NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL SEASON ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

Highlights were plentiful during a record-setting fall sports season. Linfield’s run through the football playoffs and Shane Kimura’s 600th win as volleyball coach provided some of the most lasting memories. Here’s a sport-by-sport rundown of the fall season:

FOOTBALL

Unbelievable.

That may be the best word to describe the record-smashing 2004 season that culminated with the Wildcats capturing the NCAA Division III championship.

Linfield went 13-0 to win its first national title in 18 years and fourth overall. The Wildcats won NAIA Division II crowns in 1982, ’84 and ’86.

With an offense that led the nation in passing, total yards and scoring, and a defense that improved with every game, the 2004 Wildcats established themselves as one of the best teams in program history.

Jay Locey, in his ninth season, was named national coach of the year by the American Football Coaches Association and Football Gazette.

The season began with high expectations, but few could have predicted the levels to which the Wildcats would rise.

A crowd estimated at 4,000 turned out for the first game at the newly renovated Maxwell Field. Quarterback Brett Elliott passed for five scores and ran for another as the Wildcats swamped Western Oregon 58-17.

A week later, Linfield rallied from 10 points down in the fourth quarter to beat No. 7 Wisconsin-Stevens Point on the road. Elliott set three single-game records, completing 38 of 59 of 480 yards – all school records.

The Wildcats opened Northwest Conference play with a 40-21 victory over rival Pacific Lutheran. Linfield held PLU to just nine completions and 113 passing yards as the young defense began to forge a new identity.

In a 48-37 home victory over Whitworth, Casey Allen caught a school-record four touchdown passes and Elliott broke his own school record with 486 passing yards and five scores. The two teams combined for 1,157 yards with the Wildcats gaining a season-high 608 yards and Whitworth totaling 549.

Thomas Ford scored three touchdowns, helping Linfield rally from its largest deficit of the season to beat Southern Oregon 56-34. With the win, Linfield extended its national record of consecutive winning seasons to 49.

On the road in Tacoma, Wash., Elliott passed for four scores and ran for another as the ‘Cats pulled away from Puget Sound in the second half for a 35-16 win. Linfield scored on its first three possessions of the third quarter, opening up a 35-8 lead.

Next, Linfield equaled a school record with seven touchdown passes during a 69-13 whitewash of Menlo at Maxwell Field. The Wildcats erupted for five scores during an eight-minute span of the second quarter, turning a close game into a rout. Taking advantage of turnovers and special teams plays, the ‘Cats registered the second-highest point total in program history.

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FOOTBALL CELEBRATION PLANNED FOR FEB. 26

A community-wide celebration to honor the achievements of the Linfield football team is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 26, at 2 p.m. in Ted Wilson Gymnasium.

Everyone is invited to attend. Admission is free.

Players and coaches will be introduced, and the season will be summarized with a special video presentation.

When the Wildcats returned to McMinnville from Salem, Va., Dec. 18 after winning the national title, the fall semester had concluded. Most players and coaches returned immediately to their hometowns, making the possibility of a late-December or early January recognition impractical.

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Over 40 players and coaches from the 1984 national championship football team returned to campus Saturday, Nov. 13, to be inducted into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame.

The 1984 football team joined seven individual athletes also enshrined at the seventh annual Hall of Fame banquet.

Many team members were greeting one another for the first time since that magical season 20 years ago, when the Wildcats overcame seemingly insurmountable odds to capture the NAIA Division II national crown.

Steve Belt ’85, cited “courage, toughness and ability to overcome adversity,” as the team’s defining qualities. Steve Boyea ’85 noted the team was comprised of “a whole bunch of very good players, not any excellent players.” Floyd Halvorsen ’86 drew comparisons between the 1984 team and the 2004 Wildcats, saying that the football program has continued to prosper because of its “tremendous coaching staff.”

Three former track and field All-Americans were inducted. Curt Heywood ’94, a three-time national champion and six-time All-American in the pole vault, “epitomized what every student-athlete should be,” said his former coach Garry Killgore, in presenting Heywood for induction. Melanie Leckenby ’90, who came to Linfield intending to focus on swimming, instead blossomed into an All-American and national-meet qualifier in both track & field and cross country under the tutelage of retired coach George Oja. Known for his grueling training runs, Oja also developed distance runner and Hall of Fame inductee Kris Mueller ’83, who once held school records in six different events. Mueller praised Oja’s ability as a coach to build a bond between the coach and each individual athlete.

Don Hansen ’43, was remembered as “a smooth left-handed dribbler with a great eye for the basket,” said Al Beeler ’35, in presenting the Hall of Fame induction to Leslye Hansen ’49. “If Don had not hurt his knee playing, I might never have slowed him down long enough to marry him,” she mused, noting that she never actually got the chance to see her late husband play.

Football and baseball standout David Rohrer ’63 gave credit to his coaches, Paul Durham ’36 and Roy Helser ’36, both of whom “encouraged their athletes to practice good sportsmanship, be of good character and work toward graduation.”

Two-time All-American Bernie Peterson ’74, a self-described “man of few words,” was a “great football player and one heck of a good guy,” said former teammate Steve Pickering ’74. “In his own quiet way, Bernie was a very positive leader.”

Al Wills ’56 said Linfield “will always be my family. The college provided me with a great foundation for success.” Wills, an All-American offensive and defensive lineman, was known as a great downfield blocker and outstanding team leader.
Linfield football coach Jay Locey was named Division III Coach of the Year by the American Football Coaches Association. The award was presented Jan. 11 at the organization’s national convention at the Kentucky International Convention Center. Locey joined Auburn’s Tommy Tuberville (Division I-A), James Madison’s Mickey Matthews (I-AA), and Valdosta State’s Chris Hatcher (II and NAIA) as 2004 AFCA National Coach of the Year winners.

Locey led Linfield to a 13-0 record, the Northwest Conference title and the NCAA Division III championship in 2004. He has a nine-year career record of 74-17 at Linfield, including a 50-5 record over the last five years. His .813 winning percentage is the best in school history. Linfield has won five consecutive NWC titles and advanced to the NCAA Division III playoffs four of the last five years. His 74 wins are third-most in school history.

The winners are selected by a vote of the active AFCA members (coaches at four-year schools) in the Association’s four divisions. The AFCA has named a Coach of the Year since 1935. The AFCA Coach of the Year award is the oldest and most prestigious of all the Coach of the Year awards and is the only one chosen exclusively by the coaches themselves.

The Division I-AA, Division II and Division III Coach of the Year winners served as assistant coaches at the 2005 Hula Bowl in Maui, Hawaii. Locey, his wife, Susan, and their three daughters enjoyed an all-expenses paid week on the islands.

The letter appeared in the Portland Tribune as part of a column written by Dwight Jaynes. I thought you should all get a chance to read it, because it reflects the character we hope all our student-athletes leave Linfield with. Enjoy!

I want to start off by saying congratulations on a superior win in the Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl, and winning the Division III national championship, and finishing a perfect season. My name is Emily Painter and I work at Community Hospital in Roanoke, Va. I was working the day that part of your football team came to the pediatric floor to visit with our patients. I was impressed with the number of players and coaches who participated.

Being a former college athlete, I know that there are times when we as players were told that we would be participating in a community activity.

I watched your players come to our floor, and I saw something that I have rarely seen from college men - compassion and concern. I was truly touched to watch these men interacting with our kids.

One little boy, who has cancer, was scared to go to them at first. So they came to him, gave him a hat, read him some stories and gave him the feeling that someone cares about him. His mom chooses not to stay with him during his many chemotherapy treatments.

Some of the players went to our intensive care unit to visit patients. Our child life specialist told me that the players gave one of the patients a hat they had all autographed, and then he gave them his autograph in return.

The guys were more than willing to go to the rooms of patients who were not able to come out to our playroom.

The fact that your men would get on the floor and play house, basketball, build things and just take the time to spread some love and joy is a victory in itself. I hope that you are extremely proud and fond of this team, because they made a lasting impression on myself and our patients.

So not only are you national champions on the football field, but you are truly champions in life. Never let that spirit die. I hope that you would forward this on to all of your players who graced us with their presence in December.

Linfield junior Lindsay Harksen was named to the 2004 ESPN the Magazine Academic All-America volleyball team, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Harksen, a three-time first team all-Northwest Conference performer, was voted to the Academic All-America third team in the college division.

Harksen was a second team American Volleyball Coaches Association All-American as a sophomore in 2003.

A right-side hitter from Sublimity, Ore., Harksen is a finance major who carries a perfect 4.00 grade point average. She finished third in the NWC in hitting percentage (.266) and fourth in kills per game (3.72). As a sophomore in 2003, Harksen led Linfield to its first conference championship since 1989.

“Lindsay has a great combination of academic and athletic ability. From the time she first arrived at Linfield, she established her priorities and has been very focused on academics ever since,” said Linfield coach Shane Kimura ’78. “She has a tremendous work ethic and manages her time well, especially during the season. She’s also been a terrific role model to her teammates, working with them in areas such as math and calculus.”

The Academic All-America Teams program honors 816 male and female student-athletes annually who have succeeded at the highest level on the playing field and in the classroom. Individuals are selected through voting by CoSIDA, the College Sports Information Directors of America. To be eligible, a student-athlete must be a varsity starter or key reserve, maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.20 on a scale of 4.00.
Fall Sports, continued from Page 1

Kicker Garrett Wales booted seven extra points to become the career scoring leader during a 62-7 blowout of Lewis & Clark in Portland. Elliott threw five touchdown passes, setting the Linfield single-season touchdowns record.

Linfield nailed down its fifth consecutive Northwest Conference championship in the regular-season finale with a 48-14 win at home over Willamette. Three times in the first half, the Bearcats drove inside the Linfield 20-yard line, only to come away empty handed. Willamette was held to a season-low 174 yards rushing and 334 yards of total offense.

The playoffs began with the Wildcats on a roll. As the top seed from the West Region, Linfield received a first-round playoff bye. Elliott passed for 456 yards and five touchdowns as Linfield defeated 13th-ranked Wisconsin-La Crosse 52-14. O.J. Gulley scored Linfield’s final points with an interception return that covered 100 yards, setting a new school record and tying the NCAA Division III playoff record.

Elliott put on a passing display to remember in the semifinals, scouring Occidental for a school-record seven touchdowns. The Wildcats rallied from a 10-point first-quarter deficit to defeat the 24th-ranked Tigers 56-27. Allen hauled in 13 of Elliott’s passes for 221 yards, breaking Linfield single-season records for catches and receiving yards in the first quarter.

The steadily improving Linfield defense pitched its first shutout of the season in the semifinals, holding Rowan to 148 yards through three quarters, long enough for the offense to build an insurmountable lead. Linebacker Brandon Olson returned an interception for a touchdown, giving Linfield a 21-0 lead. Elliott established a new NCAA all-divisions record for most touchdown passes in one season, throwing for three scores to give him 59 in 12 games.

In the championship game at Salem, Va., Riley Jenkins caught a 10-yard touchdown pass from Elltott with 5:51 left to lift Linfield past Mary-Hardin Baylor 28-21. The victory capped a perfect season (13-0) for the Wildcats and marked their third Northwest Conference championship in five seasons. However, a crushing 1-0 overtime loss to eventual NWC champion Whitworth on the road cost the Wildcats another shot at the title.

The ‘Cats, who won the NWC crown in both 2000 and 2003, ended up third in the powerful NWC with an 8-5-1 record. A 10-9-1 overall mark beared witness to the up-and-down play that marked Coach Eric Watson’s third season at the helm.

“I still believe our men had the potential to be in the top half of the conference,” said coach Garry Killgore. “But our inexperience racing at the collegiate level really hurt us. Not enough of our runners put in the kind of offseason training they needed to in order for us to be successful.”

At the conference championships, Harrison Wilson was the men’s top performer, placing 25th in 27:41. Kelly Warren was 32nd and Chad Klein earned 49th place.

Four freshmen and two sophomores comprised the top-six runners for the women’s squad. Whitney Mentaberry was the top finisher at the NWC meet, claiming 23rd place in 23:45. Meryl Witt, bothered in the late season by a foot injury, was 29th and Chelsea Pullen was 48th overall.

“On the bright side, our women really clicked,” said Killgore. “They enjoyed being together and there’s a lot to be gained from having a close-knit group like that.”

While the growing pains were obvious, the future appears bright for the cross country program.

“For the athletes who will return next year, the challenge has been set forth to go out and train hard during the off-season and come together as a cohesive unit,” said Killgore. “I still believe this group has the potential to accomplish a lot of things.”

MEN’S SOCCER

Linfield rode an eight-match winning streak into the final two weeks of the season and was within reach of capturing its third Northwest Conference in five seasons. However, a crushing 1-0 overtime loss to eventual NWC champion Whitworth on the road cost the Wildcats another shot at the title.

The ‘Cats, who won the NWC crown in both 2000 and 2003, ended up third in the powerful NWC with a 9-5-1 record. A 10-9-1 overall mark beared witness to the up-and-down play that marked Coach Eric Watson’s third season at the helm.

“We played well in big matches, but didn’t perform as well against other teams as we have in the past,” Watson said, noting the Wildcats’ four league losses at home.

“Looking back, we benefitted from some very good individual performances, but we weren’t as good collectively as we should have been.”

Breaking in 10 new starters to begin the season, the Wildcats got off to a slow start, going 2-6-1 to start the year. That’s when Linfield caught fire, beginning with a dramatic 3-2 victory at Pacific in which the Wildcats rallied to win from two goals down.

“I was very pleased with the way we responded after the disappointing start,” said Watson. "Beating Puget Sound in Tacoma, beating Rhodes at home, and coming from behind to win at Pacific were all tremendous accomplishments."

Linfield posted its sixth consecutive winning season, finishing among the NWC’s upper echelon for a sixth straight year.

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Fall Sports, continued from Page 4

Six Wildcats received NWC all-star recognition, including midfielder Kevin Popich and defender Paul Collins - both first team representatives.

Goalkeeper Grant Williams, defender Tyler Lundy and forward Chris Paradis each garnered second team acclaim. Mike Grabast, recording a team-high eight assists, earned honorable mention.

With just Colby Ayonon and Tyler Oxley expected to graduate, the Wildcats should return nearly all of their nucleus next fall.

VOLLEYBALL

Losing seven seniors to graduation from Linfield’s 2003 Northwest Conference championship team proved too large a crater to fill. The Wildcats limped to an 8-14 overall record, finishing in fifth place in the NWC with a 6-10 record.

Linfield began the season with mixed results, winning seven of the first 13 matches. With a roster void of any seniors, it was only a matter of time before inexperience and a lack of poise in pressure situations eventually caught up with the Wildcats.

Wildcats coach Shane Kimura ’78 fielded a starting lineup that featured four freshmen, one sophomore and one junior. As other teams in the NWC made late-season runs toward the championship, the Wildcats digressed, the result of a lack of consistency.

“During the second half of the season, we lost a lot of close games, 30-28 or 30-27,” said Kimura. “Down the stretch, we just didn’t make plays we needed to win matches.”

The young Wildcats struggled to produce victories on the road.

“We won some big matches to start the year. But we were a lot better team at home than we were on the road,” said Wildbirds coach Shane Kimura, whose team posted a 5-4 record at Ted Wilson Gym, but was just 3-10 away from home.

Right-side hitter Lindsay Harksen, a first team all-Northwest Conference selection, led the conference in hitting percentage. Hitting .266 while averaging 3.72 kills per game, Harksen was also called upon to alternate with Tori Beck at the setter position. Beck averaged 6.54 assists per game while Harksen averaged 5.00.

Freshman Lisa Brocard and sophomore Michelle Wyatt were consistent performers on the front line. Brocard was named honorable mention all-NWC after hammering 290 kills. Wyatt enjoyed some outstanding performances, ending the season third on the team in kills with 218.

Defensively, Staci Fisher recorded a team-high 253 digs while Wyatt was second with 250. Harksen topped the Wildcats with 70 total blocks, setting the career record for block assists. Middle blockers Laura Grambo and Molly Taylor combined for 135 total blocks.

Kimura, who completed his 27th season as Wildcats coach, celebrated his 600th career victory during a 3-1 victory early in the season over LaSierra.

“The experience our players gained this season is hopefully going to pay dividends next year,” he said, already looking forward to another campaign.

WOMEN’S SOCCER

Decimated by injuries to a half-dozen players and trying to adjust to a new coaching staff, the Linfield women’s soccer team sputtered to a 4-14-2 overall record. The Wildcats finished in eighth place in the Northwest Conference with a 4-11-1 mark.

Bill Hander, the program’s third coach in four years, entered the season with hopes of getting all the players organized and striving for the same goals. To that end, the season could be considered a success.

“Every player gave tremendous effort,” said Hander. “Sure, they were disappointed not to have won more games, but my desire was to develop the team for the long term.”

The season was not without its share of highlights. In the early going, the Wildcats battled nationally ranked Concordia to an overtime tie. The Cavaliers ended up as the NAIA championship runner-up. And in the season finale, Linfield fell 1-0 to NWC champion Puget Sound, which went on to represent the conference in the NCAA Division III title match.

“When we played well, we were very good,” said Hander. “But injuries throughout the season really hurt our team.”

Erica Crossman and Ashley Covey shared top scoring honors with five goals each. Stephanie Gilchrist added three scores and Mindy Smith had two.

Allison Cartmill played the entire season in goal, recording 112 saves. Cartmill received most valuable player honors at season’s end. Covey was named best offensive player and Cassie Korneder was voted the top defensive player. Laura Vickers received the most improved player award.

Crossman, the lone Wildcat to earn all-conference accolades, received the coaches award. The senior ended her career fifth on the all-time goals (18) and points (54) lists.

As a team, Linfield was bestowed Academic All-Region honors from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.
WINTER SPORTS PROGRAMS EXPECTED TO BE COMPETITIVE IN 2005

MEN'S BASKETBALL

At the wing, defensive standouts Lindsay Sticka and Erin Nooy are enjoying positive senior seasons. Sharpshooter Brandi Loring has picked up where she left off last season, averaging double digits in scoring. Freshman Casey Stepan is also contributing on the perimeter.

The front line features both size and experience. Kendra Victor and Jessica Denison are hard-nosed rebounders. Letterwinners Bayley Coblenz and Brittany Mock have played with improved skill and confidence.

"This is a very competitive team with excellent depth," said Stewart. "We have some nice versatility at each of the positions. I like the fact that we've added players who can help fill our needs."

Puget Sound and Whitman, which shared the NWC title a year ago, are expected to contend for the top spot once again. Whitworth and Pacific Lutheran will also field strong teams. George Fox and Pacific can't be counted out, either. The Wildcats' goal is to crash the party by surprising many with a top-four finish in the conference.

SWIMMING

For the men, 11 letterwinners fill the scoring void left by graduated standouts Greg Jackson and Craig Gonzales. Team captain Paul Oler has made significant strides and could challenge for NWC championships in the 100 and 200 butterfly events. Nathan Piers-Vanderploeg and Andy Peters both return after placing among the top eight in three events at the 2004 conference meet. Peters could challenge in the 500 and 1,650 freestyle, while Piers-Vanderploeg should be a factor in the butterfly, breaststroke and individual medley.

Letterwinner Greg Baron is back with improved confidence. His steep training regimen should yield dividends in the freestyle and butterfly. Versatile performer Derek Laurie will contribute in the butterfly and IM, while Jacob Carroll is a rising talent in the breaststroke and 400 IM. Freshman Kevin Caple is within reach of a national qualifying time in the 400 IM. Caple will also compete in the backstroke and 200 IM. Matt Atkinson should score among the top eight at the conference meet in the breaststroke and sprint freestyle. Adding important depth are Ben Karlin, Loren Klemz and Patrick Motz.

There's little doubt the Linfield women will be an improved team this winter. Mandy Weeber, a standout in the backstroke, IM and butterfly, teams up with Katie Knep and Alyssa Norman to form the bulk of the Wildcats' scoring punch. Knep is expected to shine in the sprint freestyle, IM and middle distances, while Norman will be a consistent scorer in the backstroke and freestyle.

Letterwinner Andrea Thomas is enjoying an outstanding season in the butterfly and freestyle. Meagan Mandeville is performing well in the distance freestyle and 400 IM. Adding key depth are veterans Devon Parks, Anna Shoemaker and Crystal Padgett.

Top newcomers include Jennie Schenck in the butterfly, breaststroke and IM, Stephanie Model in the breaststroke and IM, and Marie Rode in the distance freestyle.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Linfield appears to have improved its long-range shooting and ironed out the ball-possession problems that resulted in the Wildcats leading the NWC in turnovers in 2003-04.

Nine letterwinners form the team's nucleus, including four returning starters. Heidi Jurgens is one of the top point guards in the NWC. Letterwinner Shannon Schiele can attack the basket or lead the fast break.

The Wildcats face a difficult road. Mandy Weeber, a standout in the backstroke, IM and breaststroke, teams up with Katie Knep and Alyssa Norman to form the bulk of the Wildcats' scoring punch. Knep is expected to shine in the sprint freestyle, IM and middle distances, while Norman will be a consistent scorer in the backstroke and freestyle.

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WINTER SPORTS PROGRAMS EXPECTED TO BE COMPETITIVE IN 2005

MEN'S BASKETBALL

On paper, the Wildcats seem to have the components in place for a championship run, namely size, speed and basketball savvy. Reclaiming the Northwest Conference championship will take "a concerted effort to do the special things that build team chemistry and morale," said Coach Larry Doty.

"We want to put our program in position to have a successful season. And the way we measure success here is by winning championships."

Four seniors are playing prominent roles this winter. Point guard Casey Kushiyama, off-guard Blake Shelton, and posts Sam Kreiger and Chris Lewis bring skill and experience where it's needed most.

Linfield has increased depth at point guard with the return of Kushiyama and the addition freshman Steve Taylor, a former South Salem High School star and member of the Saxons' 2004 state title team.

On the wing, the Wildcats have plenty of talent and perimeter scoring. Shelton is a consistent double-digit scorer after earning all-conference honors as a junior. Blake Shelton '05

In the low post, the Wildcats feature size and strength and the ability to score. Kreiger and 7-foot-1 Derek Ellerbrook will cause opponents to alter their shots. Lewis is a versatile scorer who can hit shots from inside or out. Letterwinner Joe Wells offers the Wildcats a smooth passer and muscular rebounder.

Followers of NWC basketball know the Wildcats face a difficult road. Unseating 2003-04 champion Puget Sound is a tall order, not to mention beating perennial contenders Whitworth and Willamette. But given their returning personnel, the Wildcats appear up to the task.

WINTER

SPORTS

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Linfield College athletes and coaches were prominent at the 53rd Oregon Sports Awards held Jan. 30 at the Tiger Woods Center on the Nike World Campus in Beaverton.

Linfield was presented two awards and was a finalist for three others. The Linfield football team, fresh from winning the 2004 NCAA Division III championship, was co-recipient of the George Rutschman Award. Sharing the honor with Linfield were the George Fox University baseball team, the Oregon Tech men’s basketball team, and the Aloha Knights amateur baseball team, all of which won national titles during 2004.

In accepting the Rutschman award on behalf of his teammates, senior captain Thomas Ford thanked the event organizers, and noted that “it’s pretty special to be a Linfield football player right now. We were thrilled to be able to go out and achieve the highest goal we set for ourselves.”

All-America quarterback Brett Elliott ’06, who set NCAA single-season records with 61 touchdowns and 4,595 yards, received the Ad Rutschman Small College Male Athlete of the Year award.

Three-time World Series champion and Linfield alumnus Scott Brosius ’02 announced Elliott as the Rutschman award winner. A five-time recipient of the Slats Gill award, Rutschman won 183 games in 24 seasons as Linfield football coach. He accompanied the entire Linfield football coaching staff and 13 Wildcat seniors to the gala event.

A communication major who is leaning toward a career in sports broadcasting, Elliott told the sold-out auditorium of about 800, “I came here to win a national title, but the most rewarding experience I had was in the friendships I made with guys on the team and the bond we had with the coaches.” Elliott is the third Linfield football player in three years to claim the Rutschman award, following All-Americans David Russell (2003) and Tyler Matthews (2004).

Linfield softball pitcher Liz Coburn ’04, who led her team to the best season in program history, was a finalist for the Ad Rutschman Small College Female Athlete of the Year award. That honor went to Concordia All-American soccer player Caitie Davidson. In addition to setting Linfield records for pitching victories and shutouts, Coburn was an all-star in the classroom, earning first team Academic All-America recognition.

“I’m very honored,” said Coburn. “Being a finalist was a pleasant surprise and a great way to mark the end of my college career.”

Elliott was a finalist for the evening’s most prestigious award, the Hayward, presented annually to the state’s top amateur athlete. University of Oregon All-America basketball player and NBA draft pick Luke Jackson was the recipient of the 2005 award.

Wildcats football coach Jay Locey was a finalist for the Slats Gill award, honoring the state’s top coach or administrator. Oregon Tech men’s basketball coach Danny Miles received the award after guiding OIT to the NAIA national championship.

The Oregon Sports Awards, co-sponsored by Nike and the Portland Tribune newspaper, honored the best and brightest athletes from across the state. Formerly known as the Hayward Banquet of Champions, the event featured appearances by Oregon sports luminaries Mary Slaney, Alberto Salazar, Mike Bellotti, Mike Riley and Terrell Brandon.

During the second weekend in January, the 99th NCAA National Convention was held in Dallas, Texas.

Of the 12 proposals considered for legislation, one is worthy of being highlighted as it immediately affects one of Linfield’s athletic programs. Since 2002-03, there has been a NCAA rule calling for Division III football teams not to use a football during their spring practices. That’s correct...football practice with no football!

Along with not being able to use footballs, the use of helmets, pads, blocking sleds, or any other form of sport-related equipment is also prohibited (Bylaw 17.11.6). The intent of this rule is to provide a safe environment for football student-athletes to condition out of season.

While a significant portion of Bylaw 17.11.6 is consistent with Division III philosophy, there is one portion that was called into question in a proposed amendment at the NCAA convention. The amendment called for the use of a football during the spring strength and conditioning period. There was a lengthy debate over the issue of allowing the use of a football back into spring practice.

It seems most will see the passage of this hotly contested amendment as favorable for one or two reasons:

• Linfield’s football team will now be able to practice their passing, catching and punting skills during the spring with a football.

• The amendment brings football back into alignment with other D-III sports such as tennis, soccer and baseball that have been allowed to use their sport’s ball during their non-traditional season practices.

If you happen to walk by Maxwell Field this spring and see the football team tossing a football around, don’t worry. They’re in compliance!
ALUMNI NOTES AND TIDBITS

Dallas Wilson, longtime Linfield sports supporter and brother of Hall of Fame coach Ted Wilson, died Nov. 6 of heart failure at the age of 90. Among his deeds, Dallas donated the “Cumseeum Bus” and also furnished uniforms for the Wildcat basketball teams.

Two-time all-conference softball pitcher Megan Muth ’97 married Kevin Larson in Aurora.

Tammie (Leberti) Montiel ’97 is the varsity volleyball coach at Marshfield High School in Coos Bay.

Scott Safford ’93, a former baseball pitcher, is assistant professor of psychology at Oregon State University.

Former football and track letterwinner Chris Nash ’91 received his second master’s of military science from Marine Corps University. He is currently an operational planner for the Third Marine Expeditionary Force.

Former soccer goalkeeper Chris Burke ’97, of Kirkland, Wash., is manager of financial planning and analysis for Classmates.com.

Soccer letterwinner Brooke (Honda) Chun ’93 of Waipahu, Hawaii, and husband, James, gave birth to a son, Stone, Aug. 6.

Former all-conference linebacker Justin Taylor ’98 and wife, Michelle, announced the birth of a son, Miguel, Oct. 13, in Spokane, Wash.

Ryan Cruz ’02, who lettered in three sports at Linfield, married Stacia Wiggins July 10 in Peshastin, Wash. Ryan is a teacher at Westside Christian High School.

Ronnie Smith ’80, who lettered in basketball, passed away June 3, in Hartford, Conn.

Matt Cate ’88, a member of two NAIA national championship football teams, was appointed Inspector General for the State of California.


Women’s soccer letterwinner Kim (Huserik) Olietti and husband, Tim, both ’95, gave birth to a baby boy, Izaac, March 16.

Longtime college and professional football coach Fred von Appen ’64 retired in August, ending a 40-year career that included coaching in two Super Bowls.

Former football All-American Phil O’Meara ’42 passed away Sept. 6 at age 84. O’Meara was inducted into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame in 2001.

Football letterwinner Jack Brown ’52 passed away Aug. 22 outside of Redmond.

Track and cross country letterwinner Gabe Doebler ’00 is cross country coach at Tigard High School and teaches mathematics at Valley Catholic High School in Beaverton.

Former All-America golfer Emily Hungenberg ’02 is assistant women’s golf coach at the University of Northern Colorado.

Joe Dominey ’93 is public relations director for the Laredo Bucks of the Central Hockey League and the Laredo Law of Arena Football League 2.