devout Christian, Lepp said she received her marching orders from a higher power, experiencing an epiphany one day while in church. “It was a knock-you-off-your donkey moment,” she said. “God definitely got my attention. He said, ‘You’re going to Africa’ and I went. It’s obviously changed my life.”

She’ll live in Kenya from January though mid-August, then return to McMinnville to teach classes full time during fall semester. In Africa, she’ll lead summer courses through the Adult Degree Program and a Jan Term class through International Programs.

“I’ve met all my goals for what I wanted to achieve at Linfield and now it’s time to do something different,” she said without a hint of regret. “I got promoted to full professor, was able to get the athletic training education program accredited, and our students are graduating and passing the certification exam.”

She was the guiding force behind developing Linfield’s athletic training program into one of only three accredited programs in Oregon. Under Lepp’s leadership, the number of staff members devoted to teaching athletic training students and treating student-athletes has increased from one to 4½, with most dividing their time between service and education.

“Linfield College is amazing. I’ve always been very impressed with what Linfield has been able to achieve. It’s been great to be around the program because the people here are dedicated and committed. That makes it a great place to work.”

As a long-term volunteer missionary in Africa, she must pay her own travel and living expenses.

“Athletic training is a service profession,” said Lepp. “And my work in Africa is all about service.”

As the years ticked by, Lepp found it challenging to continually summon the stamina required to maintain an athletic trainer’s seven-day-a-week schedule.

“The job takes a physical and emotional toll. You’re dealing with people who become upset when they get injured because they are so driven to achieve their goals.”

Lepp’s longevity is a testament to her will. “People in the medical profession and ministers have a high burnout rate. And what am I doing?”

“Both,” she said, bursting into laughter. “Sometimes 1982 seems like yesterday and other days it feels like a million years ago.”
Shanan Rosenberg is new basketball coach

Shanan Rosenberg has been named men’s basketball coach at Linfield, becoming the 17th coach in program history. He takes over for recently retired coach Larry Doty.

“I’ve always considered teaching and coaching at Linfield to be my dream job,” said Rosenberg, 41. “Linfield offers tremendous balance between pursuing excellence in the liberal arts and achievement in athletics. In basketball terms, there’s great potential to be successful and develop a program that can vie for championships year in and year out. All the people I’ve met from Linfield have been fantastic and nothing but first-class.”

Rosenberg was head men’s basketball coach the past 11 years at Foothill College, a two-year community college near Palo Alto in the south San Francisco Bay region. At Foothill, he compiled a 186-131 win-loss record. His 2012-13 team went 22-5, achieving the best regular-season finish in program history.

In 2002-03, he took over a troubled Foothill program that was staggered by player behavioral problems and rules violations. After a 6-22 record during his first season, Rosenberg guided the Owls to the California Community College Athletic Association playoffs, the first of eight state playoff appearances. The CCCAA comprises 82 institutions spanning 10 athletic conferences.

Under Rosenberg’s leadership, Foothill became a top-10 regionally ranked basketball program, a regular state tournament qualifier and a program that enjoyed a 99 percent graduation rate.

Prior to taking over at Foothill, Rosenberg spent three years as assistant head coach at Lewis & Clark from 1998 until 2002, a period when the Pioneers won two Northwest Conference championships and reached the Elite Eight of the NCAA Division III playoff tournament.

“I’m very pleased with the search committee’s recommendation to hire Shanan Rosenberg as Linfield’s next men’s basketball coach,” director of athletics Scott Carnahan said.

“Shanan is a great fit for Linfield. He has all the attributes we were looking for and has achieved great success in every coaching opportunity he has had.

“From a basketball standpoint, he’s proven he can develop players. He knows the Northwest Conference from his time at Lewis & Clark. And he’s a capable recruiter who will be able to open doors to high school and junior college kids from California.”

At Linfield he takes over a sleeping giant, inheriting a program with a history of 20 conference or district championships in men’s basketball, the most recent coming in 2000-01. Rosenberg’s task will be to restore luster to a program that is coming off a last-place finish in the NWC, winning just four games last winter.

“Linfield basketball has wonderful potential and a rich history,” he said. “I would not have accepted this position if I didn’t believe with every fiber of my body that this can be a highly successful program.”

“Shanan is accomplished in every facet we were looking for,” said Carnahan. “He’ll be a strong addition to our exercise science program and he has excellent depth in his coaching experiences. I’m confident he is going to be able to turn our basketball program around and return Linfield to a position of being nationally competitive.”
Karleigh Prestianni, Tim Wilson named year’s top athletes

Capping a record-setting four-year career that included an NCAA championship, four straight All-America citations, four conference titles and three regional crowns, softball player Karleigh Prestianni has been selected as the Female Athlete of the Year following a vote of the coaching staff.

Prestianni captured the Wildcats to a dominating 36-8 season. She enjoyed career-high statistical performances in batting average (.481), on-base percentage (.558), doubles (19) and RBI (59). She struck out just six times in 131 trips to the plate.

It came as no surprise when the Grants Pass, Ore., native was crowned the Northwest Conference Player of the Year and received all-tournament honors at the Tyler (Texas) Regional playoff tournament.

“Karleigh’s impact on our program is hard to put into words,” said Wildcats coach Jackson Vaughan. “Not only was Karleigh a great player this season but also a great leader, mentor and teammate. On the field, she had perhaps her finest all-around season. A huge exclamation point to her magnificent career was when she became not only the second player in school history to be named a four-time NFCA All-American.”

Playing 199 games at third base - fifth most in NCAA Division III history - Prestianni finished her career tied for fourth all-time in Division III history - Prestianni finished her career tied for fourth all-time in RBIs. She struck out just six times in 131 trips to the plate.

He graduates as the career leader in stolen bases (70) and also ranks second in hits (204) and batting average (.421), as well as fourth in on-base percentage (.483).

A two-time first team all-Northwest Conference honoree, Lindell also copes with epilepsy, and remarkably has never let his medical condition affect his on-field performance.

“He has these seizures that can really be impactful to him on the physical side of things, and he’ll come to a practice sometimes without even letting me know that he’s had one the night before or the morning of,” Brosius said.

Despite having to balance his medical concerns with a tough academic load as a physics major, Lindell has yet to miss a game – with a team-high .401 batting average, 32 RBI and 31 stolen bases.

He recorded 27 multiple-hit games, including a five-hit performance in the first inning, and posted a 20-2 record when scoring in the first frame.

As Timmy goes, we go.”

That’s how those within the Linfield Baseball family describe Tim Wilson, who has been honored as the Linfield College Male Athlete of the Year.

A first team all-conference, all-West Region and All-America pick, Wilson posted his third consecutive .400 season as the leadoff man for the NCAA Division III national champions. With 87 total hits – among the highest in the nation – Wilson helped the Wildcats grab an early lead more often than not. On the year, Linfield outscored its opponents 40-9 in the first inning, and posted a 20-2 record when scoring in the first frame.

A co-captain team, Wilson started 50 games – tying a program record – with a team-high .401 batting average, 32 RBI and 31 stolen bases.

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Marshall Award: Physical challenges can’t slow Lindell, Paavola

Overcoming physical hurdles on their way to outstanding spring seasons, juniors Kramer Lindell and Karina Paavola have been chosen as recipients of the Vern Marshall Award, saluting student-athletes with the greatest tenacity.

Over the course of Linfield’s NCAA Division III championship baseball season, Lindell recorded a career-high .389 batting average and drove in 38 runs.

Lindell was the team leader in on-base percentage (.471) and ranked in the top five for hitting (third, .389) and slugging percentage (fourth, .547). One of just three players to start all 50 games in 2013, he was the only full-time starter not to commit a defensive error, registering a perfect fielding percentage over 126 chances.

“Kramer epitomizes what that award is all about,” said coach Scott Brosius. “He’s no-nonsense, shows up every day, comes to practice and works hard, plays hard. You never see him taking a day off.”

A two-time first team all-Northwest Conference honoree, Lindell also copes with epilepsy, and remarkably has never let his medical condition affect his on-field performance.

“He has these seizures that can really be impactful to him on the physical side of things, and he’ll come to a practice sometimes without even letting me know that he’s had one the night before or the morning of,” Brosius said.

Despite having to balance his medical concerns with a tough academic load as a physics major, Lindell has yet to miss a game – with a team-high .401 batting average, 32 RBI and 31 stolen bases.

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Paavola, the NWC Pitcher of the Year and a first team all-region honoree, dramatically stepped up her game as a competitor this spring, according to her coach, Jackson Vaughan.

“Karina worked hard to add a new pitch to her arsenal and had several outings this year where she did not have her best stuff but battled and fought her way to wins," said Vaughan.

Paavola was 22-4 in the pitching circle, including 10 complete-game performances. She rolled up a NWC-best 133 strikeouts while posting a 1.93 earned run average. The 5-foot-10 junior right-hander pitched the Wildcats to three shutouts while holding opponents to a .206 batting average.

The Marshall Award was established in honor of 1957 Linfield graduate Vern Marshall, a former athlete, and college and professional sports referee who passed away in 2002.
Championed by three All-Americans but fueled by a preeminent sense of team, the Wildcats had both the talent and the mentality befitting of the nation’s top ballclub.

Chris Haddeland (15-1, 1.07 ERA, 96 Ks), Tim Wilson (.401, 87 hits, 31 SB) and Jake Wylie (.396, 66 RBI, 8 HR) posted astronomical numbers and were deservedly recognized as first team All-Americans.

But it was also the unselfish attitude and burning desire to succeed modeled by four seniors – Kyle Chamberlain, Jordan Harlow, Michael Hopp and Wilson – that helped the ‘Cats erase the memory of last year’s playoff snub, bringing home the first NCAA title in program history (and third overall, counting NAIA triumphs in 1966 and ’71) while setting numerous records along the way, including an all-time standard of 42 victories.

“This team hated to lose,” said coach Scott Brosius. “They carried a chip on their shoulder.”

Perpetually undeterred by adversity and always confident of victory, Linfield never lost back-to-back games. They went 4-1 in games decided by one run and 24-3 in contests decided by five runs or more. In perhaps the most memorable game of the year, Linfield was shut out for six innings before mounting a four-run comeback against UW-Stevens Point that put the ‘Cats in the driver’s seat at the NCAA Finals.

Few outside the program could have predicted the ending the Wildcats enjoyed. Linfield was unranked to start the season, picked to finish third in the Northwest Conference and opened the year with a shutout loss.

But the ‘Cats bounced back with a vengeance, and once the conference season got rolling, they never stopped. Linfield won every weekend of NWC action, including five sweeps, and captured the league title by four games with a 21-3 record.

By the middle part of the year, the secret was out: Linfield had secured its first No. 1 ranking of the Division III era and was well on its way to writing even more history.

One person who knew of Linfield’s potential from the get-go was Brosius.

“Before the season even started, I really liked this team,” Brosius said. Talent-wise, “I liked how the pieces fit in terms of flexibility. With guys who could play multiple positions, we could tweak the lineup when we needed to.

“Off the field, it was guys of great character... they believed in each other, they had a team-first mentality, they pulled for each other.”

Linfield saved its best for Appleton. The Wildcats got stellar starting pitching performances from Haddeland, Aaron Thomassen and Zach Brandon. Hitter after hitter proved clutch at the plate, from Wilson’s game-tying triple against UW-SP to Nick Fisher’s leadoff double and Chamberlain’s squeeze bunt against Southern Maine in the championship game.
“Sometimes it boils down to one hit or one play that one team makes and the other team doesn’t,” Brosius said when asked about the difference between this year’s team and past championship contenders. “This year we got the big hit.”

Fisher, a second team all-region honoree, worked hard to become a complete all-around player and took on a greater offensive role as a three-hole hitter by the end of the season.

Thomassen “had probably the greatest overlooked year that a guy’s ever had,” Brosius said. With a 12-0 record and 1.54 ERA against Division III opponents, Linfield’s No. 2 pitcher could easily go toe-to-toe with any other team’s ace.

Two-time first team NWC all-star Kramer Lindell anchored the outfield in center and boasted a .389 average at the plate. First-year starting shortstop Corey VanDomelen provided energy near the top of the order. Clayton Truex hit a hot streak in the postseason, batting .429 en route to all-tournament team honors in Appleton.

All in all, this was a season Wildcat coaches, players and fans will not soon forget.

“It’s just been such a special year,” Brosius said. “When you’re going through it you realize that the team has the ability to finish like that. But when it actually happens, wow.”

**Championship Top 10 List**

- 10 – Wildcats with 10 or more runs batted in
- 9 – 1st and 2nd team all-NWC honorees
- 8 – Postseason wins
- 7 – Top 25 teams faced
- 6 – Straight weeks as nation’s No. 1 team
- 5 – Shutouts
- 4 – Finals All-Tournament Team picks
- 3 – All-Americans
- 2 – 2.30 postseason earned run average
- 1 – National Championship

**‘Haddy’ pitches Wildcats to the ‘Natty’**

Chris Haddeland’s complete-game victory in the championship game of the NCAA Division III Finals was a fitting end to one of the greatest single-season performances in Linfield baseball history. The sophomore right-hander and McMinnville native won a nation-leading 15 games, setting a single-season program record that will take an extraordinary effort to surpass. He threw eight complete games, registered 96 strikeouts and set up a record-breaking 175 groundouts for a 1.07 ERA, seventh-lowest ever recorded by a Wildcats pitcher.

Haddeland, who as a freshman in 2012 pitched just 33.1 innings, mostly in relief, was named the Northwest Conference, West Region and d3baseball.com Pitcher of the Year. He was nearly untouchable in the postseason, totaling four victories and two saves en route to recognition as both the Austin Regional and the NCAA Finals Most Outstanding Player.

What’s most exciting about Linfield’s highly decorated ace? Haddeland still has two more seasons in a Wildcat uniform.

**‘Cats gain NWC title, lose hair in same hour**

Less than an hour after wrapping up the Northwest Conference title – the first step toward a national championship – with an emotional, 13-inning marathon victory over rival George Fox on Senior Day, the Wildcats broke out the clippers, trimmers and tarps in a phenomenal show of support for childhood cancer research.

All 42 members of the team – plus coaches – shaved their heads during a special postgame event on April 21. Some lost fairly decent heads of hair, others not as much. Teammates, mothers and friends all got involved in the process, which took place adjacent to the playing turf in the stands of Jim Wright Stadium.

In addition to the symbolic display of support for cancer patients, the team raised $4,201 (more than four times its goal) to support the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, a volunteer-driven charity that funds more in childhood cancer research grants than any organization with the exception of the U.S. government. The team’s fundraising efforts honored four children who have fought or are currently battling cancer, including 3-year-old Sapphire, who attended the head-shaving event along with her family. Team captains Jordan Harlow and Tim Wilson spearheaded the fundraiser, which was completely player-organized, advertised and managed.
Spring sports produce mixture of success, disappointment

MEN’S GOLF

Though Linfield fell short of claiming the program’s third consecutive NWC crown, the Wildcats placed respectfully among their conference brethren, overcoming the loss of All-American Alex Fitch, the midseason departure of key regular Connor Magnuson, and hot-and-cold performances during September and October to grab second place among eight NWC programs in the year’s final point standings.

“In the fall, we seemed to follow every good round with a bad one or vice versa,” said coach Greg Copeland, explaining the reason why Linfield found itself tied for fourth place in the point standings heading into the spring. “After that, we ended up performing pretty consistently.”

Magnuson left the team for personal reasons in December, taking with him valuable experience.

Enter freshman Adam Ruben, who joined the team in January after beginning the school year at College of the Desert.

Ruben was instantly comfortable in the Linfield environment. He ended up as Linfield’s low scorer in each of the four spring events he competed in, including edging NWC Player of the Year Ryan Kukula of Willamette by one stroke at the season-ending NWC Championships.

Ruben averaged a team-low 74.8 strokes per round, leading Copeland to call him “a great addition” to the program. Sophomore Taylor Klopp was one of Linfield’s most consistent golfers, averaging 75.9 strokes to rank among the top 100 golfers in NCAA Division III.

WOMEN’S GOLF

Already short in number to begin the year, a continuously flexing roster resulted in the highlights for the Linfield women’s golf program being considerably more individual than team-oriented.

Fortunately, the three mainstays – Maggie Harlow, Alexandria Smith and Brinn Hovde – provided plenty of positives, winning one tournament apiece and combining for 16 Top-10 finishes.

Harlow, a freshman, claimed the first medalist honors for the 2012-13 Wildcat squad – and the first of her collegiate career – with her triumph at the Linfield Invitational in October.

Veterans Smith and Hovde scored their medals after the turn of the calendar year. Smith, who averaged a team-low 87.1 strokes per round in her junior season, opened the spring schedule with a win at the PLU Invitational. Hovde won a tournament for the first time in her career in her second-to-last collegiate match, tying for first at the Willamette Cup.

As a team, Linfield finished seventh in the final NWC team standings.

WOMEN’S TENNIS

Battling through one of the closest playoff races in its history, Linfield reversed an early losing trend and closed the regular season on a 4-2 run to earn the fourth and final spot in the Northwest Conference tournament.

Despite not successfully defending their regular-season title, the Wildcats achieved a team ranking among the top five by the numbers, the 2013 season ranked among the top five in many statistical categories in the Linfield record book.

Understandably, an air of disappointment hovered over the ‘Cats after they suffered back-to-back losses to tradition-rich programs Redlands and Texas-Tyler at the Tyler Regional. Linfield scored just one run in its two playoff contests, a far cry from the nearly 10 runs per game the team averaged during the regular season.

Led by returning All-Americans Karleigh Prestiani and Karina Paavola, Linfield captured the conference pennant by a seven-game bulge. Three Wildcats received All-America citations at season’s end, including Prestiani and first-year starters Erin Carson and Lisa Yamamoto.

Carson emerged from her role as part-time contributor to a second team All-American. Similarly, Yamamoto elevated herself from part-time player to a .360 hitter while becoming the conference leader in home runs and first team All-American. Catcher McKenna Spith went from backup outfielder to a second team all-conference selection and Ashley Garcia raised her batting average to .429 and knocked home 51 runs.

Collectively, the Wildcats dominated the NWC, leading the eight-team league in batting average (.352), runs (335), hits (434), doubles (89), triples (17) and home runs (40). Linfield’s pitching staff also ranked first in ERA (1.75), opponent batting average (.216) and strikeouts (279).

But for all its dominance, the Wildcats couldn’t erase the sting of an early departure from the playoffs.

“A combination of great competition, poor play on our part, and no breaks was certainly the equation for a quick exit,” said Vaughan. “Unfortunately, the playoffs are all about playing your best softball at the right time of year and this year we just were not able to do that.”

Softball: When simply great isn’t good enough

If there was one lesson learned by the Linfield Wildcats during 2013 softball season, it was that a great regular-season performance doesn’t necessarily translate to success in the playoffs.

Linfield entered the season with several question marks about who would fill certain positions caused by graduation. The Wildcats brushed aside all doubts by again proving to be the dominant program in the Northwest Conference on the way to securing a 10th consecutive league championship.

Having reached the NCAA championship game the previous three seasons, expectations were understandably high, particularly for success in the postseason. Many expectations were met and some exceeded, though the ‘Cats walked away with a measure of disappointment after a quick ouster from the regional playoffs in Tyler, Texas.

Ordinarily, a season record of 36-8 would be cause for celebration at nearly every Division III institution. And judging strictly by the numbers, the 2013 team ranked among the top five in many statistical categories in the Linfield record book.

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Collectively, the Wildcats dominated the NWC, leading the eight-team league in batting average (.352), runs (335), hits (434), doubles (89), triples (17) and home runs (40). Linfield’s pitching staff also ranked first in ERA (1.75), opponent batting average (.216) and strikeouts (279).

But for all its dominance, the Wildcats couldn’t erase the sting of an early departure from the playoffs.

“A combination of great competition, poor play on our part, and no breaks was certainly the equation for a quick exit,” said Vaughan. “Unfortunately, the playoffs are all about playing your best softball at the right time of year and this year we just were not able to do that.”
The most balanced singles and doubles matches, including four wins at No. 1 doubles, led the team with eight victories in 13 dual matches. Zachery Lyons, the Wildcats’ senior captain, said, “We had some key injuries on the men’s side,” coach Travis Olson said. “We didn’t have much depth to begin with, so it was difficult to fill those gaps.”

**WOMEN’S LACROSSE**

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times for the Linfield women’s lacrosse team during the Wildcats’ 2013 season.

On paper, Linfield went all nine games without earning a victory on the scoreboard. Yet every player left the field happy, content that they had made improvements to their overall game in every contest.

First-year coach Sammy Smith took over the program armed with just slightly more than the minimum number of players needed to field a starting lineup. With no bench to call upon and many players experiencing the sport for the first time, a lot of Smith’s coaching was dedicated to teaching basic concepts of the burgeoning sport.

Linfield often found itself trailing early in matches and lacked the offensive firepower to play from behind. Nonetheless, the Wildcats played with an infectious enthusiasm, a rare yet encouraging happenstance for a team struggling to win even one match. Seguing on, they had made improvements to their overall game in every contest.

A “perfect storm” of injuries prevented the men’s team from realizing its full potential. Relying on just four individual finalists plus two scoring relays, the ‘Cats managed only 16 points en route to a last-place finish.

**MEN’S TENNIS**

The 2013 season was characterized by individual development, personal desire and a willingness to serve others.

“The team played hard, developed as players and showed a great desire to contest and battle every match,” said Wildcats coach Carl Swanson.

Zachery Lyons, the Wildcats’ senior captain, led the team with eight victories in 13 dual matches, including four wins at No. 1 doubles.

The most balanced singles and doubles player this year was Lukas Kleinman, who won four singles matches and four doubles matches to equal Lyons’ eight combined wins.

Sophomore Micah Hoos and freshman Tim Hawkins performed admirably throughout the spring, forming a solid No. 2 doubles team. The two young Wildcats paired for four wins.

Off the court, the Wildcats were active in the community. Their outreach included practicing with the local Special Olympics volleyball team, playing at recess with the kids at Sue Buel Elementary School, setting up a Pan Am event at Evergreen Aviation, raising funds for a Linfield student-athlete suffering from brain cancer, and staging a tennis clinic for the McMinnville High School boys tennis team.

**TRACK & FIELD**

From the takeover of a 16-year-old school record to a pair of unsatisfying team finishes at the NWC Championships, Linfield fans experienced it all in 2013, weathering the highs and lows that naturally define such a performance-driven sport.

While the team results were certainly not what Travis Olson had hoped, or even predicted, for his third season as head coach, eight Linfield Top-10 efforts and an NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships participant provided some significant individual highlights for the Wildcats.

On the women’s side, Linfield got six top-three efforts from 14 overall top-eight finishes at the NWC Championships, but had to settle for sixth place in the team standings.

Anna LaBeaume successfully defended her conference title in the hammer throw, placed second in the discus and was third in the shot put. She broke the program record in the hammer by mid-season, and topped her own all-time best effort with the winning throw at the NWC Championships. The junior also qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships, keeping alive a 15-year streak for the Wildcats in which at least one female has competed at the national meet.

Melany Crocker and Halsie Peek provided a solid 1-2 punch in the sprints. In addition to helping Linfield place third and sixth in the 4x100 and 4x400, respectively, the two combined to score 25 points in their individual events for the Wildcats at the NWC Championships.

For the men, a quartet of Wildcats – Lester Maxwell, Charlie Poppen, Nick Fairhart and Drew Wert – delivered in the individual events at the NWC Championships. Maxwell recorded his third consecutive top-three finish in the 800 meters, Poppen placed sixth in the high jump, Fairhart took sixth in the hammer and Wert registered his second career top-eight finish in the shot put.

**MEN’S TRACK & FIELD**

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Why TopCat Club?

Ask recent graduates Cole and Sallie

“My experience at Linfield was transformational and helped me become the person I am today. As a student-athlete in both baseball and football, much of my time outside the classroom was spent on the field with my teammates. I will never forget the lasting friendships I made and the absolutely incredible experiences. I still vividly remember winning the baseball regional championship on our home field. Celebrating with the home crowd after capturing the championship is one of my favorite memories from my four years at Linfield.

“This year, I made a gift to support Wildcat Athletics so our student-athletes can have the same experiences I enjoyed. Gifts from alumni, parents and friends supported me during my time at Linfield, and I want to pay it forward to current and future Wildcats.”

- Cole Bixenman ’11, football and baseball letterwinner

More and more alumni under age 30 are joining the TopCat Club.
✓ Participation in athletics is often a precursor to success beyond college.
✓ Supporting the TopCat Club enables all 19 athletic programs to prosper.
✓ By selecting the Lettermen’s option, you can join for as little as $10 a month.

“My fondest memories from Linfield involve my time on the tennis team. I vividly remember my senior year at nationals when my doubles partner and I battled back from a deficit in our final match to clinch our fifth-place finish. Being a student-athlete taught me to never underestimate myself; that we are all capable of much more than we would be inclined to believe, both physically and mentally. Competing in collegiate athletics allowed me a healthy outlet for my stress from schoolwork, and introduced me to some teammates who will be lifelong friends.

“As an alumna, I continue to support Linfield Athletics. I am proud I was able to be part of an athletic program with such high standards of excellence. My gifts to Wildcat Athletics ensure future student-athletes are given similar, or perhaps greater, opportunities that I received during my time at Linfield.”

- Sallie Katter ‘10, four-year letterwinner, women’s tennis

Will you sign up today? Your gift sets the table for success in 2013-14!

LINFIELD.EDU/SPORTS/TOPCAT

The TopCat Club exists as a support organization to Linfield’s 19 NCAA Division III varsity sports teams and the more than 450 students who participate in athletics each year. Gifts in support of the TopCat Club are essential in maintaining and expanding each program.
‘Big fan’ Arnold Owens dies at NCAA Finals

Linfield lost one of its most ardent supporters, just as the Wildcats baseball team was about to cross the threshold to a national championship. Arnold Owens, a 1954 graduate and longtime fan and supporter died unexpectedly May 25, in Appleton, Wis., just hours after Linfield defeated Southern Maine 10-1 in the winners bracket of the NCAA Division III Finals. It was his third trip to Appleton in seven years in support of the Wildcats.

Perhaps most visibly, Mr. Owens displayed his love for Wildcat Athletics through his regular attendance at Linfield sporting events and practice sessions.

He paid special attention to the Linfield baseball program, attending practices on a near daily basis while developing first-name relationships with many of the players over the years. He was known to travel to distant baseball games in Idaho, Arizona and California.

“If there’s a game, I’m usually there, no matter what or where it is,” Owens told the Linfield Review in 2008. “I even come to practice in bad weather.”

He earned his bachelor’s degree at Linfield in 1954 followed by a master’s degree in education in 1958.

A first baseman, Owens earned all-conference honors in the spring of 1954, helping the Wildcats to a 19-2 record, one of the best marks in program history.

In support of the college, Owens served various volunteer capacities, including a term as the president of the Quarterback Club and service to the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame selection committee. He was a regular and generous contributor to the TopCat Club.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn ’53, who accompanied him to Appleton.

Hall of Famers Bake, Stevens pass away

Two Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame inductees passed away this spring and both were pitchers on national championship baseball teams.

Frank Bake, a member of Linfield’s 1966 NAIA championship club, died April 1 at age 69. Dennis Stevens, a pitcher on the Wildcats’ 1971 NAIA title team, died March 14 at age 64.

Bake graduated from Cleveland High School in 1962, where he excelled in both academics and athletics. While playing basketball and baseball, he gained the nickname “Snake Bake” and the legend began. The catchy name followed him to Linfield. He pitched for the 1966 National Championship baseball team, which was inducted into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame in 1999 and the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

After graduation, Bake worked as an insurance underwriter. He then joined the family business, Columbia Door Sales and worked there for 35 years. He owned and operated the business from 1988 until 2004.

Bake is survived by a sister and brother-in-law, Cathy ’70 and Bob Sullivan ’71; a nephew, Mike Sullivan ’96; and a great-niece, Amanda Ricker.

A retired Air Force lieutenant, Stevens grew up in Portland. He was an all-state baseball and football player who attended Linfield on an athletic scholarship, which covered much of his tuition expenses along with summer sailing trips with the Merchant Marine.

He was a pitcher on Linfield’s 1971 NAIA national championship team and was inducted as part of the team into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame in 2001.

At Linfield, he met and later married Joyce Ann Greene ’71. After graduating from Linfield, he entered the Air Force, finishing a 32-year military career at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

He is survived by his mother, Gloria Stevens, sisters Donna Lugibihl and Laurie Davis, brother David Stevens, wife Joyce, daughter April Zimmermann, son Matt, and granddaughter Alexa Zimmermann.

Also, former Linfield football player Toby Weymiller ’94 passed away March 29 at age 43 from injuries sustained in an avalanche. An avid outdoorsman, Weymiller was living in Japan where he taught English. He survived by his wife, Maiko, father Sinclair, and three brothers, Allen, Peter ’82, and Paul ’87.
Join us for friendship, food and fun at the 2013 Wildcat Open July 12 at The Reserve!

Sign up at linfieldtickets.com
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More information wildcatopen@linfield.edu