

HIGHLIGHTS

Reaching New Goals

The men's soccer team is the program's first to reach Elite Eight; the women return to national tourney.

By Ryan Whirty

ARMED WITH SEASONED leadership and abundant confidence, the men and women on the Yellowjacket soccer teams believed they had a big year in store. By the time November rolled around, they'd been proven right.

Both the men's and women's teams earned a share of their league title, and both squads found victory in the NCAA tournaments.

The men advanced to the NCAA Elite Eight for the first time in school history, while the women won their opening round in the national tournament.

Having lost just four seniors from a 2008 squad that went 14-3-2, the Yellowjacket men entered the 2009 campaign with a sense that something special might be brewing. The team's preseason goals included winning the UAA for the third straight year and moving deeper into the

NCAA tourney than any previous Rochester squad.

By the end of the year, both goals had been checked off. Using a perfect balance of offense and defense, the Yellowjackets posted an overall mark of 12-1-3 in the regular season and a 5-1-1 record in the UAA.

That earned them a share of the UAA title—their third straight—and a fifth consecutive trip to the NCAA tournament, where they garnered a first-round bye before dispatching SUNY Plattsburgh and Wesleyan University to advance to the round of eight.

There, Rochester succumbed to a familiar foe when eventual champion Messiah College beat the Yellowjackets 2-1. Messiah has bounced Rochester from three straight NCAA tourneys.

“(The loss) was a heartbreaker, to say the least,” says junior defender Misha Carrel-Thomas '11. “Messiah has now ended my first three seasons (at Rochester), and our program has only gotten better each year. I

know for a fact that every teammate worked as hard as they possibly could, fought for every ball and left everything they had in them out on the field that night.”

The women, meanwhile, approached their season with equal confidence and matched the men step-for-step. Regular-season marks of 11-3-3 overall and 5-1-1 in-conference brought them a share of the UAA title and punched their ticket to nationals.

“Everyone was working really hard at every position,” says senior defender and third team all-American Eileen Boylan '10. “We knew we had a great environment going on with the coaching staff and players. We had really great chemistry.”

Rochester posted a 4-0 win over Westfield State in the opening round of the NCAAs before falling to Rowan, 1-0. The Yellowjackets were disappointed with the defeat, but they are counting their 2009 accomplishments as they look to 2010.

“The underclassmen did a great job this year, so the juniors should provide great leadership next year, and we have a great coaching staff,” says forward Emma Moran '10. “Every year we have high expectations.”



HONORS

All-Americans

SOCCER STANDOUTS: Senior goalkeeper Michael Peacock '10 (above) of Pittsford, N.Y., and sophomore forward Ellen Coleman '12 (left) of Wauwatosa, Wis., were named second team all-Americans by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America for their play this fall. Senior defender Eileen Boylan '10 of Edina, Minn., earned third team honors.