

ATHLETICS & RECREATION

Lacrosse Opens Season with New Coach

Former Division I coach and All-American Sue Behme leads the Yellowjackets.

By Ryan Whirty

IF YOU ASK THOSE AROUND SUE BEHME TO describe Rochester's new lacrosse coach, the word that comes up a lot is "intense." Even Behme relies on it to explain her approach to coaching and to life.

"Intense, passionate, a ton of energy," Behme says when describing her coaching style. "I strive for perfection, but I also know no one's perfect. That's OK. That's what drives me. I stress mental toughness, and hopefully that will trickle down to the student-athletes."

At that point Behme (pronounced "beam") pauses and smiles. "But I like to have fun, too. It's about finding a balance."

Behme's mixture of discipline and exuberance could be just what the Rochester program needs. While the Yellowjackets have had some periods of success, the program has yet to truly take off.

Behme could be the key to changing that. She has found success over her entire athletic career, first as a two-sport star at Cortland State, then as a lacrosse coach for a slew of collegiate programs.

That includes a highly successful stint at crosstown rival Nazareth College, with whom Behme won four conference championships and earned bids to the NCAA Division III tournament six times. Behme left Nazareth in 2008 to help launch a Division I program at Fresno State, but she decided to return to upstate New York to be closer to family in her hometown of Syracuse.

"Sue brings a depth of experience that makes her a tremendous addition to our staff," says George VanderZwaag, director of the Department of Athletics and Recreation. "We are very fortunate that we were in a position to attract her to the University, particularly given the late timing of our search. I am very excited for the students on our women's lacrosse team."

Behme succeeds Elizabeth Monte, who coached the Yellowjackets for eight seasons, including leading the team to its first Liberty League playoff berth. The Yellowjackets open the 2011 season in March.



Tourney Time!

In late February, the Yellowjacket squash team finished fourth at the national tournament; and in basketball, both the UAA champion men (20-5) and the women (20-5) were headed to their NCAA Division III national tournaments.

For updates, visit the website, www.rochester.edu/athletics.

Arriving last October, Behme has been working to place her stamp on the program, encouraging the Yellowjackets to set their sights high. "There's always a transition period (between coaches), for me and for the student-athletes," she says. "But I really feel they are seeing the benefits of everything

▲ **BALANCED BEHME:** New lacrosse coach Sue Behme describes herself as "intense, passionate, a ton of energy," and someone who strives for perfection. "But I like to have fun, too. It's about finding a balance."

we've done up to this point in time. It's really building their confidence."

Behme says she pushes her players to be the best on and off the field. That includes excelling in the classroom. At Fresno State, for example, the Bulldogs earned the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association team academic award in each of her first two seasons, and five players were named to the association's Academic Honor Roll.

Behme also knows that success shouldn't always be marked by winning percentages or championships. For her, intensity is something that can make a young woman successful in every facet of her life.

"I want our program to be extremely competitive," she says, "but I don't measure success by the number of wins and losses. I measure it by how well you set yourself up for the future. Winning is part of the equation, but it's not what I'm focusing on." R

Ryan Whirty writes about sports for Rochester Review.