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Mules on the Move

Kevin Cool
Colby College

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Good and Getting Better
Young, talented women's basketball team adds experience

By Kevin Cool

Colby's women's basketball team did some growing up this season, says head coach Tricia O'Brien, whose squad compiled an 18-9 record and advanced to the finals of the ECAC championships.

Starting three sophomores and two freshmen, the Mules overcame their lack of experience with hard work and talent, led by first-year sensation Kim Condon, who averaged 18 points and six rebounds a game. Condon, who already is on a pace to become a career 2,000-point scorer, was the first Colby women's basketball player to be named a District I All-American. It was one of a mantel-full of awards, including Rookie of the Year honor from ECAC, State of Maine, ECAC and the New England coaches association. "She is a great kid; a quiet leader," O'Brien said. "She clearly established herself as the top first-year player in New England."

But the key to Colby's success was its team play, O'Brien says. "We're a dangerous team because we have several players who can step up and hit a shot when we need it," she said. Sophomore Erin Cole-Karagory averaged nearly 13 points a game, and both Mandy Cochrane '01 and Jen McGonagle '00 scored in double figures several times. McGonagle led the team in rebounding.

The player who perhaps best personified the team was Suzanne Heon '00, whose courageous play after recovering from her second reconstructive knee surgery in less than a year inspired teammates. Heon spent much of her freshman season sidelined by a torn anterior cruciate ligament that was surgically repaired in time for her to rejoin the team last fall. In the Mules' eighth game, Heon "blew out her other knee," O'Brien said. That knee was subsequently repaired and Heon came back in time to play a handful of games late in the season. "She was in major pain, playing with a brace, but she wanted to be out there. Watching her go out on the court and play, and play well, was a highlight of our season. She became the emotional leader of the team," O'Brien said.

When Colby played in the ECAC final against Trinity—the same team that last year eliminated the Mules from the tournament—Heon had her best game. She scored 17 points in the second half "and played with herold confidence," O'Brien said, as Colby won 71-51 to advance to the tournament's final game. Williams then defeated the Mules 77-66, but Heon and the team had moved one step closer to their ultimate goal, O'Brien said. "The toughness that Suzanne showed rubbed off a little, I think, and that was important. This team has the talent and they work hard. When they combine that with the toughness it takes to win against the top competition, they will be very, very hard to beat."

With her starting five returning intact and another year of experience to build upon, O'Brien is optimistic about the Mules' future. "Winning the ECAC, going to the national tournament, those goals are within our reach," she said. "We would like to be the first Colby women's basketball team to reach the nationals."
Tender Moments

Led by the record-breaking performance of goaltender Scott Bonnell ’98, the men’s hockey team overcame a midseason slump to make the ECAC playoffs.

The Mules posted a season record of 11-8-3, including a quarterfinal loss to third-seeded Hamilton in the ECACs. Colby lost only one of its final six games heading into tournament play after enduring a four-game losing streak earlier in the year. Head coach Jim Tortorella said the losses may have helped the team mature. “The adversity we survived in the middle of the season says something about the character of the team,” he said.

“We were excited to represent our school as the defending ECAC champions.”

Bonnell, who established a school record goals against average of 2.05, teamed with fellow goalie Jason Chereilla ’99 and all-ECAC defenseman Rob Koh ’99 to provide solid defense. Senior Terry Flynn, who was honorable mention all-ECAC, led the team in scoring.

String Music

Fred Brussel’s men’s squash team had the best season in the program’s history, winning 17 of 21 regular season matches and advancing to the B flight of the NCAA tournament.

Colby ended the regular season ranked 13th, the highest ever, and was named by coaches as the nation’s most improved team. Brussel said the squad met nearly every preseason goal, including reaching the B flight for the first time. “The B flight is sort of like the Division II competition within the tournament,” Brussel said. “Essentially, it’s the best eight teams outside of the Ivies.”

Among its 17 victories were first-ever wins over Cornell, Franklin & Marshall, Navy and Rochester. The Mules were 8-1 in NESCAC play and won the CBB.

Freshman Mike Natenshon, the team’s Most Valuable Player, shared Rookie of the Year honors with Preston Amos ’01. Senior Geoff Bennett received the Scholar-Athlete Award at the national tournament.

“Trent won’t be many schools taking us lightly after this season,” Brussel said. “From this point on we will go to matches knowing that everyone will be looking to knock us off our spot.”

sport shorts

The women’s hockey team sent senior Meaghan Sittler and freshman Courtney Kennedy to the inaugural women’s All-America team. Sittler, Colby’s all-time leader in goals, assists and points, was an eight-time ECAC player of the week. Kennedy led the league in scoring among defensemen. . . . Men’s indoor track featured record-breaking performances by two Colby athletes. Sophomore Jamie Brewster threw the 35-pound weight 56 feet, 10 inches, breaking a record established in 1970 by Mike Salvetti ’71. Brewster placed fifth in the New England Division I championships. Emil Thomann ’00 became the first Colby runner to break 50 seconds in the 400 meters indoors when he ran a 49.96 at the New England championships and placed first among Division III competitors. . . . Sophomore Ken Allen emerged as a prolific scorer during the men’s basketball team’s 14-9 season. Allen averaged 17.5 points per game and twice was named NESCAC Player of the Week. Junior James Spidle averaged 12.8 points per game and led the team in rebounds. . . . The nordic ski team had “a very successful season,” said head coach Tracey Theyerl. The women placed as high as fifth in the EISA division. They consistently placed three skiers in the 20s with senior captain Jenny Lane cracking the top 15 twice. Lane also became Colby’s first female nordic skier to qualify for the NCAA nationals. For the men, sophomore Tim Bertram placed 29th in three races and senior Peter Manning was the team’s third leading point scorer at the season’s final carnival. . . . The women’s alpine team was led by Christina Haas ’01, who became the first Colby skier in five years to qualify for the NCAA championships. Stephanie Gruber ’01 was third alternate to the championships. David Riss ’01, who finished in the top 20 in five races, paced the men’s team. Riss was third in the super giant slalom and eighth in the giant slalom at the Rolex Junior Olympic championships. . . . Women’s squash finished 11-13 and came in 12th at the Howe Cup against the nation’s top competition. Senior tri-captain Sonia Totten was 16-10. Both she and tri-captain Lindsay Hayes ’99 competed at the individual nationals. Martie Stewart ’99 won the number four match during the Mules’ first-ever contest against Brown. . . . The women’s swim team placed 12th out of 37 teams at the New England Championships. Senior co-captain Alice Wong broke Coach Sura Dubow ’92’s 100 breaststroke record with a time of 1:10.88. Junior Laura Feraco broke the 200 backstroke record of 2:14.75 by more than two seconds. Diver Kathryn Johnson ’00 finished the season owning all four of Colby’s diving records.