

sports

Men’s basketball team wins first GLIAC tournament championship

DEAN PAOLUCCI
Reporter

In the final year of the Eagles being in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletics Conference, the Ashland University men’s basketball team was able to cut down the nets and proclaim themselves 2021 GLIAC tournament champions for the first time in program history. The Eagles championship win came in a 85-77 battle in Hammond, Ind., against the Michigan Tech University Huskies on Sunday, March 7. The Eagles (14-8), the number five seed in the tournament, entered the game red hot, winning two tournament games against the number four seed Ferris State University Bulldogs 100-85 and the number eight seed Saginaw Valley State Cardinals 83-57 over the weekend in Hammond.

“It was fun watching our guys celebrate and the hard work they put out and the comradery of them being able to celebrate work,” said head coach John Ellenwood. Leading the way for the Eagles on Sunday was redshirt senior guard Aaron Thompson who scored a new career-high 32 points. Thompson, who received both All-GLIAC Second Team and All-Defensive Team selections in back-to-back seasons, also made an impact defensively, grabbing nine rebounds and three steals. Along with Thompson leading the way for the Eagles was sophomore guard and GLIAC Tournament Most Valuable Player, Brandon Haraway who scored 19 points. Haraway, who also received all-conference honors for All-GLIAC First Team and All-Defensive Team selections, also accumulated six rebounds and two steals.

Redshirt senior guard Bo Furcron also was able to score 19 points, with three rebounds and two steals. “Aaron came out like a man possessed,” Ellenwood said. “He had 25 points in the first half.” “Everybody else on the team; Brandon Haraway had an unbelievable weekend, Bo Furcron, and defensively Derek Koch did great all weekend.” The Eagles, as a team, shot over 59 percent from the field, making six three-pointers and going 23 of 30 from the free throw line. While the Eagles tied the rebounding battle with the Huskies at 29 each, the Eagles did score 40 points in the paint and 18 points in fastbreak situations. The Eagle defense also held the Huskies to 47 percent shooting on the day and 37 percent from beyond the three point line. The Huskies (14-7), the three seed

in the tournament, were led by junior guard and GLIAC Player of the Year Owen White who scored 33 points and made five three-pointers. Senior forward Trent Bell also racked up a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds on the day. The Eagles tournament championship clinches an automatic berth to the Division II NCAA Tournament in the Midwest Region, where the team was ranked as a fifth seed out of six teams on Sunday night. The opponent the Eagles will face in the tournament is a GLIAC foe in the Wayne State University Warriors, who enter the tournament as a four seed in the region. The Eagles and the Warriors have met two times this season, both matchups going in favor of the Warriors 58-50 on Jan. 26 and 64-60 on Feb. 16. The Warriors were

also the regular season champions in the GLIAC with a record of 12-5 in conference play prior to the GLIAC Tournament. “We are playing a team we are familiar with in Wayne State,” Ellenwood said. “Our guys are gonna be hungry, we blew two leads against them. They are a great team and they won our league. I think our guys are gonna be pumped up for the third time and hopefully the third time’s the charm.” The Eagles will face the Warriors in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in the Midwest Region on Saturday, March 13, in Evansville, Ind., at 7:00 p.m. The game will be broadcasted over the radio on 88.9 WRDL or online at WRDLFM.com.



Men’s basketball team poses for photo after winning the GLIAC title.

AU ATHLETICS

Men’s tennis rolls into new season

NATE POWALIE
Reporter

The coronavirus pandemic has brought turnover with some new faces to the Ashland University men’s tennis team. In June, the organization hired former West Virginia Wesleyan head coach Timothy Dunford as the Director of Tennis Operations. The team also helped out in the Ashland community by adopting a family through the Salvation Army Kroc Center. Now with four matches under their belt for the new season, the Eagles are back in action with familiar names such as senior Priyank “P.K.” Soni, juniors Stuart Brdicka

and Jordan Phelps, and others. Soni is ready to play in his senior season. “As a player, since this is my final season,” he said. “I’m looking forward to playing my best tennis and focusing on winning the GLIAC and getting to nationals.” Being the only senior on the team, Soni has a leadership role when it comes to handling the pandemic. Under his watch, the team tries to follow the regulations, such as social distancing, hand sanitizing, and wearing masks before and after each match. “As a team, we try to stay healthy, follow the COVID-19 rules and regulations, and hold each other accountable,”

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Priyank Soni pictured above.

AU ATHLETICS

Softball team ready for final GLIAC season

JORDANN LOPATA
Sports Editor

The Ashland University softball team is ready to leave their mark in their final season in the Great lakes intercollegiate athletic conference. The team, who before starting their season in February, were away from practices and games for almost a year due to the coronavirus pandemic. “Our hopes for the season are to have a really strong finish in the GLIAC, everyone is almost on an even playing field because everyone missed out on the last year. So, to see how we compete, we’re young, we’re a little inexperienced but we have a lot of enthusiasm in our freshman and sophomores and we have a lot of talent across the board, and so I am excited to see how all of our players rise up to the occasion,” said head softball coach Emlyn Knerem. The softball team traveled to Chicago in their opening weekend, went 2 and 2 and are determined to continue to get more wins.

Senior second baseman Emma Lawson, talked about one of the goals that the team has for this season. “First of all we want to finish above .500, we have been stuck there for a while the past few years. Then eventually finish first in the conference, and then hopefully make it far in the tournament, and then make it to regionals. So one step at a time, and keep building,” she said. As far as how the team has adjusted because of the pandemic, and the guidelines that the University has used to ensure safety of athletic teams, the softball team has some of their own rules to make sure they are staying healthy. “We’ve just had to adjust to not going home as much, trying to stay here, be with only each other as much as possible, keep our circles small, which in doubt has made us a lot closer and we have that compatibility with each other,” said senior Alli Hylton. The eagles, a fairly young team with only five graduating seniors,

and a strong freshman and sophomore class have seen great potential already in the start of their season. “There’s a lot of young talent and they’re only going to keep getting better,” Emma Lawson said. As far as the future goes, Coach Knerem is very confident in her team, and the classes coming in that will add to the success of the program. “They are invested in what we want to do and they want to come out and compete and they want to win. And we have a really strong class coming in next year, we’re really excited about them. So, adding those girls to the mix of who we already have, I just see us improving each and every year and I expect that we’re going to compete at the top of the GMAC every single season from here on out,” said Coach Knerem.



Members of the softball team pictured above.

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