

# sports

## AU basketball optimistic for seasons despite Covid-19

**LEWIS MARKHAM**  
Reporter

As the referee gets ready to throw up the first tip at Kates Gymnasium, the usual loud cheers and chants of “AU” seem like a memory to the players. On the court, the only noises that are audible are the squeaks of the shoes and the dribble of the ball with the occasional sideline tip from the head coach.

Ashland Basketball is underway for the Spring 2021 season, but unlike previous seasons, this one is very different. With Coronavirus concerns looming around every corner, there has been emphasis for the players on wearing masks and being smart about the situation on and off the court.

Sophomore forward, Annie Roshak, of the women’s basketball team stated that Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the season thus far.

“Covid has caused our season to look a little different this year. We are playing the same team back to back days, getting tested multiple times a week and just being extra cautious about what we do and where we go,” Roshak said. “Obviously we don’t want to get Covid for the health reasons, but if anyone were to get it it would also shut us down for 2 weeks, so we’ve all been really diligent about being smart in that regard.”

With no fans in attendance, the players have had to adjust to a different atmosphere, even when playing in big games.

“It has been so different play-



AU ATHLETICS

The AU women’s basketball team faught Saginaw Valley over the weekend of Jan. 22, losing game one 70-73, and winning game two 80-64.

ing without fans,” Roshak said. “Truthfully, we are used to having Kate’s rocking on game day.”

Not only has Covid-19 affected the attendance of fans, but it has also disrupted the start to the basketball season as both teams did not know if they were even going to

be able to play.

“The first semester was a huge challenge,” head coach of men’s basketball John Ellenwood said. “We were practicing in October not knowing if we were going to play at all. November and December were tough months with posi-

tive tests, which led to little practice.”

This in turn has led to preparation issues that normally were not a problem in previous seasons.

“Covid has affected our conditioning and our time to evaluate different lineups,” Ellenwood said. “Plus, with all the two week breaks due to positive tests, it has been difficult to monitor what works and what adjustments need to be made with our personnel.”

When asked about being successful in the GLIAC this season, Ellenwood stated that the most important thing is to stay healthy.

“This league is such a gauntlet. First, we need to stay healthy. Next, win some road games and dominate our home court. Easier said than done with the GLIAC competition...everyone is capable of beating anyone on any given day,” he said.

Even with a tough season ahead with many hoops to jump through, the team’s goals and intentions are just like any other season.

“Our mission statement remains the same as always: to be the best division two women’s basketball

team in the country and make a positive impact on all who cross our path,” Roshak said. “We continue to work day in and day out to achieve these goals and continue to make adjustments as needed.”

Being a young leader on an experienced team, Roshak was able to give insight on how she has handled the season and continued to push through.

“Learning to take adversity head on has been a big point that I think our team has focused on this year,” Roshak said. “Through every season there’s going to be ups and downs and so we need to be able to ride those waves out. We’ve also talked a lot about doing the details and being very intentional in every action we take whether that is on or off the court.”

To stay updated with how each team is doing, visit goashland-eagles.com or listen to the radio coverage of the games on 88.9 WRDL.



AU ATHLETICS

Senior wing Aaron Thompsom stands off against the Saginaw Valley Cardinals.

## Wrestling team wins first G-MAC title for AU

**ZOE BOGARTY**  
Reporter

Ushering in the spring semester, Ashland’s wrestling team participated in the Great Midwest Athletic Conference and brought home the GMAC title after ten months since their last competition because of the pandemic.

Ashland athletics as a whole will be joining the GMAC conference formally this upcoming year. The conference consists of 13 schools with six of them fielding wrestling teams. The wrestling team is also the first AU athletic team to compete in a GMAC championship and take first place.

“I think winning the GMAC title set the tone for the rest of the season for the team,” head wrestling coach Colton Sponseller said.

“It showed that we are a talented team that can compete with some of the better teams in the country. It has also helped reinforce the confidence that we are training hard and making gains in the right direction. I am super proud of the way the men competed and represented Ashland University.”

Sponseller became head coach

only two months ago.

Because of Coronavirus concerns, the wrestling season was pushed back from Nov. 1 to Jan. 1, so essentially their season dropped from being four months to two months, which dimmed the teams’ spirit for this season.

“The season so far has been unlike any other I think I’ve ever had for a sport,” Junior Daniel Beemer said. “Combating Covid and following guidelines while competing at a high level can be extremely challenging and stressful for any athlete. Even with these conditions Coach Sponseller and the rest of our staff have done a great job in getting our team ready to compete this year and help address any concerns or problems we had throughout the year.”

When adding in COVID-19’s regulations, the team is now limited to competing in duals, preparing for meets in different ways, and getting tested weekly. Wearing masks during training for a sport like wrestling has made some of the practices and lifts difficult, but the team has done a great job in adapting to the situation they are in according to Beemer.



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The men’s wrestling team currently competes in the GMAC, while other AU sports will follow suit next year.

“It’s not ideal, but it’s not the worst thing that could result from everything,” graduate assistant coach Brett Romanzak said. “We’re happy to be able to be in the room each day no matter how we have to do it. Masks are worn by the team any time they are not

on the mat getting ready for practice. Luckily, our wrestling room is very large, so that makes it easy to keep guys spread out and try to distance ourselves the best we can.”

Despite the pandemic, the GMAC title sets an early example of their expectations for the team

this year and how the rest of Ashland University sports will compete in the new conference. Setting the tone right away for their team and university in the new conference is something that the team takes pride in this season and future seasons to come.