

VIKINGS

Athletics

Brian McCann,
Asst. Athletic Director/Communications
Office: (216) 687-5115
Email: B.McCann66@csuohio.edu

Alan Ashby, Associate SID
Office: (216) 687-5288
Email: A.Ashby02@csuohio.edu

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For Immediate Release

The Viking Report. . .

A Look At What Is Happening In Cleveland State Athletics

Spring Break Hits Cleveland State. . .

Swimming, Wrestling & Fencing Prep For NCAA Championships

Spring is definitely on the horizon at Cleveland State as the changeover from winter competition to spring play is in full swing. The four remaining winter sports will either compete in league or NCAA Championship play over the next two weeks while the six spring sports are gearing up for their respective spring break tournaments.

The women's basketball team plays a Horizon League Championship quarterfinal contest at UIC on Wednesday night (March 7) at 8:00 p.m. A win by the seventh-seeded Vikings would advance CSU to a semi-final contest against either Youngstown State or Butler on Friday (March 9) with the championship match being played on Sunday (March 11).

The fencing team will send as many as 10 participants to compete in the NCAA Midwest Regional, which will be held on Sunday (March 11) at Notre Dame.

Three members of the wrestling team, one men's swimmers and one men's diver will use the week to prep for next week's NCAA Championships. Wrestlers Ryan Hurley (149), Victor Crenshaw (157) and Rashard Goff (HWT) earned entry into the NCAA Wrestling Championships (March 15-17 in Detroit) while diver Chris Dalman and swimmer Jakub Dobies will take part in the NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships in Minneapolis, MN that week.

With the CSU campus pausing the spring term for the annual spring break next week (March 10-18), the Viking spring sports are all heading to warmer parts of the country.

The softball team will be in action for the first time in two weeks when the Vikings play 10 games in five days at the Rebel Spring Games in Kissimmee, Fla. CSU opens play on Sunday (March 11) with games against both Lafayette and Army.

The baseball team continues its 25-game season-opening road swing by playing a three-game series at Cincinnati this weekend. The Vikings will face the Bearcats on Friday (March 9) and Saturday (March 10) at 4:00 p.m. and then again at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday (March 11).

Both tennis teams will be in Hawaii over the break, allowing senior Sarah Galon to play at home for the first time in her Viking career. The men will play four matches during the trip, starting with a Saturday (March 10) contest at Hawaii-Pacific. The women will also play four matches during the trip, including a Saturday (March 10) meeting with Hawaii and a Sunday contest vs. Hawaii Pacific

The Schedule Ahead For The Vikings

March 7	Wednesday	Women's Basketball at UIC (HL Tourney)	Chicago, IL	8:00 p.m.
March 9	Friday	Women's Basketball at Horizon League Tourney	Green Bay, WI	TBA
		Baseball at Cincinnati	Cincinnati, OH	4:00 p.m.
March 10	Saturday	Baseball at Cincinnati	Cincinnati, OH	4:00 p.m.
		Fencing at NCAA Midwest Regional	Notre Dame, IN	All Day
		Women's Tennis at Hawai'i	Manoa, HI	TBA
March 11	Sunday	Baseball at Cincinnati	Cincinnati, OH	1:00 p.m.
		Men's Tennis at Hawaii Pacific	Honolulu, HI	1:00 p.m.
		Softball vs Lafayette (Rebel Spring Games)	Kissimmee, FL.	1:00 p.m.
		Women's Basketball at Horizon League Tourney	Green Bay, WI	1:00 p.m.
		Softball vs Army (Rebel Spring Games)	Kissimmee, FL.	5:00 p.m.
		Women's Tennis at Hawaii Pacific	Honolulu, HI	8:00 p.m.

Men's Basketball Closes Season At 10-21. . .

All Eyes Move To 2007-08 In Expectation Of Year Two Of Gary Waters Era

The first season of basketball under head coach Gary Waters came to a close last week when the Vikings couldn't rally from a four-point deficit, falling 78-59 in a first round Horizon League Championship game at UW-Green Bay on Tuesday (Feb. 27). The Vikings closed the year with a 10-21 record, including a 3-13 mark in league games.

"This group of guys gave it their all this year," Waters said. "They gave me everything that had all season long and even though injuries and a lack of depth may have limited our ability to win as many games as we should have, they refused to quit. Our seniors (Victor Morris, Raheem Moss & Patrick Tatham) should be proud of what they accomplished this year and we will miss their contributions next year.

"This season was about what I expected. We had some limitations going into the year that weren't going to go away but we still were able to lay the foundation of the program that we want to have. I'm looking forward to next year because we had three players sitting out this year who will immediately help to take the program to a higher level, and the three players we signed during the fall will be the backbone of a class that will lead this team for the next four years."

Sophomore J'Nathan Bullock scored 12 points against UW-Green Bay to finish the season with a team-high 13.5 scoring average, becoming just the third player in school history to lead the team in scoring as both a freshman and sophomore (Franklin Edwards & Weldon Kytley).

Women's Basketball Travels To UIC For Horizon League Tourney Contest. . .

Vikings Earn No. 7 Seed; Klein Named Horizon League Newcomer of the Year

The women's basketball team (8-21, 5-11 HL) opens play in the 2007 Horizon League Championship on Wednesday, March 7 at 8:00 p.m. EST at second-seeded UIC. Picked ninth in the preseason, the Vikings finished in a three-way tie for sixth place with Loyola and Youngstown State, earning the No. 7 seed. The Flames won both regular season meetings by comfortable margins and are 2-0 versus CSU all-time in the postseason. The Vikings are 6-12 all-time in the league tournament and a win on Wednesday would earn CSU a semifinal match-up on Friday (March 9) against either Butler or Youngstown State. The championship game is slated for Sunday (March 11) at 1:00 p.m. on ESPN. The Vikings have been led in league play by freshman Kailey Klein, who was named the league's Newcomer of the Year on Monday, after averaging 16.3 points and 5.8 rebounds in CSU's conference contests.

"Wednesday's game at UIC is going to be challenging - we didn't play very well in either meeting with them during the regular season," CSU head coach Kate Peterson said. "However, we've been playing with a lot more confidence lately and I think this team believes that it can play with anyone right now. The key to beating UIC is going to be our ability to not turn the ball over and make smart decisions on offense."

Cleveland State suffered a pair of tough losses last week to close out the regular season. The Vikings fell, 63-55, at Wright State on Thursday (March 1), followed by an 83-79 defeat at Butler two days later. Klein scored a game-high 18 points against the Raiders, but CSU was unable to overcome a 33 percent effort from the floor (19-57). The Vikings came up just short against the Bulldogs, erasing a 14-point second half deficit to take a three-point lead with 1:22 remaining. However, Butler scored the game's last seven points to pull out the win. Klein once again led all players with 26 points, adding a career-high nine rebounds, while senior Chenara Wilson tallied a career-best 19 points.

Wrestling Sends Three To NCAA Championships...

Three Viking wrestlers have qualified for the NCAA Championships and one was selected as an alternate, marking the 43rd straight year that at least one CSU grappler qualified for the championships and the seventh straight year with multiple entries. Junior Ryan Hurley (27-11 at 149) and sophomore Rashard Goff (25-15 at 285) were voted in by the league's coaches as wild card selections after placing third in their respective weight classes at the EWL Championships this past weekend. Sophomore Victor Crenshaw (26-9 at 157) was also selected as a wild card after placing fifth at the league tournament. Additionally, sophomore Chris Hahn (15-7 at 197) was voted into the tournament one of the league's three alternates.

The NCAA Wrestling Championships will be hosted by the University of Michigan from March 15-17 at the Palace of Auburn Hills in Detroit, MI.

"I am very proud of the three guys who made it to nationals," head coach Jack Effner said. "But I thought we could have gotten maybe one more guy in the tournament."

The Vikings placed sixth in the team standings at the EWL Championships at Woodling Gym this past weekend. No CSU wrestler made it to the championship round, but Goff, Hurley and sophomore Marcus Effner (23-15 at 165) each placed third in their weight classes while junior David Armstrong and Hahn placed fourth. Edinboro won the tournament, their sixth straight team championship.

Men's Swimming Sends Duo To NCAA Championships. . .

For the first time since 1987, Cleveland State will be represented at the NCAA Swimming Championships. Freshman breaststroker Jakub Dobies and senior diver Chris Dalman will compete at the national meet from March 15-17 at the University of Minnesota.

"Jakub and Chris have turned in perhaps the most memorable performances in Cleveland State swimming history," head coach Wally Morton said. "It's a lot harder today to make the NCAA's than it used to be. It is extremely difficult to make it this far. They are both phenomenal competitors."

Dobies, who was named the Horizon League Newcomer of the Year after setting two league records at the league championships, qualified in the 100 breast after posting a time of 53.77 on Feb. 23. His time was the sixth-fastest in the country, according to collegeswimming.com.

Dalman qualified for the diving portion of the national meet after placing third in the one-meter dive at the Zone C Championships on March 2 at the University of Michigan. He also placed fourth in the three-meter and will compete in both diving events at the NCAA Championships.

The last Viking swimmer to compete in the NCAA Championships was Harold Wagner in 1987. The last CSU diver to qualify was Ron Barrick in 1977.

Softball To Compete In Rebel Spring Games...

The softball team returns to action on Sunday (March 11) by opening its stay at the Rebel Spring Games with contests against Lafayette and Army. The Vikings will remain in Kissimmee through March 15, playing a total of 10 games over five days. CSU has been off since claiming the Longwood Spring Classic on Feb. 24. Junior Whitney Willard led the Vikings offensively, batting .500 (5-10) with five stolen bases, while sophomore Christa Coppus hit .444 (4-9) with a pair of RBI. In the circle, freshman Amanda Macenko did not give up a run in 9.2 innings en route to earning a pair of victories.

"We've been chomping at the bit to get back on the field again," head coach Angie Nicholson said. "It will be nice to get out in the warm sun and play a lot of games against some different opponents. After getting off to such a good start at Longwood, we're excited to see what we can do."

Baseball Starts Spring Break Schedule With Four On The Road...

The long season-opening road swing continues for the Cleveland State baseball team (2-7) with four more contests this week. CSU will play a three-game series at Cincinnati from March 9-11 before heading to Kentucky on March 12. The March 11 and 12 games will be broadcast over the air on WDLW 1380 AM and CSUVikings.com.

"We've gotten some great pitching early in the season, but we have yet to find our offense," head coach Kevin Kocks said. "We need to start executing our offensive system, especially with runners on base."

CSU, which is in the midst of a five-game losing streak, dropped both of its games and scored just two runs last weekend at Southeast Missouri. The Vikings lost, 3-1, on Saturday (March 3) and 5-1 the next day. Junior Bobby Cash led the Vikings with four hits in the two games. On Tuesday (March 6), the Vikings dropped a 9-5 decision at Ohio. After trailing 6-0, CSU stormed back with five runs in the sixth and seventh innings before Ohio added some insurance runs late in the game. Cash once again led the Vikings with two hits and three stolen bases.

Men's Tennis Heads To The Aloha State For Spring Break. . .

The Cleveland State men's tennis team (10-2) will spend its Spring Break playing four matches in Hawaii from March 11-14. The Vikings will leave for the Aloha State on Friday and will start match play on March 11 against Hawai'i Pacific.

"Taking the team to Hawaii is a nice trip for our program," head coach Brian Etzkin said. "Not a lot of teams get that opportunity."

The Vikings have won seven of its last eight matches, with their only loss in that stretch coming at Toledo on Feb. 24. All six of the team's starters have a singles winning percentage of .500 or better, led by freshman Ryan Hamning with a 20-6 mark while sophomore Rob West is 15-4 in singles play. One of the keys to the team's success has been winning the doubles point, as CSU has controlled doubles play in 10 of its 12 matches.

Women's Tennis Takes Winning Streak To Hawaii...

The Cleveland State women's tennis team (9-5) will take its six-match winning streak into a four-match spring break trip in Hawaii from March 10-13. CSU opens the trip with a March 10 contest with Hawai'i.

The trip will serve as a homecoming for senior Sarah Galon, a three-time first team all-Horizon League selection. Galon hails from Waianae, a small city on the southwestern side of the island of Oahu, the island CSU will be playing all of its matches on.

CSU's 1-4 start seems now like ancient history as the team has won eight of its last nine. Galon has run her singles record to 20-6 while freshman Charlotte Gibbons has won eight of her last nine matches and now owns a 15-7 singles record. The team's doubles play is much improved, led by No. 1 doubles combo Galon and freshman Denisa Muntean. The duo is 6-3 and has helped stabilize the lineup. The Nos. 2 and 3 doubles teams have been changed multiple times, but Etzkin may have found the right combination with Gibbons and junior Lindsay Sellers at No. 2 doubles with juniors Jenn Myers and Christine Vogelgesang and sophomore Kristin Chamberlain rotating in the third spot.

"One of the keys to our success has been that we're getting better and better in doubles play," head coach Brian Etzkin said. "We're starting to pull out the close matches and we're winning the tight 4-3 contests."

Fencing Heads To NCAA Midwest Regional...

The postseason action heats up for the men's and women's fencing teams this weekend as the Vikings travel to Notre Dame for the NCAA Midwest Regional on Saturday, March 10. CSU is coming off of a successful showing at the Midwest Conference Championships over the weekend.

"We're looking forward to going back to Notre Dame this weekend and hopefully qualifying some fencers on to the NCAA Championships," head coach Jim Sager said. "Our showing over the weekend solidifies our performance over the course of the year and shows us at what level we need to compete at NCAAs. I'm proud of the fact that this was our best finish at the conference championships in the history of the program."

CSU kicked off the postseason by competing at the Midwest Conference Championships at Notre Dame on Saturday and Sunday (March 3-4). The men's squad earned a third-place finish – the best in school history, while the women were eighth.

With 535 points, the men finished behind only nationally-ranked Ohio State (675) and Notre Dame (620) in the 18-team field. The foil team was third, epee fourth and sabre eighth. Freshman Liran Gross earned second team all-conference accolades in foil, while senior Mike Merker (foil) and sophomore Andy Snell (epee) both garnered honorable mention nods.

On the women's side, Ohio State tallied 645 points to edge Northwestern and Notre Dame, which both finished with 625 points, while the Vikings totaled 415 points. CSU junior Katie Smetana earned honorable mention all-conference honors in sabre. The Vikings were sixth in foil, ninth in epee and 10th in sabre.

Viking High Fives (Championship Edition)

1. Kailey Klein — Horizon League Women's Basketball Newcomer of the Year.
2. Chris Dalman — Qualifier, One-meter Diving, NCAA Men's Swimming & Diving Championships
3. Jakub Dobies — Qualifier, 100 Breast, NCAA Men's Swimming & Diving Championships
4. Ryan Hurley (149), Victor Crenshaw (157) and Rashard Goff (HWY) — Qualifiers, NCAA Wrestling Championships.

Viking High Fives (Regular Season Edition)

1. Bobby Cash — The baseball junior has had two hits in each of the last three games and is now batting a team-high .353.
2. Rob West — The men's tennis sophomore was named Horizon League Scholar-Athlete of the Week after helping CSU to a win over Chicago State. The psychology major owns a 3.64 GPA and is 15-4 in singles play.
3. Charlotte Gibbons — The women's tennis freshman has won matches against Dayton, Oakland and Chicago State last week to run her winning streak to six, improving to 15-7 this year.
4. The Fencers — Liran Gross, Mike Merker, Katie Smetana and Andy Snell each earned all-conference honors at the Midwest Conference Championships over the weekend.