May 31, 2016

Mount Mercy Sports Round-Up

Softball

The Mount Mercy softball team’s extremely successful season ended in a disappointing 3-0 loss to eventual champion Nardin in the semi-finals of the Monsignor Martin League playoffs. The Magic played solid defense, but were unable to get their bats going. The team had some runners on base, but failed to bring anyone home. Laura Gregory (Buffalo) took the loss on the mound, giving up all three runs. Senior Olivia Baly (Orchard Park) closed her four year varsity career with a hit. The team finished the regular season in second place with a 7-1 record and closed the year with an overall record of 10-4. With eight starters and 12 players returning to the team next season, the future looks bright for Mount Mercy softball.

Lacrosse

Mount Mercy’s unprecedented magical lacrosse season ended with the Magic winning both the league and playoff championships. First place Mount Mercy faced Buffalo Seminary in the semi-finals and Mount Saint Mary in the finals.

Mount Mercy got off to a bit of a slow start offensively against Buffalo Seminary. The team built a 3-0 lead but Buffalo Seminary scored twice to close the gap. A goal by Brigid Lempko (West Seneca) right before the first half ended put the Magic up 4-2. The team built their lead to a comfortable 8-2 margin before Buffalo Seminary narrowed the margin to 8-5. The Mount Mercy defense, led by goalie Brianna Gawronski (Dunkirk) then shut down the opponent’s offense for the last ten minutes of the game and the Magic’s offense added two more insurance goals to make the final score 10-5. Gawronski finished with 12 saves. Lempko tallied three goals and senior Emily Gawlak (Buffalo) also added three goals and had two assists. Gawlak also controlled the middle, winning six draws. Clare McKeone (Hamburg) scored a goal and had an assist. Arielle Brown (Buffalo), McKenzie Cerrone (Colden) and Anne Bamrick (Buffalo) each added a goal. Brigid Keane (Buffalo) passed out two assists and did a great job of picking up ground balls, finishing with seven.

The Magic had split two contests against Mount Saint Mary during the regular season, losing their only league contest 6-4 in the first game of the season. Mount Mercy defeated the Thunder 9-8 to take over first place later in the season. During the championship game, Mount Mercy was not to be denied, winning the contest 10-6. Keane opened the scoring putting the Magic ahead 1-0. The Thunder answered with two goals to take their only lead of the game. Keane used her speed and a spin move to tie the game with 4:49 left in the half. Fourteen seconds later Lempko put Mount Mercy ahead 3-2 on a goal with Keane assisting. With 1:39 left in the half Cerrone scored the first of her two goals to close the first half scoring with Mount Mercy ahead 4-2. The Magic picked up right where they left off when the second half started. With just 45 seconds elapsed in the second half, Lempko and Keane teamed up again with Lempko scoring her second goal and Keane picking up her second assist. Mount Saint Mary roared back with two goals to narrow Mount Mercy’s lead to 5-4. Lempko answered with her third goal to give the Magic a two goal advantage with 15 minutes left in the game. No one scored for the next seven minutes until Alyssa Siracuse (Buffalo) made a steal and then used her speed to score on a breakaway. Mount Saint Mary scored to make it 7-5 and with 4:58 remaining Lempko scored her fourth goal of the game off of a pass from Mary Barnes (Fredonia). Forty six seconds later Cerrone added her second goal of the game on a pass from Anne Bamrick. Keane closed the scoring with her third goal of
the game, with Brown picking up the assist. The Thunder scored with 44 seconds left making the final
score 10-6.

The Magic’s defense was superb in the championships, preventing the Thunder from
establishing a consistent offensive attack. Gawronski was exceptional in the early going, collecting 8 of
her 12 saves in the first half. Gawlak’s center draw skills were essential to the team’s offensive success
as she controlled 9 of the draws.

This was the third year that coaches Beth Schroeder and Melissa Graham led the team. The
team progressed from a season with two wins to winning the league and playoff championships under
their direction. “It was a great season,” Schroeder remarked. “The team worked together through
everything they faced this season. They stuck together, played together and won together.”

“I am so proud of how hard the team worked the past three years. There is a bright future for
Mount Mercy Lacrosse,” Graham commented. “It was especially rewarding to have so many former
players from the past two years return to celebrate the victory with the team.”

Keane, a four year member of the lacrosse program was obviously excited. “It is an unreal
feeling. During my four years we went from worst to first. This is the greatest feeling in the world,”
Keane stated.