



Wittenberg Men's Lacrosse 2002 Season in Review

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SETTING THE SCENE: Close, it is said, only counts in horseshoes. Wittenberg Head Men's Lacrosse Coach Vinnie Lang is well aware that it doesn't count in his sport.

The Tigers came so close on so many occasions during the 2002 season, leaving players and coaches alike scratching their heads and wondering what would happen next. When the curtain had closed, the end result was a 5-11 overall record and a 2-3 mark in the NCAC, which was good for a fourth-place finish behind perennial powers Kenyon, Denison and Ohio Wesleyan.

Six of the Tigers' 11 losses in 2002 came by three goals or less, including three by one goal. Among those disappointing near-misses were a 5-4 season-opening decision in frigid conditions against nationally ranked Denison, an 11-10 non-conference defeat at the hands of Wooster when the Tigers yielded two goals in the final 11 seconds of the game, and a 9-8 loss to Wheeling Jesuit in which the Tigers held another late lead only to be overcome in the closing minutes.

There were also some significant high points, including a pair of lop-sided wins over Oberlin, a huge decision against Washington & Jefferson, a victory over Marietta and a surprisingly easy 14-3 win over Wooster in a conference game, just two weeks after the debacle at Wooster.

OFFENSIVE-MINDED: For a second year in a row, the Tigers could put the ball in the back of the opponents net very well. As incongruous as it may seem, Wittenberg outscored its opponents 170-150 on the season, even as they lost 11 of 16 games.

Most of the damage was done in an early-season four-game stretch that included 15-0 and 17-0 wins over Oberlin, a 12-1 decision against Marietta and a 28-2 beating of Washington & Jefferson. But the Tigers reached double figures seven times on the season, winning five.

Individually, four players scored 37 or more total points. Junior attacker **Dan Patterson (St. Louis, Mo./DeSmet Jesuit)** led the team with 52 points on 23 goals and 29 assists. The points total was good for seventh in the NCAC, while

the assist total was second-best among conference players. Senior attacker **Alex Nichols (Phoenix, Md./Dulaney)** added 25 goals and 23 assists for 48 total points. He ranked 11th in the NCAC in total points and fifth in assists. Freshman attacked **Cory Essig (Dublin, Ohio/Coffman)** added a team-best 27 goals and 13 assists for 40 total points, despite missing the first two games of the year with an injury. And senior midfielder **Nate Reed (Cincinnati, Ohio/Moeller)** chipped in with 23 goals and 14 assists for 37 total points.

LOOKING AHEAD: Seven players on the 2002 roster were seniors, with several playing key roles. Among the biggest losses will be Nichols, a two-year captain and one of the team's leading scorers in each of the last four years, Reed, the team's most valuable player each of the last two years, and defensemen **Andy Oliver (Ballwin, Mo./Marquette)** and **Jon Simon (Cincinnati, Ohio/Moeller)**, who started every game in front of the Tigers' netminders in 2002. Other seniors included midfielder **Shannon Miller (Wallingford, Pa./Strath Haven)**, long stick middle **Carmine Baroni (Wallingford, Pa./Strath Haven)** and midfielder **Justin Bitner (Lansing, Mich./Waverly)**.

While there are sure to be some holes to fill in 2003, the cupboard figures to be far from bare. Leading the charge on offense will be Patterson and Essig, with support from a variety of sources, including sophomore **Hans Rydquist (Hudson, Ohio/Hudson)** and juniors **Spencer Dunning (Cincinnati, Ohio/Mariemont)**, **Zach Kulow (Wooster, Ohio/Wooster)** and **Tom McHugh (St. Louis, Mo./DeSmet Jesuit)**, among others.

Defensively, all three goaltenders who split time in the net are expected to return, led by team defensive MVP **Kyle Prussing (New Concord, NH/Concord-Carlisle)**, a sophomore. In front of him, sophomore **Jim Kelley (Hudson, Ohio/Hudson)** was outstanding in 2002 as he started every game and earned all-conference honors.

ALL-NCAC: Nate Reed garnered a first-

team All-NCAC selection, a select group that also included Jim Kelley. Three other Tiger players were named Honorable Mention All-NCAC, Cory Essig, Alex Nichols and Dan Patterson.

THE COACH: In his second year with the Tigers, **Vinnie Lang (Owego State 1989)** has a 10-18 Wittenberg record. His overall four-year mark of 32-33 includes three seasons and a 22-15 record at Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa.

Lang played at Oswego State for four seasons and also played for the club lacrosse program at Purdue University for four years, earning Big 10 Midfielder of the Year honors from 1992-94. His playing accomplishments also include second-team All-Empire Lacrosse League and team MVP honors at Oswego in 1988. He also was involved with the German National Team from 1998-2001, and earned several individual honors for the team at the World Games.

Wittenberg University 2002 Men's Lacrosse Results

(Record: 5-11, 2-3 NCAC)

Mar. 3	DENISON*	L, 4-5
Mar. 12	@ Randolph-Macon	L, 6-9
Mar. 16	@ Virginia Wesleyan	L, 6-14
Mar. 23	OBERLIN*	W, 15-0
Apr. 3	@ Marietta	W, 12-1
Apr. 6	@ Oberlin	W, 17-0
Apr. 8	WASH. & JEFF.	W, 28-2
Apr. 10	@ Kenyon*	L, 9-12
Apr. 13	@ Wooster	L, 10-11
Apr. 16	@ Denison	L, 5-14
Apr. 19	COLORADO COLL.	L, 5-13
Apr. 20	WHEELING JESUIT	L, 8-9
Apr. 24	@ Ohio Wesleyan*	L, 7-23
Apr. 27	WOOSTER*	W, 14-3
May 1	KENYON	L, 9-11
May 4	OHIO WESLEYAN	L, 14-23

* NCAC Games
HOME GAMES IN CAPS