

# Lancers Look To Defend GPAC Tourney Title



P&amp;D FILE PHOTO

The Mount Marty College baseball team holds up the 2012 Great Plains Athletic Conference tournament trophy after winning the tournament, held in Lincoln, Neb. MMC begins its tournament title defense as the fourth seed, playing Nebraska Wesleyan in the opening round today (Thursday).

BY JEREMY HOECK  
jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

It's been a spring filled with nail-biting for the Mount Marty College baseball team.

From piecing together a lineup after injuries to a handful of close games, the Lancers emerged through the regular season in rather good shape.

Now comes the task of keeping it going in the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) Tournament. Mount Marty, seeded fourth, opens with No. 5 Nebraska Wesleyan today (Thursday) in Hastings, Neb.

Working in favor for the Lancers (19-23, 11-9) has been a torrid finish to the regular season — 8-3 over the last 11 games.

"We really came together as a team and things started clicking," said junior first baseman Jared Miller, who leads the team in hits (55), doubles (15), home runs (5), RBI (38) and total bases (85).

"Last year we had low points too and all of a sudden, it all turned around. We're not in the

exact same situation, but we're in a lot better position because of the way we played."

A year ago, the Lancers entered the GPAC Tournament as the No. 7 seed and put together a 5-0 record to win the post-season championship.

If close games — as was the case last year — are the barometer, MMC prepared itself during the regular season in 2013. The Lancers have won seven conference games by one run and lost five others by one run.

The combination of close-game success and a strong finish should bode well, according to head coach Andy Bernatow.

"These kids, in terms of carrying on a tradition, have achieved a lot," Bernatow said. "I really like where we're at. I know there are some other teams that are hot, but I'm intrigued to see how we do when we match up against them."

On the way to a winning GPAC record, it's been a season of obstacles for Mount Marty.

Junior Derrick Nelson, the start-

ing shortstop and contender to close, suffered a season-ending injury eight games into the season. Sophomore transfer Bryton Carlson was also injured early, but returned to bat .299 in 26 games.

"We had to figure out what we were going to do with our middle infield, and we found some kids to step up," Bernatow said. Alex Mueller (Fr.) eventually settled in shortstop and Tyler Edler (Jr.) moved to second base.

"We're not the same team we started out with," Bernatow added. "We had to learn a lot about ourselves. But the guys have always been coachable along the way, and it's led to some really good baseball."

Mount Marty, which ranks second in the GPAC in batting average (.290), boasts a rather balanced offensive attack — with only two seniors among the top 10 eight hitters.

Mueller has batted .409 in 17 games, followed by sophomore Zac

LANCERS | PAGE 9

## MOUNT MARTY HALL OPENS ITS DOORS



P&amp;D FILE PHOTO

Members of the 1972 Mount Marty College women's volleyball team pose with MMC president Joseph Benoit, left, and athletic director Chuck Iverson, right, at the Hall of Fame introduction on Feb. 16 at Laddie E. Cimpr Arena. The team, which won a state title and competed in a national regional, is one of two teams selected for induction to the MMC Athletic Hall of Fame. The induction will be held on Sunday.

# '72 Volleyball, '98 Men's Hoops, Pesicka Honored

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK  
james.cimburek@yankton.net

For the first time since Mount Marty College created its athletic Hall of Fame, two teams will be inducted when the hall opens its doors on Sunday, May 5.

The 1972 volleyball team, which won a state title and competed in a national regional in the era prior to recognition of women's athletics by the NCAA and NAIA, and the 1997-98 men's basketball team, which advanced to the NAIA Division II national semifinals, will be inducted, along with former women's basketball player Kate (Heine) Pesicka.

The event begins at 2:30 p.m. with a social in the Roncalli South Dining Room. The induction will begin at 3 p.m. as part of MMC's end-of-year athletic recognition.

Here is a look at the inductees:

### 1972 Volleyball Team

The first successful athletic program at Mount Marty College wasn't put together by great recruiting, or any recruiting outside of campus, for that matter. But the 1972 women's volleyball team had a level of success against bigger schools that hasn't been seen by Lancer programs since.

The Lancers won a state title — competing against every collegiate program in South Dakota, including South Dakota and South Dakota State — and advanced to a national region held at the University of Minnesota. "They were just grateful for

the opportunity," said Judi (Hood) Faunce, the head coach of that Lancer program. "They were excited to belong to something that was bigger than themselves."

The 1972 season was just the fourth season of volleyball at MMC, and only the third of playing a regular schedule. In the first season, 1970, Faunce actually coached by MMC and Yankton College.

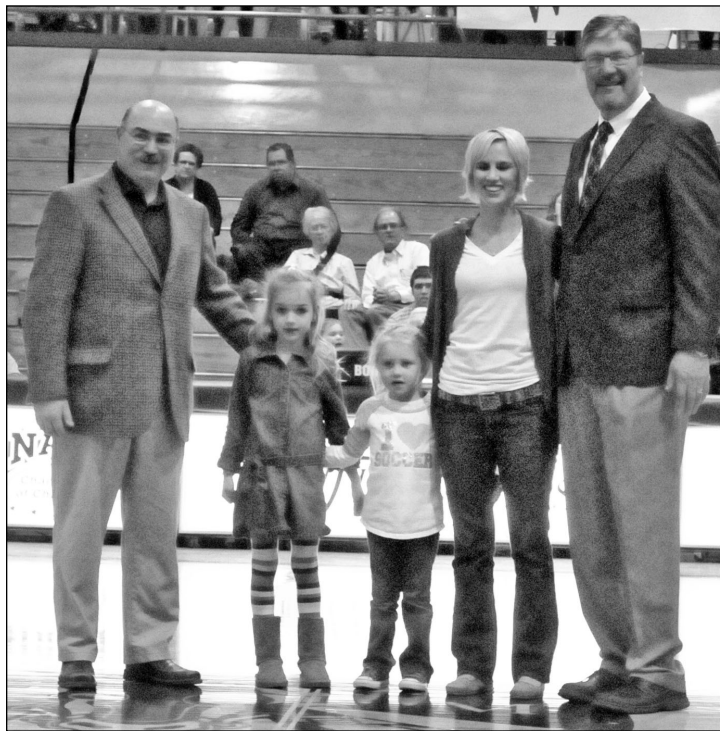
Title IX, which started the process of leveling the playing field for women, passed in June of 1972 and had not taken full effect. The Lancer volleyball program consisted of players recruited on campus, many of which were physical education majors who competed in several sports at MMC.

"There were at least three or four physical education majors that had to play every sport," said S. Joyce Feterl, a member of that squad. "Most of us did not have the opportunity in high school, so we were eager to play in college."

The Lancers had gone 9-10 the previous season, but finished third in the state tournament. In 1972, the Lancers started 1-2 before getting on a roll and finishing the regular season with a 15-4 record.

"We lost two of our first three, but from then on it came together for us," Feterl said. "We knew each other. We knew each other's moves. We knew how our teammates would take a serve and how our setters would set the ball."

Faunce, a 2006 MMC Hall of Fame inductee, wasn't afraid to



P&amp;D FILE PHOTO

Kate (Heine) Pesicka, second from right, poses with MMC president Joseph Benoit, left, athletic director Chuck Iverson, right, and daughters Quinn (second from left) and Kinsley (center) at the Hall of Fame introduction on Feb. 16 at Laddie E. Cimpr Arena. (Daughter Avyn is not pictured). Pesicka, who was a four-year starter at point guard and helped the Lancer women's basketball team to the 1999 NAIA Division II Tournament, was selected for induction to the MMC Athletic Hall of Fame.

challenge her young athletes.

"I was young and idealistic, and I gave them no slack," she had. "I had the diehard philosophy that if you worked hard, you won. If you didn't work hard, you didn't win."

When the Lancers played in the Library Gym, they would do anything and everything to get some fans to their matches.

"We literally would go to the nursing home across the street and wheel people over to watch, just so we would get a crowd for our games," Faunce said.

When the team hit the road, they would pile in to a long navy blue station wagon dubbed the "weiner-wagon."

"We didn't have a bus, ever. We had the biggest station

wagon you could imagine," said former Lancer Darlene (Thole) Dunklau. "We would get sack lunches that someone would have to order from food service, put them in the back, and we would eat those on the way home. We never got to eat out unless we were at the regional."

Dunklau recalled one eventful trip home from Mitchell.

"We had three flat tires coming home on one trip," she said. "This was before cell phones, so you had to hope somebody would stop, find somebody with the right size tire, jack the wagon up and put it on."

The Lancers beat South Dakota State twice in a row to complete the state tournament run, then advanced to play a regional at the University of Minnesota. While the Lancers went 0-5 in that tournament, Faunce credits the 1972 team for laying the groundwork for Lancer volleyball.

"It all started with 1972," she said. "From that team, you really could see what volleyball could be."

Besides challenging her players on the court, Faunce also exposed the team to some of the leaders in women's athletics at the time.

"She would take us to regional conventions, where we could see some of those at the top of the ladder," Dunklau said. "It was great for me as a player and a person who wanted to teach. You knew she wasn't just doing this for a job."

And, while Faunce was not Catholic, she gave the young women a great example of dedi-

cation to faith.

"At first I thought it was funny that they would hire someone who was not Catholic, but it didn't take long to realize what they saw in her," Dunklau said. "Seeing someone who used her faith in her whole life and lived according to what she believed, I had such respect for her as a person."

While the results on the court were impressive, the results off the court were a group of hard-working young women who became professionals in a number of fields.

"Today as I reflect on our team, we are a group of professionals working in education, nursing, and leaders in businesses and communities," said former player Lynette (Burbach) Bruening. "We are grateful for the opportunity presented to us and the environment to achieve such success."

Besides Feterl, Dunklau and Bruening, the 1972 Lancers included Becky Beck, Ruth Bryant, Marcene (Tomjack) Dickes, Deb Dykstra, Bette (Weiler) Gorczynski, Jill Heitzman, Cheri McGregor, Mary (Korger) Pistulka, Kathy (Velder) Sobotka, Diane (Thielen) Stuart, Peg Utesch and Cyd (Hamro) Wyatt.

### 1997-98 Men's Basketball Team

If there is a blueprint on how to make the most of a second chance, the 1997-98 men's basketball team followed it to near perfection.

MMC HALL | PAGE 8