

Comet Golfers Capture M

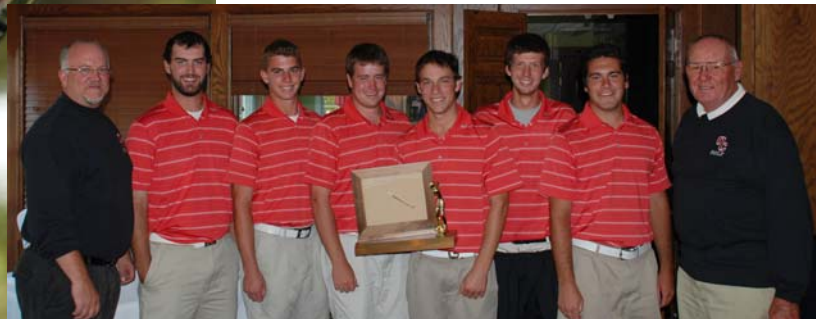


BY GEOFF HENSON

The Olivet College men's and women's golf teams captured the 2008 Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) championship in dominating fashion. It is only the second time in MIAA history that one school has won both the men's and women's golf title in the same season. In addition, the teams combined to place nine golfers on the All-MIAA teams, including seven earning first-team honors.

The Comet men matched an MIAA record by winning six of eight league jamborees and won the conference championship by 25 strokes, 2,395-2,420, over second-place Hope College. Olivet had a team score less than 300 strokes in five rounds, including a season-best 291 at Wuskowhan Players Club, Hope's home course.

"I knew we had a chance to win this year for two reasons," said Head Men's Coach Gary Morrison. "The first reason is the three seniors feel that they blew their



From left: Assistant coach Kevin Allard '81, Luke Godin, Nick Harless, Brock Gleadall, Eric Ross, Drew Lasky, Justin Lesansky and Head Coach Gary Morrison

chances last year and wanted to prove that 2008 was their year to win the MIAA championship. The second reason is you win a championship with a veteran team and that is what we had with those three seniors."

Brock Gleadall

MIAA Championships

Seniors **Brock Gleadall**, of Stratford, Ontario, and **Justin Lesansky**, of LaSalle, Ontario, and freshman **Drew Lasky**, of Marshall, were first-team All-MIAA selections, while senior **Eric Ross**, of Burlington, Ontario, was a second-team selection.

In the eight league rounds, Lasky led the Comets with a 74.4 stroke average. Lesansky was a close second with a 74.5 average. Gleadall and Ross finished with a 75.4 and 76.4 average, respectively. Sophomore Nick Harless of DeWitt also participated in all eight rounds, and averaged 78.3 strokes.

“For a freshman, Drew had a great season,” says Morrison. “Justin had a frustrating season last year and used that as motivation to have a great senior season. Brock was mentally ready this year and finished the season very strong. Eric is our captain and knows a lot about the game of golf. He took a serious approach to the season and wanted to go out on a high. Nick dedicated last summer to improving his game and the results showed on the course this fall.”

Winners of the 2006 and 2007 MIAA championship, the women took first-place at each of the four jamborees and the final two-day championship round this season. They beat runner-up Saint Mary’s (Ind.) College by 57 strokes, 1,977-2,034, and set course records at all four jamborees.

“The defining moment of the fall season was the second jamboree,” said Head Women’s Coach Bill Maas. “We won that outing by 19 strokes to take a 27 stroke lead. A lot of schools were surprised that we won by that many strokes. I think a lot of people thought it would be a closer race this year but our players just stepped up huge.”

The women placed four golfers — senior **Lindsay Pipkin**, of White Lake, juniors **Katie Misko**, of Alma, and

Megan Rimmel, of Ithaca, and sophomore **Amber Conrad**, of Battle Creek — on the All-MIAA first-team, and freshman **Lauren Campbell**, of Fenton, on the All-MIAA second team. With her All-MIAA award, Pipkin is the first female in school history to earn first-team All-MIAA honors four consecutive years. It is also the second consecutive year that Olivet had all five golfers earn all-league honors.

Pipkin was second in the MIAA player standings with an 81.7 stroke average in six rounds. Conrad, Rimmel and Misko were each separated by one stroke. Conrad led the way at 496 strokes (82.7 average), followed by Rimmel, 497 (82.8), and Misko, 498 (83.0). Campbell averaged 85.5 strokes.

“I am very proud of Lindsay,” Maas said. “Being a four-time All-MIAA performer at Olivet is a special thing and I am not even sure if we have realized the magnitude of it. Katie stepped up and had a great season. It was not so much that she improved her swing, but her mental focus and attitude were much more positive and that made her a better golfer.”

“Megan got off to a solid start and that set the tone for her season. I think that she is ready to take a big step up. Amber just goes out and brings back a score that we can count almost every time. She has become a very solid player with a bright future. Lauren exceeded my expectations. I am never quite sure what to expect from a freshman, but I thought that she had a very good first year.”

The men have already received the league’s automatic berth to the NCAA Division III National Championships May 13-16 in Port St. Lucie, Fla. “I am happy that we get to go back to nationals,” Morrison said. “I know that the guys are also excited and fired up for their chance to play at a national level.”

The women will have to play a three-round MIAA playoff next spring to determine the league’s automatic berth for the national championships. A year ago,



From left: Lindsay Pipkin, Katie Misko, Lauren Campbell, Megan Rimmel, Amber Conrad, Abby Wheeler, Trisha McKim and Head Coach Bill Maas '89.

the Comets won the playoff and advanced to the national championships for the second consecutive season. The 2008 NCAA Division III National Women’s Golf Championships will take place at the same location and at the same time as the men’s championships.

“We are in the same position that we have been the last two years,” said Maas. “We need to be focused for the spring season because the rest of the schools are not going to just hand it to us. We have to be competitive and prove that we are the best team.” ▲