



# Ballers roll over break

Pioneer men garner national ranking, remain unbeaten; women vie for playoffs

by Kevin Byrne

For the first time in the history of Grinnell College basketball, both the men and women's basketball teams are major factors in the quest of a Midwest Conference title. The women picked up their ninth win on the road at Knox Tuesday night 68-53 and the men are grabbing media attention from across the country win their hot, undefeated start. The men also topped Knox on Tuesday for their 13th win by a margin of 98-86. The men and women are playing well late in the season, an important piece of the puzzle that is the Midwest Conference.

Winning on the road is essential for success, but is easier said than done.

The women are currently 9-4 overall and 3-3 in MWC play. They will have to prove themselves on the road again if they wish to be serious contenders this year.

"Playing on the road will be a challenge but our team is definitely up for it," said guard Emily Kolbe '07. "Winning these next few games will depend a lot on our next couple of practices. We all want to get out there, work hard and support one another."

The women currently sit in fifth place in the MWC after picking up big conference wins at home against Illinois College and on the road against Monmouth. They must travel to Carroll and Lawrence before coming back home for the final two games of the season against Beloit and the Carroll squad once again.

"None of our conference games have been easy," Kolbe said, "but each game has taught us something new. Fourth place in the conference is the goal we are looking to reach and we're hanging tough right now. A win this weekend will give us an edge and push us that much closer to reaching our goal."

The men's team has some high hopes of their own, playing under the spotlight, and grabbing a number 21 ranking in the country. The men captured a pivotal road win against Monmouth on the road on Jan. 13, and won two thrilling games at home: an overtime victory against Ripon, and a three-point win against St. Norbert. Senior Steve Wood has led the way for the Pioneers, averaging over 20 points a game and reaching the 2,000 career points milestone during the team's last home game against the Green Knights. Wood knows this year's team has a chance to do something special, but there is a lot of work left to be done.



Emily Kolbe '07 dribbles between defenders in Grinnell's lost to Lake Forest last December. Grinnell followed the defeat up with five consecutive victories, and their victory over Knox on Tuesday left them just one game back in the playoff race. photo by David Kennedy

"We are a senior-led group who realizes that this is it," Wood said. "There may be games when we aren't shooting particularly well, but we'll be playing hard every night."

The team will have to do without the senior leadership of Ken Heiser, who broke a bone in his foot that will require surgery. This blow has hurt the Pioneers, but they have found ways to win without him. The men still have another month in the regular season to go, with aspirations of the NCAA Division III tournament as well.

"We can keep the pace up," Doug Ticus '07 said. "It will be hard because the conference is very good, and with the loss of Ken a number of people will have to step up. We still have a good team and I believe that we can go real far."

## Winter break results

Women's basketball (9-4, 3-3 MWC)		Men's basketball (13-0, 6-0 MWC)	
Jan. 2 v. Thomas	W 68-51	Jan. 2 v. St. Joseph's	W 147-103
Jan. 3 @ Colby	W 61-59	Jan. 3 @ Colby	W 116-77
Jan. 10 ILLINOIS C.	W 78-63	Jan. 7 MT. MERCY	W 143-113
Jan. 13 Monmouth	W 70-69	Jan. 10 ILLINOIS C.	W 141-92
Jan. 16 RIPON	L 72-57	Jan. 13 @ Monmouth	W 147-136
Jan. 17 ST. NORBERT	L 66-59	Jan. 16 RIPON	W 122-120 OT
Jan. 20 @ Knox	W 68-53	Jan. 17 ST. NORBERT	W 114-111
		Jan. 20 @ Knox	W 98-86

# Mad Dogs and Ducks return from Florida trip

Grinnell's swimmers and divers prepare for Coe, then Conference, after spending part of Winter Break in Naples, Fla.

by Josh Cooley

For the 45 swimmers and divers who journeyed to Naples, Fla. over winter break, there were plenty of highlights. But not all of them were in the pool.

"One night all the guys each drank at least two liters worth of root beer. They were completely hyped up on sugar for a day-and-a-half," said Sarah Stayer '06 describing her memories of the team's bonding experience in the Sunshine State.

"The team is more together now than it was before we left," added Rachel Sellon '04. "Given its size, I'm impressed with the level of camaraderie we've been able to put together and I think that will only improve going into conference."

The swimming wasn't bad, either, and head coach Erin Hurley was very pleased with the team's training during the Naples trip. She was especially grateful for the favorable weather, as it allowed the swimmers and divers to train outside.

"It's a lot easier [for the swimmers and divers] to train effectively when they do not have other stresses in their lives," said Hurley, noting the team's commitment to its two two-hour sessions every day, which included both work in the pool and dry-land practices.

"We got good quality training done," said co-captain Dan Karney '04. "People were swimming fast in practice and hopefully that will bode well for the future."

Though diving coach Kelly Rose was unable to travel with the team to Florida, the divers had a

temporary diving coach to help them during their time in Florida.

"She was a wonderful coach and very honest," said Stayer. "So if you did a dive that was really good she would tell you 'Wow, that's awesome.' But if you did a dive that really sucked she would be equally as honest," she said.

On Jan. 9, the Pioneers competed against Connecticut College. The undefeated Connecticut College women's team proved too strong for the Mad Ducks, overpowering them with a 134-108 victory. However, the men's team continued their unbeaten streak in dual competition, earning a decisive 151-90 win over their opponents. Hurley was pleased with both teams' performances.

"It can be pretty challenging to race well when you are in the peak of your training. It was good to have a team really challenge us at this point in the season," she said.

The female divers had an especially strong meet, with solid results posted by Lucy McCormick '06, Natalie Funk '07, Lauren Page '06. Another strong showing came from Jenn Holm '04, who returned to the Pioneer roster for the first time after a semester abroad. The women recorded 15 seasonal bests. The men recorded 14 seasonal bests with Kevin Wood earning two individual firsts, in both the 200 IM and 100 fly. Nate Jacobson '04 and Braden Pence '05 also had good races.

The team quickly transitioned from the blazing heat of Florida to the sub-zero temperatures of

Iowa to compete in their home invitational, just two days after arriving back in Grinnell. The women's team dominated the meet, winning by over 175 points. The men's team finished second to Carthage College, but finished almost 300 hundred points ahead of third-place Coe College.

"It's interesting to see how people react to the training in Florida," said Sellon. "It's good to see that some people swim insanely fast," she said. According to Sellon, the Pioneers fortitude in competing in both preliminaries and finals in one day is a good sign that the team will perform well at the Midwest Conference Championship, which is similarly divided into afternoon prelims and night finals.

The women posted 96 seasonal bests and over a dozen lifetime bests. In diving, Sarah Stayer set meet records in both the 1 and 3 m events, posting a national qualifying score in the 3 m. In the pool, Holm and Amber Gedlinske '04 went 1-2 in the 200 free. Erin Croco '07, Julie Perino '06, Lauren Dickinson '06, Ansuha Vable '04, and co-captain Martha Makowski '04 had strong swims. The relay teams also fared well.

"We also had some of our relays swim season bests which will seed us better at conference," said Hurley. They were not seeded very well going into the invite and just competed really tough," she said.

On the men's side, Eric Blevins '04 and Daniel Shryock '06 took first and second respectively in both the 1 meter and 3 meter diving events. Blevins' score of 444.40 in the 3m qualified earned him an NCAA B-Cut qualifying score him for nationals. Teej Anspach '07 earned a spot to compete at Conference by competing in his first 11-dive, 1m meet. In the pool, the men's team won four relays and took individual firsts in both the 200 Free (Peter Brown '06) and the 100 Fly (Kevin Wood '07). In

the meet's final event, the men's 400 Free Relay, Wood, Pence, Petersen and Brown teamed up to win in a meet record 3:14.62, dropping almost two seconds off the previous record, which had been held for the past 11 years by University of Missouri-St. Louis.

"The Carthage coach told his 400 Free relay team that if they beat our men's relay, they would have Monday practice off, and we ended up winning the race by almost a full body length," said Stayer, commenting on the final race. "Carthage has better numbers but in the finals, especially on Saturday night, we really out-swam them," she added.

This Saturday both the men's and women's teams will travel to Coe College for another chance to compete in preparation for the Midwest Conference Championship. Since both teams defeated Coe at the Grinnell Invite, the Pioneers are not worrying about the duel competition.

"The meet is a final tune-up for Conference," said Karney, "where people will be solidifying what events they will swim at conference."

With Conference quickly approaching, Hurley feels that both the men and women have the necessary training to perform well at conference. Hurley hopes that in addition to repeating as Conference Champs, both the men's and the women's teams will have individuals qualifying for Nationals and putting their names up onto the leader board.

"I am predicting some relay records on the men's side, with potential in the fly, back and IM," said Hurley. "On the women's side, I expect some of the free relays to go as well as some freestyle events and possibly a backstroke event," she said.