SPRING SPORTS GET UNDERWAY WITH HIGH HOPES

“I think we have a good shot (to reach the national tournament),” said Dames Smith. “The top five teams from the West Region qualify for nationals. To be one of those teams, we’re going to have to beat a Top 20 team on the road.”

The Wildcats travel to California twice in the month of March, where they’ll play regional heavyweights Hardin-Simmons and UC-Santa Cruz. The strongest challenges Linfield faces within the Northwest Conference are expected to come from Puget Sound, last season’s runner-up, and from PLU and Whitworth.

Linfield’s starting lineup looks daunting with the return of three junior all-conference performers. At the top of the list is last season’s NWC Player of the Year, Becca Johnson, who in two seasons is 27-9 in singles play and 26-12 in doubles. Fellow all-stars Kasey Kuenzli (32-9 singles, 32-9 doubles) and Megan Rodgers (29-11 singles, 26-12 doubles) have equally impressive statistics.

The Wildcats are not without experience in the lower flights. Savvy senior Traci Sorensen (15-3 singles, 14-4 doubles in 2005) returns for her final season. Four sophomore letter-winners will compete with three freshmen for the remaining spots in the lineup. Kelli Sides and Hollin Buck both saw extended action last spring. Molly Nelson and Corinne Oates are also capable players. The list of newcomers includes Marina Orcutt, Megan Kelly and Melissa Maebori.

WOMEN’S TENNIS

With a lineup that’s loaded with experience at the top and brimming with potential at the bottom, Linfield appears to be the odds-on favorite to win its fifth consecutive Northwest Conference championship. The Wildcats could become only the third school in NWC history to win five straight women’s tennis titles and the first since Pacific Lutheran accomplished the feat from 1980 to 1984.

Winning the conference crown is not the ultimate goal for the Wildcats, who enter the season ranked No. 30 nationally by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Led by third-year coach Amy Dames Smith, Linfield aspires to earn an invitation to the NCAA tournament – something that has eluded the Wildcats the previous four years. Without an automatic qualifying berth for the NWC champion, the Wildcats must rely on the national rankings to earn a postseason bid.

SPRING SPORTS

The return of a dozen lettermen - including five starters - should translate into another contending season for Linfield in 2006.

“Our goals are to win the conference, protect our home court, play solid doubles and be prepared to compete in the NCAA tournament,” said fifth-year head coach Carl Swanson.

The Wildcats were 12-3 in the Northwest Conference last year, finishing third in the standings behind...
MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY JOINING THE TOPCAT CLUB

By contributing to the TopCat Club, you can truly make a tangible difference in Linfield’s continuing quest for excellence in every arena of competition.

Only with the help of TopCat Club contributions can the Linfield athletic program continue to excel regionally and prosper at the national level. Linfield has long strived to compete at the highest level of sports.

Donations benefit all 19 varsity sports programs. Resources provided by the TopCat Club have been a major factor in Linfield receiving the prestigious McIlroy-Lewis trophy three times in the last five years as the Northwest Conference’s top sports program.

Special needs vary from year to year, but the primary areas supported by TopCat Club include enhancement of facilities, equipment and uniforms, salaries for part-time assistant coaches, travel expenses for teams, as well as contingency funds for any unexpected needs.

If you’d like to spread out the financial impact by contributing monthly, you may do so by utilizing the special “Lettermen’s Club” option.

The TopCat Club is seeking to increase its membership by 25 percent in 2006-07 while generating $100,000 for our student-athletes. Though ambitious, these goals are vital to the growth of our programs.

New TopCat Club members are always welcome. Be a part of continuing the proud tradition of one of the nation’s most vibrant and successful sports programs.

To contribute securely on-line, go to https://www.linfield.edu/secure/give.php and enter “TopCat Club” under “Gift Designation.” Or, you may choose to mail your gift to TopCat Club, c/o College Relations, Linfield College, 900 SE Baker Street, McMinnville, OR 97128-6894.

Carney’s Corner, continued from Page 1

Today’s potential students do more shopping for a college than ever before. We receive inquiries from sophomores and juniors due to the advancement of technology and the use of the Internet. Our web site has become a major source of information for interested students and student-athletes. The athletics web site has become one of our most valuable recruiting assets.

Another change has come about due to the many recruiting and scouting services that are sold to high school students with the inferred promise of finding a college that they can continue their athletic endeavors. In most cases, I believe that these services are not worth the money, but they do send out countless numbers of names from all over the nation.

We still rely heavily on alumni and friends of the College for recommendations. Your pride and love of Linfield always play a large part in influencing potential recruits in their decision as to which college they might attend.

It has been my experience that student-athletes will find four elements that determine their happiness in their choice of a college or university. Listed here are some of the many questions that they need to answer for themselves. If any one of these elements are absent then happiness is much more difficult to achieve. It has been my experience that most all who leave Linfield prior to earning a degree have experienced difficulty maintaining a workable solution for the financial element.

1. The Educational Element – Does the school offer the program or opportunity that I am looking for in an institution?
2. The Athletic Element – Will I have an opportunity to participate or turn out for my chosen sport? Is the success of the program what I am looking for? Am I looking for immediate opportunity or do I want to be involved in a winning environment? Do I feel good about the coaching I will receive? Do I like the facilities?
3. The Social Element – Do I want a large or small school environment? Do I want to live in McMinnville, Oregon? Did I enjoy the atmosphere and people when I visited Linfield?
4. The Financial Element – Will this fit for my family and myself? Is the education worth the dollars for me personally?

Much of the time in college athletics, coaches spend time in preparation and anticipation. They recruit student-athletes, coach to prepare them for competition, and ultimately anticipate a favorable outcome. We are busy preparing and continue to be cautiously optimistic about our outcomes. Thanks for all your interest and support of our programs.

Sincerely,

Scott Carnahan
Director of Athletics

RUTSCHMAN REUNION PLANNED FOR JUNE 3

Football alumni from any era, plus baseball players who played under Hall of Fame Coach Ad Rutschman, are invited to a mini-reunion Saturday, June 3, at the McMinnville Elks Lodge. The fifth annual Rutschman Reunion luncheon starts at 11 a.m. and will again feature story swapping and other activities. For those who plan to attend, please RSVP to Jay Locey at 503-883-2415.

SCORER, BASEBALL ALUMNI TO GATHER IN LATE SPRING

Two separate alumni events this spring will bring together former Linfield athletes to compete against current team members.

The Linfield men’s soccer team is preparing to host its annual alumni match on Sunday, April 30.

All former Linfield men’s soccer players are invited to participate. The game begins at noon. A post-game meal will be served at the field following the exhibition match.

For more information, contact Linfield men’s soccer coach Eric Watson at 503-883-2528.

Similarly, the Linfield baseball program welcomes all former players to take part in an exhibition doubleheader against the Wildcat junior varsity squad. The game is scheduled for Sunday, May 7, at 11 a.m.

Players wanting to participate should arrive by 9:30 for batting practice.
Five home games, including two at night, highlight a challenging 2006 Linfield football schedule announced by Wildcats head coach Jay Locey.

The season starts at home Sept. 9 against Western Oregon in the first night game at Maxwell Field since 1969. The next week, Linfield travels to the Lone Star State to face powerhouse Hardin-Simmons in Abilene, Texas.

Linfield takes a week off prior to hosting Northwest Conference rival Willamette for the annual Homecoming game Sept. 30 at 1:30 p.m. Linfield visits Puget Sound on Oct. 7, then hosts Southern Oregon under the lights one week later as part of Family Weekend. Conference play resumes Oct. 21 in Tacoma against Pacific Lutheran. Menlo officially joins the NWC this fall, and the Wildcats meet the Oaks for the Hall of Fame game on Oct. 28. Linfield welcomes Whitworth to Maxwell Field on Nov. 4, then visits Lewis & Clark Nov. 11 to wrap up the regular season.

### 2006 LINFIELD FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Western Oregon</td>
<td>McMinnville</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Hardin-Simmons</td>
<td>Abilene, Texas</td>
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<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Idle</td>
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<td>Sept. 30</td>
<td>Willamette (Homecoming)</td>
<td>McMinnville</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>Puget Sound</td>
<td>Tacoma, Wash.</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Southern Oregon (Family Weekend)</td>
<td>McMinnville</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>Pacific Lutheran</td>
<td>Tacoma, Wash.</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>Menlo (Hall of Fame Game)</td>
<td>McMinnville</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>Whitworth</td>
<td>McMinnville</td>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>Lewis &amp; Clark</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
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- Northwest Conference game

Life has been a whirlwind for Brett Elliott since the Linfield All-America quarterback played his final college game three months ago.

The most decorated player in Linfield football history was presented with two momentous honors – the Gagliardi Trophy and the Melberger Award - anointing him as the top football player in NCAA Division III. He also competed in two senior all-star games, the Las Vegas Classic and the Hula Bowl in Honolulu, Hawaii.

For Elliott, his most anticipated moment is yet to come. The National Football League draft is scheduled to take place April 29-30 at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis and Elliott will be on the edge of his seat with cell phone in hand, hoping that one team – any team – calls his name.

A scout from every team in the league beat a path to McMinnville during the 2005 season to observe Elliott at practice, review game tape, and talk with coaches.

Questions surround his future. Will Elliott be drafted? Does he have what it takes to play in the NFL? A proven winner, Elliott is most certainly worth expending a draft pick to find out.

He’s considered among the top 25 quarterback prospects available in this year’s draft. Some have speculated he’ll be selected as high as the sixth round. Others have downplayed his success at the Division III level, saying the 6-foot-3 signal caller would have a tough time replicating his success against faster defensive backs. If he goes undrafted, he may yet catch on with a pro team as a free agent.

During his two seasons at Linfield, Elliott’s statistics were off the charts. He set the single-season NCAA Division III passing yardage record of 4,595 in 2004, and the all-divisions record for touchdown passes in a single season with 61. He also set a career NCAA record for pass completion percentage in 2005 of 68.1 percent and equaled the Division III single-season record for most 300 yard passing games (9) in 2005. In all, he set 31 Linfield passing and total offense records.

Perhaps most important, Elliott was 23-1 as Linfield’s starting quarterback, taking the Wildcats to the 2004 Division III national championship.

### NIGHT GAMES HIGHLIGHT 2006 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

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The season starts at home Sept. 9 against Western Oregon in the first night game at Maxwell Field since 1969. The next week, Linfield travels to the Lone Star State to face powerhouse Hardin-Simmons in Abilene, Texas.

Linfield takes a week off prior to hosting Northwest Conference rival Willamette for the annual Homecoming game Sept. 30 at 1:30 p.m. Linfield visits Puget Sound on Oct. 7, then hosts Southern Oregon under the lights one week later as part of Family Weekend.

Conference play resumes Oct. 21 in Tacoma against Pacific Lutheran. Menlo officially joins the NWC this fall, and the Wildcats meet the Oaks for the Hall of Fame game on Oct. 28. Linfield welcomes Whitworth to Maxwell Field on Nov. 4, then visits Lewis & Clark Nov. 11 to wrap up the regular season.
Spring Sports, continued from Page 1

The top tier of players includes captains Owen Suagee and John Yates, as well as lettermen Ian McGrath, Ramsey Selback, Wes Gabrielsen and Jon Roberts.

Returners Cole Shelton, Joe Serrepede and Kei Sato may also play their way into the starting lineup. The list of up-and-coming players includes letterman Jed Rembold, along with freshmen Nick Ruess and Luke Rembold.

“We're focusing on conditioning, shot selection and learning to play smart and play aggressive,” said Swanson. “The results will take care of themselves.”

The schedule begins Feb. 18 with a conference match against Pacific Lutheran. The Wildcats play three matches in California during spring break against UC-Santa Cruz, Pomona-Pitzer and Williams.

With the conference now playing a home-and-away round robin schedule, the NWC standings take on added significance. Only the top six teams qualify for the NWC championship tournament, slated for April 21-22 in Yakima, Wash.

TRACK AND FIELD

Could this be the year Linfield ends Willamette’s four-year stranglehold on the Northwest Conference men’s and women’s championships? It could happen, says Wildcats coach Garry Killgore.

“Certainly, we have started to close the gap,” said Killgore, who begins his 17th season. “We always believe it’s possible to win the championship. But it’s been a tall order the last several seasons.”

Twenty letterwinners return for the men’s squad, which achieved a second-place finish behind Willamette at the 2005 NWC championships. Under Killgore’s tutelage, the Linfield men have finished among the top three programs in the conference for 16 straight seasons. The 2006 Wildcats are strong in the sprints, middle and long distances, and throws, but remain untested in the hurdles and jumps.

Scott Vanassache, NWC runner-up in the 200 as a freshman, anchors the sprints. Freshman speedster John Torsey is expected to make an immediate impact. In the 400, newcomers Brian Petermeyer, Matt Strum and Matt McShane should be strong contenders. Mike Killgore and Dan Sagers are proven commodities in the 400 and 800. Chad Klein will challenge in the 800, 1,500 and 3,000 steeplechase. Justin Brandt can run the gamut of distances from the 1,500 to the 5,000. The trio of Kent Sasaki, Harrison Wilson and Shawn Pollard should be solid in the long distances.

In the throws, Killgore expects a stellar season from Derrick Gleason, the NWC runner-up last year in the discus. Lettermen Chris Miles and Jake Kleffner give the Wildcats plenty of experience in the weights. Bobby Rudel and Dylan McMurtry could be surprising additions. Lettermen Phil Zahn has NWC championship potential in the javelin.

Brandon Carpenter and Gabe Haberly will compete in the pole vault and decathlon. John Nelson is likely to be the Wildcats’ top high jumper. Paul Collins and Greg Schuff are the top threats in the long jump and triple jump. Haberly, Eric Snow and David Hinchman are emerging talents in the hurdles.

The women’s squad features two of the NWC’s top throwers in Danielle Bielenberg and Joni Claypool. The pair have taken turns beating the other for the NWC shot put crown the last two seasons. They could also finish 1-2 in the discus this spring. Also competing in the weights are transfer Porcia Jackson, from Whatcom Community College, and freshman Jenna Frank. Returning letterwinner Lydia Mascorro is a capable competitor in the javelin.

Coming off a stellar cross country season, Joanna Murphy is expected to be a force for the Wildcats in the 3,000 steeplechase and the 5,000. Whitney Mentaberry is solid in the 5,000 and 10,000 events. Freshman Jasmine Klauder further strengthens Linfield’s distance corps.

The middle distances could be another strength with Casey Stepan running the 800 and 1,500, and Kate Franklin emerging in the 400 and 800.

In the sprints, letterwinner Kelsey Newell is joined by Chelsey Gellately and Sarah Heilman. Riley Bernard, Caitlyn Mahoney and Laura Sibley will challenge in the hurdles.

Linfield is well-rounded in the jumps, with Gina Fuqua and Jessica Carpenter in the high jump, Lisa Brocard and Anna Moore in the long jump and triple jump, and Juli Huddleston in the pole vault.

SOFTBALL

Seven starters are among 13 returning letterwinners, and together, they share a vision of returning to the NCAA Division playoffs and advancing past the West Regional.

“Our goals are to win the league championship, qualify for the playoffs, and try to make a run through the West Regional and into the College World Series,” said Wildcats coach Jackson Vaughan.

Linfield finished the 2005 season with a 33-9-1 record and ranked 26th by the NFCA. This spring, the ‘Cats appear to have enough weapons to capture a third consecutive Northwest Conference title. But first, questions must be answered about pitching, depth in the infield, and at catcher.

Three senior cornerstones provide a solid foundation for the ‘Cats. Outfielder Shelly Steinke, shortstop Amy Hammons and first baseman Stephanie Morgan have started every game of their careers at their respective positions. Their experience and playoff savvy will prove to be important throughout the competitive NWC schedule.
BASEBALL

A lack of proven veterans, coupled with an abundantly wet training camp, have cast an air of uncertainty over the Linfield baseball program as the Wildcats enter the 2006 season.

Linfield graduated five first-team all-conference selections and six other seniors who earned second-team or honorable mention all-conference from the team that won a school-record 33 games.

In the annual NWC preseason poll, conference coaches picked George Fox to win the title this year and Linfield to finish second. “That’s very generous,” said Linfield coach Scott Carnahan, “considering we only have two starters returning.”

Returning for Carnahan’s 23rd season as Linfield coach are 13 lettermen, including All-America designated hitter John Dailey (.428, eight home runs) and a dugout full of questions.

During training camp, Carnahan received good and bad news about his pitching staff. Good: Senior Jordon Rasmussen (6-2 last year) has recovered from summer surgery to remove a bone chip in his elbow. Bad: Junior Dan Lawrence, who used a medical redshirt season to rehabilitate an 80 percent tear of an elbow ligament, has not recovered sufficiently to pitch. He is feared lost for the season.

Long-ball hitter Dailey also will be a starting pitcher. Brian Clark, Kyffin Marcum and Kyle Nakamichi, who pitched 21 innings between them last year, also will contend to move out of the bullpen.

At catcher, Jon Frederick was backup to all-star J.J. Stolsig in 2005 and Drew Van Cleave showed promise on the J.V. squad.

Cleanup hitter Brian Baker (eight homers, .612 slugging percentage) returns for his senior season at first base. Letterman Brett Glover has the inside track at second base Ty Stanley, David Bachofner and Jordan Boustedt will compete at shortstop and 2005 backup Brett Shearer will open at third.


LACROSSE

Heavy losses to graduation are tempering the outlook for the Linfield women’s lacrosse team entering the 2006 season. Five key starters were lost to graduation, including the top three scorers and career saves leader Jen Robbins.

The Wildcats return nine letterwinners from last season’s team that finished 11-9 overall and 6-5 against NCAA Division III competition.

Sixth-year coach Bill Hander calls his squad “well balanced.” Though Linfield lacks more than one proven goal scorer, “our overall skill level is much improved from the same time last year,” noted Hander.

There are no seniors on the roster, but five juniors bring leadership and experience to an otherwise young squad. Two-year letterwinners Jai Blood, Katie Walker, Julia Mortlock, Carly Ongman and Meghan Palakiko return with the most experience. Veterans Amy Twietmeyer and Audrey Kirmis are expected to be regular contributors. Returning letterwinners Laila Luopa and Meghan Sherman further solidify the lineup.

Hander benefits from the addition of freshman goalkeeper Rebecca Levy, an experienced netminder who formerly played with the Scottish under-18 national team. Other key newcomers include Michelle Dorris, Martha Inouye and Callie Martin.

The defensive side of the field appears solid, but the Wildcats must develop quickly on offense, where a trio of consistent point producers have graduated. Walker tallied 13 goals last season and will be the centerpiece of the front line.

The action gets underway March 3 at the Colorado College tournament.
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Starting with 11 freshmen, Robyn Stewart faced one of the most daunting challenges of her coaching career. Though the talented group of newcomers displayed moments of brilliance, those were tempered with times of uncertainty, frustration and fatigue.

Given the level of inexperience, the Wildcats’ fourth winning season in five years was considered a notable accomplishment. Linfield matched its season record of 13 wins and 12 losses from the previous year, but achieved it with far fewer veterans in the lineup. The Wildcats were 7-9 in Northwest Conference games, tying Whitworth for sixth place in the standings.

Perhaps the key moment of the season came in the fourth game against Northwest Nazarene when senior Brandi Loring re-injured her surgically repaired knee and was lost for the season. Loring had been averaging a team-best 14.3 points and 3.8 rebounds a game while providing a measure of leadership and savvy to the young club.

Playing without Loring, the Wildcats pressed on, jumping to a surprising 3-0 start in Northwest Conference play that included home victories over Whitman and Whitworth. Linfield was 9-3 following the Christmas break and faced a defining road game at Pacific Lutheran. The young ‘Cats self-destructed during a 63-55 loss, beginning a downward spiral that featured five more losses in the next six outings. The Wildcats rebounded to finish the season with positive results, winning two of the final three contests, including a 65-58 road win over Lewis & Clark that knocked the Pioneers out of the conference playoff hunt.

The Wildcats were among the Northwest Conference’s top defensive teams, leading the nine-team league in steals and turnover margin.

Ashley Covey, who garnered honorable mention NWC acclaim, led the conference in steals while shooting 40 percent from the field and averaging 4.2 rebounds per contest. Covey’s 85 steals established a new Linfield single-season record. Center Bayley Coblentz, the Wildcats’ lone senior, led the team in scoring (12.0) and rebounding (5.4). Guard Casey Stepan, the only player to start all 25 games, stepped up her game at both ends of the floor, developing into the team leader that the Wildcats desperately needed.

Freshman point guard Jessica Hanato flourished in a starting role, finishing among the conference leaders in assists, steals and 3-point field goal percentage. Center Kate Stadeli, another freshman, provided a true presence in the paint and was one of the top 10 rebounders in the NWC.

MEN'S BASKETBALL
The value of the 2005-2006 Linfield men’s basketball season will have to be judged in what the Wildcats’ 10 underclassmen contribute to future teams.

Linfield endured its first losing season in the past eight years and worst record (6-19 overall, 3-13 and last place in the Northwest Conference) in head coach Larry Doty’s 19-year career.

The Wildcats lost 11 of their last 12 and were 0-12 on opponents’ courts.

“We are a long way away” from contending for the NWC championship the Wildcats last won in 2001, Doty said.

“Coming off a six-win season, you have to consider that every spot is open. The returning players must get serious in the weight room,” he said. “The lack of physical-ness, experience and leadership hurt our young team.”

Linfield also needs a strong recruiting year, Doty said, especially players who can earn playing time immediately.

Freshmen and sophomores played 49 percent of the minutes and had 50 percent of the starts this season, so experience will be less lacking than on this season’s team, which had lost 80 percent of its offense and three All-NWC players to graduation.

The Wildcats’ leader, in just about everything, this season was captain Ryan Monagle. His teammates selected him Most Valuable Player and Best Defensive Player and NWC coaches gave him honorable mention.

Monagle led Linfield in points per game (15.6), minutes per game (31.1) and starts (24), and assists to turnover ratio (43/36). He was second in field goal percentage (50.5 percent) and free throw percentage (77), and at 6-feet-2 was second in rebounds per game (5.3) and first in offensive rebounds per game (2.1).

“His individual play was our one consistent mark all season,” Doty said of his star player. “The things he did this year were remarkable.”

The other seniors were post Joe Wells, who missed 50 of 95 practices because of injuries; co-captain Eric Hefferon, who was selected Most Inspirational Player by his teammates; and guard Matt Mishler.

Leaders in minutes played by underclassmen were Steve Taylor 541, Jackson Baber 510, team rebound leader (4.9 per game) selected Rookie of the Year by teammates; Matt McGowan 501, Brian Murphy 474, Khaatim Smith 407, Jeremy Goodman 322 and Michael Van Loon 286. Combined, they had 64 percent of the Wildcats’ playing time.
Winter Sports, continued from Page 6
SWIMMING

Linfield swimmers set five school records and put 24 new entries into the school’s Top 10 lists during the 2005-06 season.

For the second year in a row, Kevin Caple brought back the only gold medal from the Northwest Conference championship meet. Caple won the 100-yard freestyle in 47.44 seconds, fifth-fastest ever by a Wildcat. As a freshman in 2005, Caple won the 200 backstroke by nearly six seconds.

In the team standings, Linfield’s men finished third and the women fifth at the NWC meet. In dual meets, the men won 5 and lost 2 and the women won 4-4. Both teams won their last four dual meets.

Gary Gutierrez, concluding his eighth year as head coach, was pleased. “We had a great year,” Gutierrez said. “The kids trained hard and those who stayed committed reaped the benefits. Four records on the women’s side speak to that.”

In the 1,650-yard freestyle, Andrea Thomas set two school records in one race at the conference meet in Federal Way, Wash. Thomas finished third in 18:11.77, erasing the 13-year-old record of Wendy Hocker by nearly 5 1/2 seconds. Along the way, she was clocked at 10:57.58 for the 1,000 freestyle, beating her own school record set last season. In all, Thomas contributed five new entries to the Top 10 lists.

Freshman Courtney Johnson set the other major women’s school record in the 200 butterfly. She swam 2:12.16, also at the conference meet. Johnson had four Top 10 swims altogether. Another frosh, Rose Hollingsworth, established a new standard of 29.78 for the 50 backstroke in the first lap of the 100 backstroke at the conference meet.

Caple, who contributed to six of the 10 new men’s entries on the Top 10 list, set the only men’s record of the season with a 25.51 for the 50 backstroke in the first lap of the 100 back at the conference meet.

Caple was a provisional qualifier for the NCAA championships in the 200 freestyle but did not receive an invitation.

Next season is promising, Gutierrez said. “We only lose one swimmer,” he said. “Any team that has a finalist this year is sure to have a strong team next year.”

Freshman Alyssa Norman is looking for numbers and talent and depth in our recruiting."

In Compliance
Amy Dames Smith
NCAA Compliance Officer

PLAYOFF QUALIFICATION NOT A SLAM DUNK

Spring is in the air! Baseball, track, softball, lacrosse, golf and tennis teams have been practicing throughout January. Many have aspirations of winning the Northwest Conference championship and competing for a national title. It’s natural to assume that if one of these teams were to win the conference at the end of their regular season, that team would go on to compete in NCAA Division III playoffs.

You might be surprised to learn that is not the case for all Linfield sports. Even when a particular team wins the conference, that does not automatically mean it qualifies to compete in the national championships. A prime example is the Linfield women’s tennis program. Over the past several years, the team has been undefeated in conference play and won the conference championship four straight years (2002-05). Yet, it has fallen just short of qualifying for postseason play. Under the current system, Linfield’s tennis team must be ranked among the Top 5 of the West Region to qualify for nationals - regardless if they win the NWC championship or not. Our women’s highest regional ranking during the last few years has been No. 7.

At the 2005 NCAA convention, the membership adopted new legislation that greatly benefits athletic programs such as the Linfield women’s tennis team. Starting August 1, all Division III tennis and golf teams automatically qualify for postseason play if they win their conference championship. The proposal passed with an overwhelm- ing majority agreeing that “automatic qualification” (also referred to as “AQ”) for these two sports is in line with the Division III philosophy. For example, having an AQ puts a strong emphasis on regular, in-season conference and regional competition. Having an AQ also gives equitable access to NCAA championships as well as “treating championship access for student-athletes in team and individual-team sports consistently.”

The AQ for golf and tennis at the Division III level is a win-win. Golf and tennis programs benefit from it while bringing more Division III schools in line with the prevailing philosophy. In the meantime, Linfield’s women’s tennis team isn’t content to wait around until the 2007 season to qualify for nationals. They’re hard at work trying to qualify one last time under what will soon become a system of the past.

Until then, the Wildcats will remain in compliance!
ALUMNI NOTES AND TIDBITS

**Former Linfield men’s basketball player Gary Donnell ’70** was inducted into the Sierra College Hall of Fame on Feb. 4. Donnell spent three seasons as men’s basketball coach at Sierra and 14 years as boys basketball coach at Oakmont High School in Roseville, Calif.

One-time Linfield All-America wide receiver **George Carter ’05** has signed a professional football contract with the Tri-Cities (Wash.) Fever of the National Indoor Football League.

**Rob Christoff ’95** has been promoted from linebackers coach to defensive coordinator at Montana State. The former all-conference linebacker has also held assistant coaching positions at Linfield, Colorado and Saint Mary’s.

National championship swimmer **Beth Slaughter ’97** recently completed her second year as an assistant swimming coach and women’s recruiting coordinator at Linfield, Colorado and Saint Mary’s.

**John Broussard ’03** is a second-grade teacher and varsity cross country and boys basketball coach at Kotlik (Alaska) School in the Lower Yukon School District. He was a four-year basketball letterwinner.

Ex-Wildcat baseball pitcher **Dan Thigpen ’04** is completing his master’s degree and serving as assistant baseball coach at Concordia University (Portland).

**Michael Friess ’85** was named 2005 men’s and women’s cross country coach of the year in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. Friess is in his 16th year as coach at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. He guided both squads to the NCAA Division II national championship meet last fall.

**Tim Layman ’05** and **Alex Martin ’03** are serving as assistant coaches for the Linfield men’s and women’s tennis programs, respectively. Martin teaches Wellness and Leadership at Duniway Middle School in McMinnville. The two all-star tennis players led Linfield to consecutive NWC championships in 2002 and 2003.

**Luke and Kara (Heim) Buchheit, both ’02**, became parents of twins, Tyler and Faith, Nov. 8. Luke, a former all-conference football and baseball player, is physical education and weightlifting instructor at McMinnville High School. Kara, who competed in volleyball, is caring for the newborns at home in McMinnville.

Former Linfield baseball letterwinner **Jimmy McCary ’02** works for Fitch Investor Services, a bond rating agency in New York City. He was recently promoted to working on the company’s main point-credit ratings.

Four-year women’s lacrosse letterwinner **Jennifer Robbins ’05** received the Bob Peterson Graduate Award scholarship from the Northwest Athletic Trainers Association. Robbins, a goalkeeper, ended her career as Linfield’s career saves leader.