

# sports

## New year, same goals for AU women’s basketball

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As the new year dawns in 2019, the second half of the season is underway for the sixth-ranked Ashland University women’s basketball team as they start another run towards postseason success.

The Eagles (15-1, 7-1 GLIAC) are not new to the concept of success, but adversity in the regular season is not something that they are familiar with. After losing to Grand Valley State on Dec. 6, the Eagles have been able to put that game behind them and focus on the rest of the season.

“Looking back, it was a huge help to us because it allowed us to truly evaluate our weaknesses and we have grown as a team from that moment,” AU assistant coach Stephanie Gehlhausen said.

Gehlhausen is sitting in as the current interim head coach for the Eagles as head coach Kari Pickens is out on maternity leave.

However, Pickens’ absence does not change any part of the Eagles game plan and Gehlhausen said that it has not been as hard as people would think filling in for Pickens. Nonetheless, Pickens and Gehlhausen are in constant communication to keep the team focused and on task.

“She (Pickens) is a huge help; she is watching film and sending her thoughts and her and I are able to talk at least once a day or once every other day about where the team is at,” Gehlhausen said.

Year after year the players attribute the team’s success to the constant off-court chemistry that the



AU ATHLETICS  
**AU senior Maddie Dackin drives to the lane in a game earlier this season.**

women have.

“I think just off the court we get along so well and I think that honestly helps our chemistry on the court,” junior forward Sara Loomis said. “We just love one another and are always hyping each other up.”

However, on the court, players continue to reach milestones, such as senior guard Maddie Dackin becoming the 22nd player in Ashland women’s basketball history to score

1,000 points.

“Honestly a lot of the credit goes to being on really good teams; I’ve been apart of some really good teams and some really good players that have given me that opportunity,” Dackin said.

On Jan. 12 at Purdue Northwest, Dackin tied her career-high with 23 points, giving her a current total of 1,012 points and led her team to a 112-68 victory over the Pride.

“That’s a great accomplishment

and it couldn’t have happened to a better, hard-working kid,” Gehlhausen said. “She is our captain and she has been a leader to this team for a few years now and hitting that milestone is really just a credit to her four years of hard work.”

After the Grand Valley State game on Dec. 6, the Eagles were able to bounce back in wins against Davenport and then non-conference opponents Notre Dame College, Indianapolis and Southern Indiana.

Southern Indiana (11-4) proved to be a huge road test for the Eagles on Dec. 30 as the Eagles were able to hold off the Screaming Eagles 86-82. This game was a huge bonus for the Eagles in the regional standings. The Eagles were led by junior guard Jodi Johnson who had 23 points and sophomore forward Karlee Pireu who came off the bench for 16 points.

At the start of 2019, the Eagles jumped back into GLIAC play to defend Kates Gymnasium against Michigan Tech (Jan. 3) and Northern Michigan (Jan. 5) by scores of 80-58 and 71-55, respectively.

Throughout the last three years, AU has led the country in scoring margin and is on track to do the same this year as they rank second in the country currently (30.1). However, Gehlhausen says there are still improvements that can be made.

“Every game we have grown and found something we need to improve on and we address it and we keep taking steps forward,” Gehlhausen said. “It’s exciting to see individuals improve throughout the

season as well as our team play.”

At the halfway point of the season, Johnson currently leads the team with 19.1 points per game and is ranked second in the GLIAC in that category. Johnson leads the GLIAC in FG percentage (65.8).

One player who has changed roles from last season to this season has been Loomis, who is at the head of the Eagle attack with Johnson in the 2018-2019 season. Standing at 6’2” height, Loomis is hard to stop in the post and ranks third in the GLIAC in points per game (15.6) and fourth in rebounds per game (9.3).

“It all started in the summer, coach told me what I needed to do because I would be moving from guard to post so it was focusing more on rebounding and looking to score more inside,” Loomis said.

The Eagles take the season one game at a time, but their Feb. 2 rematch against Grand Valley State is circled on the calendar, only this time it will be at Kates Gymnasium.

The Eagles will be back in action on Saturday (Jan. 19) at home against Northwood at 1 p.m. and Pickens will return to her head coaching role on Jan. 26 at Wayne State. AU will then return back home on Jan. 31 for a matchup with Davenport before they host the Lakers on Feb. 2 on Faith Day.

Gehlhausen said that the goal moving forward is to just get the win on Saturday and then move forward from there.

The AU women’s basketball team is looking to make history once again in 2019, but they plan to do it one game and one week at a time.

## No days off for athletes over winter break

### *AU swimming and diving takes annual training trip to Florida*

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The Ashland University men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams travelled to Orlando, Fla. over winter break for their annual training trip. It’s a time for the team to train, laugh, travel and make memories as a team.

On the morning of Dec. 31 at 2:30 a.m., the team departed from Ashland, Oh. to fly down to Orlando, Fla.

Over winter break, regular students have the chance to relax at home and sleep in until the late hours of the morning. However, for AU swimmers and divers, they spend their winter breaks a little differently.

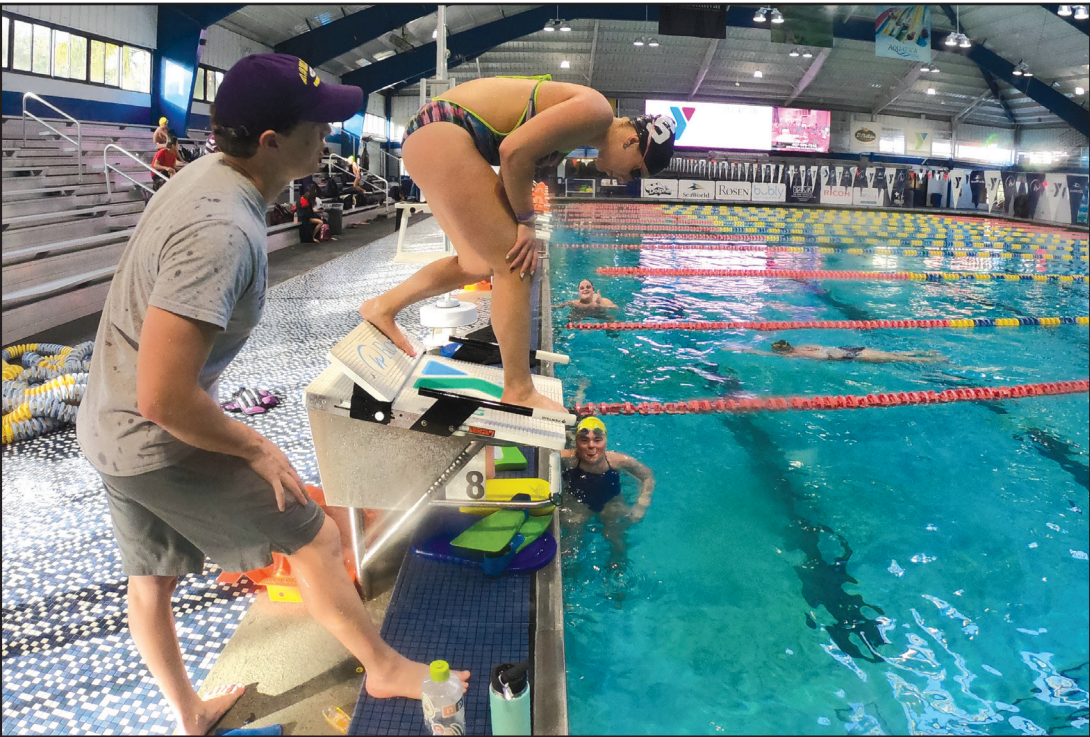
Each morning, the swimmers were up early with the first practice starting at 6 a.m. which would last for two hours. Six hours later the Eagles found themselves back in the pool from 2-4 p.m., for their second practice of the day.

Instead of swimming in the comfort of their own pool of Messerly Natatorium, for five days the swimmers called the YMCA of Central Florida their home.

On top of the intense pool workouts, for two days the teams participated in dry land practices which included a variety of exercises involving jump roping, push ups, core exercises and more.

To fund the trip that is held annually for the team, the athletes themselves hold fundraisers and raise money in the late summer and throughout the fall semester to help pay for the trip. One of the fundraisers this year was a golf outing. The team could also be seen working at a few of the home AU football games.

“Most college teams in the cold country go someplace warm to train during winter break,” head coach Ron Allen said. “The team members pay for that themselves so it is up to them where they decide



SUBMITTED BY: ELIZABETH PALMER  
**AU swimmers train over winter break at the YMCA of Central Florida in Orlando.**

to go. I honestly don’t care where we are, away or at home, as long as we are training together.”

Training together is what the team treasures most, and the amount of smiles and laughter throughout the trip can be a testament to that.

While in Orlando, the swimmers stayed in two different houses that were rented out, one for the men and one for the women. Each house was equipped with it’s own pool along with all of the living necessities for a comfortable stay.

Between practices, teammates spent time hanging out at either of the houses, cooking meals, or just relaxing.

“My favorite part was simply being with the team,” sophomore swimmer Anne Evans said. “Each house would make all their own meals, except one dinner when we ate out at a restaurant.”

Although there was a lot of serious training, a lot of joy was brought out from the experience. When the swimmers were not training or filling their athlete-size appetites,

they spent more time in the local pools hanging out and testing the water slides as well as other bonding experiences.

“We also had a freshman talent show after one of our dinners which I loved,” Evans said. “It made me feel a lot closer to all the people I already thought of as my

family.”

After five tough days of training the teams were given a half day where there was only one practice instead of two. Everybody was given the option to either relax or to have fun at Universal Studios.

However, some of the best memories made did not include any

elaborate adventures, but rather the simple van rides to and from practice filled the swimmers with excitement and happiness.

“Honestly, the van rides to and from the pool might have been the most fun,” junior swimmer Aaron Bradfield said. “Each ride was its own experience of team mischief, wild Orlando traffic, and laughs.”

Unfortunately everything eventually comes to an end and on Jan. 6 the Eagles flew back to the much colder Ohio only to attend classes the next day.

In their first meet of the new year Ashland competed at home in Messerly Natatorium on Jan. 11 where they dominated every section of the pool. The men’s team defeated Tiffin 106.50-98.50 while the women defeated Ursuline 144-29 and Tiffin 143-17.

The Eagles will be back in the pool on Friday (Jan. 18) against Malone and Urbana at Messerly Natatorium at 4 p.m.

Highlights of the winter break training trip in Orlando can be found by going to Youtube and searching for “Ashland University Swimming and Diving Training Trip 2018-2019.”



SUBMITTED BY: ELIZABETH PALMER  
**AU swimmers spend time hanging out at the Pirates Cove one evening in Orlando.**