



The Dolphin Digest

September 5, 2006

SPECIAL EDITION: WOMEN'S SOCCER PREVIEW ISSUE

2006 SCHEDULE:

DATE:	OPPONENT:	TIME:
9/7	at St. Thomas Aquinas	6:00 p.m.
9/13	at Maritime	4:00 p.m.
9/20	at Mount Saint Mary*	7:00 p.m.
9/25	CCNY*	4:00 p.m.
9/27	MEDGAR EVERS [^]	4:00 p.m.
9/30	at Manhattanville*	1:00 p.m.
10/4	at Stevens*	4:00 p.m.
10/11	CENTENARY *	4:00 p.m.
10/14	ST. JOSEPH'S *	TBA
10/16	COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND [^]	4:00 p.m.
10/19	SAINT ELIZABETH [^]	4:00 p.m.
10/21	at Farmingdale State*	1:00 p.m.
10/24	at Purchase College	3:30 p.m.
10/28	at Marymount [^]	TBA
10/31	HVVAC Playoffs	TBA
11/1	Skyline Conference Semifinals	TBA
11/2	HVVAC Semifinals	TBA
11/4	HVVAC & Skyline Conference Finals	TBA

* Skyline Conference Game
[^] HVVAC Game
 Home games in **BOLD CAPS**

Women's Soccer to defend HVWAC crown

By Mike Spinner – Sports Information Director

One of the most popular grade-school homework assignments during this time of year is an essay entitled, "how I spent my summer" where a student is allotted a series of paragraphs to explain their trials and tribulations during the last two months, and has an opportunity to detail plans and dreams for the coming year. If Mount Saint Vincent Head Women's Soccer Coach **Tony Elmore** and the 2006 team were to write that assignment today, chances are that his essay would read something like this: "We're dreaming of championships."

After all, it's hard not to be optimistic for Elmore and company after a 2005 season in which the Mount won 10 games (including its first Skyline Conference game in three years), captured its first-ever Hudson Valley Women's Athletic Conference (HVVAC) Tournament Championship after a thrilling 1-0 win over the College of Staten Island on Nov. 5, and Elmore earned Skyline Conference Coach of the Year honors, while two other members of the team were awarded All-Conference by the Skyline Conference. Not bad considering that the team was coming off of a 3-10 finish during Elmore's rookie campaign in 2004.

Oh, and by the way, only one member of the 2005 team graduated. And with arguably one of the best freshman classes in either conference, Elmore said he has very good reason to be optimistic about sweeping the HVVAC season for the first time and making the Skyline Conference playoffs for the first time as well.

"It seems like it's going to be tough to repeat from last year's success, only because last season seemed to come out of nowhere, but I think we're in a very good position to do even better," Elmore said. "All we can do is have a better season in the Skyline Conference after a bunch of close losses last season, and I think our recruiting made up for every one of our weaknesses the College of Staten Island was able to exploit in HVVAC play. So it is not much of a stretch to think that we're the favorite in the HVVAC and should make the Skyline Conference playoffs."

When Elmore said all the team could do is have a better run in the Skyline Conference, he referred specifically to three incredibly close losses in Conference play that spoiled the Mount's chances to make the Skyline Conference playoffs. The Dolphins lost 3-1 to St. Joseph's College on Sept. 18 during a game in which the Mount played the Golden Eagles nearly even. Two days later, the Dolphins suffered their most disappointing loss of the season when they dropped a 2-1 heartbreaker to Farmingdale State in double overtime. On Oct. 26, Mount Saint Vincent allowed an early goal and lost 1-0 to Manhattanville for the second straight season. Three losses the Mount could easily have won, Elmore said, and advanced to the Skyline Conference playoffs. He added that he thinks the Mount could win all three games this season.

"The Farmingdale game could have gone either way and I see no reason why we shouldn't beat them this season. Manhattanville we've lost 1-0 to during the last two years and it should be just as close of a game this year. I also think we're right up there with St. Joseph's and Centenary, and realistically, we have a great chance to be in the top two or three in the Conference," Elmore said.

2006 ROSTER:

#	Name	Year	Pos
1	Alexis Alessi	Jr.	GK
2	Shannon Beysel	So.	D
4	Marie Garcia	Jr.	Fwd.
5	Tayra Keshinover	So.	M/D
6	Kelly Curran	Fr.	F
7	Krystle Hewitt	Fr.	F
8	Cynthia Osorio	Jr.	D
9	Jessica McBain	So.	F
10	Mercedes Motz	Fr.	M
11	Katherine Gentsch	Jr.	F
12	Jennifer Lupero	So.	F
13	Tracy Frank	So.	F/M
14	Jamie Longo	Fr.	F/M
15	Kaitlin Whalley	Sr.	M
16	Danielle Trosa	Fr.	F
17	Nabela Tahir	Sr.	M
18	Deidre Baker	Jr.	D
19	Colleen Balk	Sr.	D
20	Kaitlin Moore	Fr.	M
22	Sara Fernandes	Jr.	M
24	Katie Cusmiani	Jr.	D
25	Erin Santerre	Fr.	G
29	Carisa Morrison	Fr.	M/D
30	Samantha Lee	Fr.	F/M
31	Samantha Cullen	Fr.	M/D

HEAD COACH: Tony Elmore (3rd Season)

ASSISTANT COACH: Jackie Rizzotto (1st Season)

The one glaring weakness Elmore said needs to be addressed is the graduation of **Jackie Rizzotto**, a four-year starter for the Mount. Elmore said that Rizzotto, an HVWAC All-Conference pick in 2005 who will serve as the team's Assistant Coach this season, did all of the little things at midfield that helped make the team successful, and will be difficult to replace.

"Jackie was as committed on the field as anybody I have ever coached," Elmore said. "It was her job to chase down every ball at midfield, and she did it until she couldn't breathe anymore. She caused lots of turnovers on the defensive half, and in transition she would hold the ball until the offense was set every time down. In my opinion, she played the most important position on the field, and if we're going to be as successful as we think we can be, somebody has to step up to replace her."

Aside from Rizzotto's departure, Elmore said that the rest of the team is stacked in every position.

FORWARDS:

One thing is for sure about the 2006 season for Mount Saint Vincent, scoring is not going to be an issue. With junior, Skyline Conference Player of the Year candidate **Katherine Gentsch** (Staten Island, NY/Curtis HS) back in uniform, the Mount has a steady presence up front who led the Skyline Conference in goals (18) and had 36 points a year ago despite being the number one target of every opponent. Gentsch, who earned First Team All-Conference honors from the Skyline Conference, is poised for even bigger things this season with a deeper and more talented supporting cast around her.

"Katherine won't slow down this season," Elmore said. "I think our defense took a hit from last season, but Katherine is going to make sure that we have tons of scoring. She had some lapses in confidence as a freshman, but really blossomed last season, and she has really taken her game to a new level this year. I think she is at a point in her soccer career where she could play just about anywhere."

Joining Gentsch up front will be sophomore **Tracy Frank** (Port Jefferson Station, NY/Comsewogue HS), who was the Most Valuable Player of the HVWAC playoffs last season, scoring three goals during the two game post-season, including the game-winner in the HVWAC Championship Game. Elmore said that Frank is undoubtedly poised for a breakout season.

"Tracy was sick a lot during her freshman season and it held back her game. But to show you the type of player Tracy Frank is, she was the HVWAC Tournament MVP with a 102 degree fever. She is not going to have that problem this season. She is a big, strong player who uses both feet well and could play anywhere on the attacking end. She saves her best play for the big games, and I think playing healthy this season is going to do wonders for her game. I expect big things from Tracy this season." Elmore said.

Also expecting to make a significant contribution is sophomore **Jessica McBain** (Troy, NY/Troy HS), who finished second on the team with seven goals and 16 points last season. McBain returned to the Mount for her sophomore campaign with a "ton of confidence," according to Elmore and has the potential to be one of the best on-ball players in either Conference.

"Jessica really blossomed during the mid-way point last season, and had an excellent freshman year," Elmore said. "She has more moves than a cat and is one of the best players on the ball that I have ever seen. She is going to be tough to stop this season."

After Gentsch, Frank, and McBain comes a dilemma for Elmore. He has more talent at the forward position than he has ever had before and perhaps has too many decisions to make. He has two veterans and four freshmen who are expected to make a contribution at forward ... in other words, he has the proverbial "good problem" of too much depth and talent.

Elmore said he is very excited about the presence of freshmen **Jamie Longo**

(Concord, MA/Concord-Carlisle HS) and **Kelly Curran** (Hopatcong, NJ/Jefferson Township HS) at forward as both are going to have an immediate impact. Longo, Elmore said, is a candidate for Skyline Conference Rookie of the Year, while Curran has an attitude expected of most seniors despite only playing at the College level for a few weeks.

"Jamie is perhaps the most talented player on the team as a freshman. She is in the best shape of anybody we have, and the team is very fit overall. She is a pure striker, but can play on the left wing as well. I think she could be the best freshman in the Skyline Conference. Anybody would love to have Jamie Longo on their team," Elmore said. "Kelly is a terrific kid. She is all business and plays with no attitude. She runs well enough that she could also play at the midfield."

Also expected to make significant contributions are forward are junior **Marie Garcia** (Medford, MA/Medford HS), sophomore **Jennifer Lupero** (Mamaroneck, NY/Rye Neck HS), and freshmen **Krystle Hewitt** (St. Albans, NY/Sacred Heart Academy) and **Danielle Trosa** (Bronx, NY/Townsend Harris HS).

MIDFIELD:

Despite the loss of Rizzotto, Elmore is confident that he has a terrific group at midfield who will be able to compete with the rest of the teams on the Mount's schedule. He added that Tracy Frank is one player who despite starting the season as a forward, will spend significant time at midfield and perhaps be the team's top player at that position.

Frank will be joined by senior **Kaitlin Whalley** (West Babylon, NY/St. John the Baptist) a steady player who is capable of scoring at any time for the Mount. A four-year starter, Elmore said that Whalley is perhaps the team's most consistent player at midfield.

"You could put Kaitlin out there all day long and she keeps playing and never stops. She is as steady as they come, and can score from 20 yards out if given the opportunity. Kaitlin is very much a leader on this team being a senior, and I think she is going to be the consistent player at midfield we are going to turn to with Jackie having graduated." Elmore said.

Also expected to have big seasons at midfield are senior **Nabela Tahir** (Flushing, NY/Cardozo HS), junior **Sara Fernandes** (Yonkers, NY/Our Lady of Victory), and freshman **Mercedes Motz** (Warwick, NY/Burke Catholic). Elmore said that all three have proven to be valuable members of the Mount's midfield corps.

"Nabela is very likely to be Jackie's replacement at midfield. She has incredible touch on the ball, and reads the game well. She is tough and strong, and could be an outstanding offensive midfielder if her shot develops further," Elmore said. "Sara has struggled with knee injuries during the last two seasons, but if she is healthy she is guaranteed a starting position on the team. I am also very excited about the presence of Mercedes Motz on this team. She could be a defensive midfielder player or could play defense as well. She is a great kid with good ball skills and could definitely score. I expect great things from her."

Elmore said that freshman **Samantha Lee** (Breezy Point, NY/Stella Maris) is another talented freshman who is expected to make a steady contribution to the Mount's midfield.

DEFENSE:

As Elmore said himself, as **Cynthia Osorio** (Oceanside, NY/Oceanside HS) goes, so does the team. A junior, according to Elmore, Osorio has established herself as the best defender in the Skyline Conference and he, "wouldn't trade Cynthia for anybody."

"Cynthia Osorio is our franchise player and I don't think there is any doubt she is the best individual defender in the Skyline Conference. She is a Division I player who can focus like a laser out there. It's Cynthia's ability to read the game and bark instructions that allows our offsides trap to be so effective, and her ability to explode to the ball that makes her so dominant. Cynthia was a

THE DOLPHIN DIGEST:

The Dolphin Digest is the official Athletics Newsletter at the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

For more information on The Dolphin Digest or Mount Saint Vincent Athletics, please contact Sports Information Director Mike Spinner at x3413 or by e-mail: mike.spinner@mountsaintvincent.edu

second-team All-Conference selection by the Skyline Conference last season, but I think she absolutely deserved to be first team, and I think she will be this season."

Joining Osorio on the defensive end will be junior **Deidre Baker** (College Point, NY/Mary Louis), who Elmore said very quietly has been an anchor on the defensive end throughout her career. Elmore said he considers Baker to be the model of consistency on the defensive end, and he expects the same this season.

"Deidre is simply a solid player. She is not as fast as you would expect from most center backs, but she seems to always get the ball when she needs to. She's the kind of player that you want to overlook, but you can't because she does everything right. She gives a solid effort every time she takes the field, and she has been crucial to our success ... and I expect even bigger things this season." Elmore said.

One player who Elmore said he is intrigued by on the defensive end is sophomore **Shannon Beysel** (Warwick, NY/Burke Catholic), who will be a freshman on the field as she missed the 2005 season with a knee injury. Elmore said that Beysel is as talented as any defender on the team, and with confidence could be a key cog in the Mount's push for the Skyline Conference playoffs.

"Shannon did everything right to rehab her knee and is ready to play. But anytime you have a serious knee injury like Shannon had, it does affect your confidence. She is going to be very good for us as soon as she develops her confidence. As the season moves along, I expect to see Shannon's game blossom." Elmore said.

Elmore also said he is excited by the team's depth on the defensive end as he has three members of the team who will see significant playing time. Senior **Colleen Balk** (Staten Island, NY/St. John Villa), sophomore **Tayra Keshinover** (Wappingers Falls, NY/Ketcham HS), and junior **Katie Cusmiani** (Belle Harbor, NY/Archbishop Molloy) will join freshman **Carisa Morrison** (Bronx, NY/St. Catherine) to give Elmore many options at defense.

GOALKEEPER:

If the Mount's explosive talent has trouble scoring goals, if their incredible depth fails to take over, and if their sturdy defense somehow breaks down, Elmore knows his team will still be fine as junior **Alexis Alessi** (Rockville Centre, NY/Oceanside HS) is about as dominant as they come between the pipes. Alessi played all but 17 minutes in goal as a sophomore after starting during her freshman year, allowed only 33 goals in 17 games. Take away a 9-0 loss to Stevens and a 6-0 loss to Centenary, and Alessi's goals against average last season was barely above a goal per game. Elmore said that he believes he has the best goalie in the Skyline Conference, and he expects Alessi to be even better this season.

"There is not a better goalie out there at this level than Alexis Alessi. She deserved All-Conference in both Conferences a year ago, and I think she'll earn it for sure this season. She seldom has to dive for the ball because her positioning is incredible. She actually makes a very difficult position look incredibly easy. Alexis has been a stand-out student, two-sport athlete, and team leader for two years, and although being a junior in the incredible Mount Saint Vincent Nursing program is an incredible challenge, I expect her to continue to thrive this season." Elmore said.

Overall, Elmore said that what will be key to the Mount's success this season is not necessarily the fact that the team has a roster chocked full of talent and experience, but the fact that the team has come together in terrific fashion that has him thinking that sweep of the HVWAC and run towards the Skyline Conference post-season is in the cards.

"The chemistry is just incredible, almost magic." Elmore said. "This team plays way over its head because it plays as a team, no prima donnas, no complaints.

They have a championship chemistry developing, and I expect it to blossom into a championship season."