

Lancers		
Women's Soccer		
8/28	@ York	5 pm
9/1	College of St. Mary	2 pm
9/7	@ William Penn ¹	6 pm
9/8	vs. Harris Stowe ¹	2 pm
9/12	Jamestown	5 pm
9/19	@ Jamestown	4 pm
9/22	Doane	1 pm
9/23	University of St. Mary	noon
9/25	Dakota Wesleyan	1 pm
9/29	@ Hastings	5:30 pm
10/2	@ Dordt	3 pm
10/6	Concordia	1 pm
10/10	Morningside	2 pm
10/13	@ Neb. Wesleyan	1 pm
10/16	@ Northwestern	5 pm
10/24	Briar Cliff	1 pm
10/27	@ Midland	1 pm
1 — William Penn Classic		

Epp, Lancers Look For Better Results In Second Season

BY CHRIS RILEY
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One of the great aspects of sports is that although memories of previous seasons linger, they are only memories. That is good news for the Mount Marty College women's soccer team, as they look forward to a fresh start after a frustrating 2011 season that saw them go winless in 16 matches.

Ever though they failed to post a victory, the Lancers were still competitive in a number of games last fall. All-GPAC honorable mention selection Hayley Rutledge, Dorcas Copa, and Britney Hank are lost to graduation, although Hank is helping out as a student-assistant coach this semester while student teaching.

Lancer head coach Nathan Epp, entering his second season at the helm of both men's and

women's programs, named seniors Hannah Miller and Ashlin Aguilar as his top returning players. Miller, a Norfolk-native and All-GPAC honorable mention selection in 2011, is an attacking midfielder while Aguilar players forward.

According to Epp, the goal for the 2012 season is to qualify for the GPAC postseason. That will require being in the top eight in conference standings at seasons end, a placing that will likely require at least three or four conference victories. Postseason play would be a big step forward for the Lancers, but Epp believes that the players on his roster are capable.

"The team made a lot of progress through the spring season and the returners have worked hard to be ready," Epp said. "There is a lot of new talent on the team that will improve our

skill on the field as well as improve our depth at every position."

Some of that new talent includes freshman Allison Erwin from Norfolk and Yankton-native Laura Ekeren, a sophomore transfer from Wayne State. Erwin and Ekeren join nine other newcomers as well as nine returners to push the Lancer roster up to 20, a substantial increase over last year that should give Epp a chance to mix up his lineup and little more and keep his players fresh.

The Lancers open their season at York, Nebraska on August 28. Their home opener is September 1 against College of St. Mary at 2 p.m. while conference play starts on September 22 as Mount Marty hosts Doane.

You can follow Chris Riley on Twitter at twitter.com/ChrisCRiley



MOUNT MARTY LANCERS: Hannah Miller (10)

MMC XC

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turnm Biermann, and senior Yankton native Jade Steinberg. Another young team for the Lancers, the women's roster is composed of five new faces and just four upperclassmen. But that youth excites Fischer who has high hopes for this squad.

"I think our girls' side could be our best team in school history," Fischer said. "We've got some younger talent there so I'm excited about that."

Some of that younger talent expected to run well for the Lancers are Jordyn Hudelson of Elk Point-Jefferson and Tess Byrd of Kadoka Area, who was 16th at the State B Cross Country Meet. But the top competitor for the women will once again be Fly who is setting her goals high for another successful season.

"I definitely want to qualify for Nationals again," Fly said. "That's my biggest goal. I also want to push to be the conference champion. It's a big reach but it's possible."

With so many new faces to the program, both squads are facing a couple changes in practice and training methods that will help them mature as competitors and hopefully benefit them in the long run.

"We started a little bit earlier this year with our training camp so we thought we'd try that with a young team," Fischer said. "We're going to go to a little smaller meets just to get them used to it and not so intimidated. Hopefully that'll help us get some good things going."

But, after just a few days into fall camp, things already look to be falling into place for the Lancers.

"I think the season outlook looks great," Fly said. "We have a bunch of new people in and they're running great already and it's only been a couple days of practice."

The first test for both squads will be the Augustana Twilight meet on August 31, but the big meets for Mount Marty are a couple months down the road: the GPAC Championships in Sioux City, Iowa and the NAIA National Meet in Vancouver, Wash.

And Fischer and his athletes



MOUNT MARTY LANCERS: Kaylee Fly (341)

are already working toward reaching those meets.

"I think it's going to be an exciting season for our team," Fischer said. "We've got kids that are excited about the season, they're working hard, have good attitudes, and I think all that is going to carry over for our team to have success. I think we'll surprise some teams by the end of the year."

You can follow Jilanne Doom on Twitter at twitter.com/JilanneDoom

Lancers		
X-Country		
8/31	Augustana Twilight	TBA
9/8	Nike Heartland	10 am
9/15	Dakota State Inv.	10 am
9/29	Dakota Wesleyan Inv.	10 am
10/8	Briar Cliff Inv.	10:30 am
10/20	Mount Marty Inv.	10:30 am
11/3	GPAC at Sioux City	10:30 am
11/17	NAIA Nationals at Vancouver, Wash.	



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MMC VB

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hitters junior Emily Schreur and sophomore Kristen Boyle. At six feet two inches, Schreur should be a strong force for the team after suffering from ankle injuries the last two seasons and Boyle, who came off a successful freshman year, will add a different dimension to the hitting lineup with her lefty swing.

But it is the newcomers who are expected to help move the Lancers along to the next level of competition.

Two incoming freshmen who could make an immediate impact are middle blocker Lexie Branson of Elk Point-Jefferson and outside hitter Bailey Kuchta of Wynot, Neb. Branson broke the State A tournament record for blocks last season and Kuchta is showing a high level of play already in her short amount

of time with the team, said Climber.

These returners and freshmen will have many minds to change in the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) as the Lancers were picked to finish near the bottom of the conference this season, but Climber uses their current rank as a motivation for her team.

"I saw that the polls ranked us on the bottom but I told the girls I always love upsets," she said. "And they're pretty excited to see where they are especially with this new group coming in."

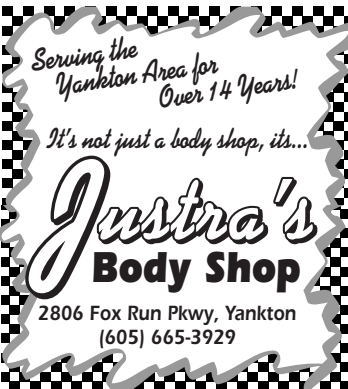
But more than just volleyball, this Mount Marty program shows the definition of what is means to be student-athletes. Last season, as well as several in the past, the Lancer volleyball team was given an American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Team Academic Award for earning higher than a 3.30 cumulative team grade point average. With their 3.42, the Lancers were one of only 31 NAIA schools to be awarded this honor, but that still did not satisfy the team whose goal was a 3.5.

"That's one thing when these girls come in; I tell them right away you're here to get an education," Climer said. "That's number one and number two is to play. Their goal was to get a 3.5 last spring and they just fell short. But we do stress that and watch it throughout the season. The seniors are awesome at that and making sure they're all staying on track."

With anticipation building for the season to start, the Lancers have a few keys matches in mind that they especially want to win: the opponents they fell to in the five-set matches from last season. And they get that opportunity soon as they will face two of those opponents in an upcoming tournament at Dakota Wesleyan University on August 31.

But first, the Lancers will open up their season with the Alumni match on August 25 and play their first regular season game against Grace on August 28 in Omaha, Neb.

You can follow Jilanne Doom on Twitter at twitter.com/JilanneDoom



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