**AU 2004-2005 Athletes of the Year**

The Aurora University Athletic Department named its 2004-2005 Athletes of the Year at the annual Spartan Sports Spring Banquet on Tuesday, May 10, 2005. The awards were presented to a pair of local seniors, baseball outfielder Jay Lavender and softball pitcher/first baseman Taylor Petersen.

Head Softball Coach Mike McKenzie presented Taylor Petersen with the Female Athlete of the Year award. In her second and final year at AU, Petersen was named Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) Player of the Year for the second consecutive season. She led the Spartans to back-to-back NIIC championships and their first NCAA tournament appearance since 1995.

Petersen also rewrote the Spartan record book. She established new marks in career strikeouts (450), career shutouts pitched (27), season strikeouts (274), season wins (27), and season shutouts (16), all while leading the Spartans to a school record of 40 wins and a 40-6-1 overall record. In her final season as a Spartan, Petersen had a 27-2 record with a 0.40 earned run average, one save, one perfect game, 25 complete games, 16 shutouts, and 274 strikeouts in 193 innings pitched. She allowed only 15 walks, and opponents hit .139 against her. At the plate, Petersen hit .390 with 13 doubles, two triples, five home runs, 27 runs batted in, and 40 runs scored. She had a .617 slugging percentage with a .424 on-base percentage.

Head Baseball Coach Shaun Neitzel presented the Male Athlete of the Year award to Jay Lavender, who was a captain on the 34-9 Spartan baseball team, which concluded the season ranked No. 26 in the last ABCA/Collegiate Baseball Division III poll.

On the season, Lavender either led or was second in all offensive categories. He hit .424 with 52 runs scored, 62 runs batted in, 18 doubles, three triples, nine home runs, 26 walks, a .733 slugging percentage, and was 10 of 13 in stealing bases. Lavender was a catalyst in the Spartans’ 2004 late-season run, which resulted in AU finishing third in the NCAA Division III Championships.

The “Spartan Report” is published quarterly by the Aurora University Spartan Club booster organization. It is written by Brian Kipley, Director of Sports Information, and designed by Kristin Savas, Graphic Designer. Photos were taken by Al Benson, Media Relations Director.

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Aurora, IL 60506-4892

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AU Has Spectacular Athletics Season

AU’s 2004-2005 athletic programs were a great success, with AU once again the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) All-Sports champion. The Spartans conquered rival Benedictine University 131 points to 113. NIIC schools are awarded points for each sports finish in the regular season conference standings. Four AU teams — football (Illini-Badger Conference), men’s basketball, softball, and baseball — won conference championships and reached the NCAA tournament; men’s soccer captured the NIIC title as well.

AU won NIIC championships in men’s soccer, men’s basketball, softball, and baseball; the university took second place in women’s soccer, and men’s and women’s cross country; and third place in men’s golf and men’s tennis.

The NIIC has been in existence for 35 seasons. The conference was formed in 1969-1970. Today the NIIC is comprised of seven schools: Aurora University, Benedictine University, Clarke College (IA), Concordia University, Eureka College, Rockford College, and Dominican University. Conference champions are crowned in 12 sports, including men’s and women’s soccer, men’s and women’s tennis, volleyball, men’s and women’s basketball, baseball, softball, men’s golf, and men’s and women’s cross country.

Individually, AU student-athletes had a tremendous year in garnering both athletic and academic awards. The Spartans had five All-Americans, two Academic All-Americans, 17 All-Region players, four Academic All-District recipients, four NIIC Players of the Year, four NIIC Newcomers of the Year, five conference Coaches of the Year, and one regional Coach of the Year. In addition, Adam McCoy was a finalist for the Jostens Award, given to a top basketball player, and Larry Welton was a finalist for the V Foundation Comeback Award.

Leading the way as All-Americans were Jay Lavender (NCAA Division III First-Team Baseball), Taylor Petersen (NFCA First-Team Softball), Larry Welton (NABC Second-Team Basketball), Josh Lane (Football Gazette Second-Team Football), and Robbie Parry (D3football.com Honorable Mention Football). Petersen and McCoy (basketball) were both named Second-Team ESPN the Magazine Academic All-Americans, while Alicia Martin (soccer) and Ryan Schrader (football) were named Third-Team Academic All-District. Petersen and McCoy were First-Team All-District.
Achieving All-Region selections were:

- **Football**
  - Josh Lane, First-Team Football Gazette
  - Robbie Parry, Second-Team Football Gazette
  - Ben Adolph, Third-Team Football Gazette

- **Men's soccer**
  - Alex DeGurian, First-Team National Soccer Coaches Association of America
  - Matias Alvarez, Second-Team National Soccer Coaches Association of America

- **Men's basketball**
  - Larry Welton, First-Team D3Hoops.com and First-Team National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC)
  - Adam McCoy, First-Team D3Hoops.com

- **Softball**
  - Taylor Petersen, First-Team National Fastpitch Coaches Association
  - Dana Cebular, Second-Team National Fastpitch Coaches Association

- **Baseball**
  - Jay Lavender, First-Team All-Central and National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Central Region Hitter of the Year
  - Brian Chelgren, Second-Team All-Central
  - Brian Brandenburg, Second-Team All-Central
  - Alex Chapple, Second-Team All-Central
  - Aaron Thor, Second-Team All-Central
  - Jay Zimmerman, Second-Team All-Central
  - John Hopkins, Third-Team All-Central

AU dominated the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) and Illini-Badger Football Conference (IBFC) postseason awards:

- **NIIC Players of the Year**
  - Larry Welton, men's basketball
  - Taylor Petersen, softball
  - Jay Lavender, baseball
  - Dan Fink, men's tennis

- **NIIC Newcomers of the Year**
  - Susan Sawtell, women's cross country
  - Lyndsey Mica, women's soccer
  - Drew Taylor, men's soccer
  - Larry Welton, men's basketball

- **Coaches of the Year**
  - James Lancaster, NIIC and NABC Region Coach of the Year, men's basketball
  - Jim Scott, IBFC, football
  - Pete Watkins, NIIC, men's soccer
  - Mike McKenzie, NIIC, softball
  - Shaun Neitzel, NIIC, baseball

**Taylor Petersen Has Unheralded Season**

AU senior pitcher/first baseman Taylor Petersen capped off the season with numerous post-season awards, including National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) First-Team All-American, NFCA Great Lakes First-Team All-Region, Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) Player of the Year (second consecutive season), NIIC All-Conference, ESPN the Magazine Second-Team Academic All-American, ESPN the Magazine First-Team Academic All-District, and AU's Female Athlete of the Year (second consecutive year).

Petersen led the Spartans to back-to-back NIIC championships and rewrote the Spartan record book in the process. She established new marks in career strikeouts (450), career shutouts pitched (27), season strikeouts (274), season wins (27), and season shutouts (16).

On the mound, she had one no-hitter, 25 complete games, and 16 shutouts. She allowed just 15 walks, and opponents hit only .139 against her. At the plate,

**Softball: Spartans Have Unprecedented Success**

After the AU softball team captured the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) regular season and tournament championships, AU made its first appearance in the NCAA tournament since 1995. The Spartans finished the season with a school record of 40 wins (40-6-1 overall), and were 14-1 in the NIIC.

*The 2005 AU softball team after winning the NIIC Tournament.*
Petersen had a .617 slugging percentage with a .424 on-base percentage (see chart for more stats).

**Spartans on Fire**

Head Coach Mike McKenzie was named NIIC Softball Coach of the Year. In his two seasons at AU, McKenzie has compiled a 67-15-2 record, while going 27-4 in the NIIC.

Freshman third baseman Dana Cebular was named 2005 Louisville Slugger/National Fastpitch Coaches Association Second-Team All-Region and NIIC All-Conference. Cebular had a .714 slugging percentage with a .420 on-base percentage and committed just three errors in 147 chances for a .980 fielding percentage at the hot corner (see chart for more stats).

AU had five players on the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference All-Conference team. In addition to Petersen and Cebular, senior shortstop Beth Nyhlen, junior catcher/designated hitter Melissa Rousse, and junior catcher/designated hitter Kristin Cumbo were named First-Team All-Conference by the NIIC women's softball coaches.

In conference action, Petersen was 11-0 with a 0.10 earned run average, seven shutouts, 10 complete games, one save, and 123 strikeouts in 70 1/3 innings pitched. At the plate, Petersen hit .438 with six doubles, two home runs, 16 runs scored, and six runs batted in. Nyhlen hit .333 with four doubles and six runs scored; Rousse hit .340 with four doubles, one triple, and eight runs batted in. Cumbo hit .442 with six doubles, two home runs, and 15 runs batted in, while Cebular led AU in conference hitting with a .460 average with three doubles, one triple, and 11 runs scored.

**Softball Stats**

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* school record (single season)

**Baseball: Spartans Finish With NCAA Regional Bid**

The Aurora University Spartan baseball team finished with a 34-9 overall record and 14-4 in the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC), while capturing their second consecutive regular-season conference championship and the NIIC bid into the 2005 NCAA baseball tournament. The NCAA appearance was AU’s 16th in school history (since 1987), and the NIIC title marked the 19th in the past 22 seasons.

**Postseason Honors**

Senior outfielder Jay Lavender garnered most of the postseason awards, and he led or was second in all offensive categories (see charts).

AU dominated the 2005 NCAA Division III All-Central Region team, placing seven members on three teams; eight players were named NIIC All-Conference or Honorable Mention All-Conference.

- **Brian Chelegren**, senior first baseman: Second-Team All-Central Region, First-Team All NIIC and Central Regional All-Tournament.
- **Brian Brandenburg**, senior third baseman: Second-Team All-Central Region and First-Team All-NIIC.
- **Alex Chapple**, junior pitcher: Second-Team All-Central Region.
- **George Creviston**, senior pitcher: Honorable Mention All-NIIC.
- **John Hopkins**, junior center fielder: Third-Team All-Central Region.
- **Jay Lavender**, senior right fielder: 2005 NCAA Division III First-Team All-American, National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association NCAA Division III Central Region Hitter of the Year, First-Team All-Central Region, Northern
Illinois-Iowa Conference Player of the Year, First-Team All-NIIC, and AU Male Athlete of the Year.

- **Brady Salter**, junior pitcher: First-Team All-NIIC.
- **Aaron Thor**, junior shortstop: Second-Team All-Central Region and Honorable Mention All-NIIC.
- **Jay Zimmerman**, sophomore left fielder: Second-Team All-Central Region and First-Team All-NIIC.

In addition, Head Coach Shaun Neitzel was named NIIC Baseball Coach of the Year. Coming off an ABCA Central Region Coach of the Year award, Neitzel has compiled an 87-42-2 record in his three seasons at AU, while going 36-18 in the NIIC.

### Spartan Baseball Stats

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* school record (single season)

### Men's Track and Field: Building Tradition and Meeting Expectations

The 2005 Aurora University men's track and field team continued to set standards that future teams will aim to reach and surpass.

In the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference/Lake Michigan Conference (NIIC/LMC) meet held on Friday, May 6, 2005, at Concordia University — River Forest, the men's track and field team brought home the gold for the first time in school history. The meet was comprised of schools participating in the newly created athletic conference beginning in the spring of 2007. During the 2005 season, 13 men set 21 new school records.

The Spartans set nine school records en route to a commanding meet win that saw the Spartans finish with 214 points, while the closest competition (Milwaukee School of Engineering) trailed with 123 points. Leading the charge were freshman sprinter/jumper Mark Heggen and sophomore sprinter/jumper Austin Deer, both of whom were Co-Athletes of the Meet.

Heggen won both the 200m dash (22.64) and the triple jump (12.90m, a school record). Heggen was also part of the Spartan 4x100m relay team, which set a record time of 43.69. In addition, Heggen finished third in the 100m dash (11.28) and fourth in the long jump (6.13m). In his short career at AU, Heggen holds three individual school records (100m [11.20 on 3/19/05], 200m, and triple jump) as well as being a part of the record-setting 4x100m relay team.

**Senior George Creviston loads before delivering a strike.**

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In the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference/Lake Michigan Conference (NIIC/LMC) meet at Concordia University — River Forest, the Spartans brought home a first-place finish for the first time in school history. The meet was comprised of schools participating in the newly created athletic conference beginning in the spring of 2007.

The Spartans set two school records on route to their victory. AU won the meet with 169 points, while second place Concordia — River Forest had 118 points. Leading the charge was Athlete of the Meet junior sprinter/jumper Jenn Garlinsky, who won the long jump (4.72m), took third in the javelin (29.90m), fourth in the 100m dash (13.70), fourth in the 200m dash (29.34), fifth in the 100m hurdles (19.58), sixth in the high jump (1.21m), and fourth in the 4x100m relay (57.60). Garlinsky holds school records in the 800m run (2:31.27 on 4/30/04), long jump (4.72m on 4/29/05), heptathlon (3,195 points on 4/9/05), and 4x100m relay (53.70 on 4/27/05).

Men’s Tennis: Stepping Toward Success

The 2005 Aurora University men's tennis team finished the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) season at the NIIC tournament and brought home a third-place finish.

The team was led by NIIC Player of the Year and All-Conference selection Dan Fink, who finished first in No. 3 singles and third in No. 2 doubles with partner Mike Kain. Fink finished third in No. 4 singles, while team Most Valuable Player Cole Guetschow finished second in No. 2 singles. Jimmy Hunt placed third in both No. 6 singles and No. 3 doubles. His partner in No. 3 doubles was Chris Hughes.

Men’s Golf: Movin’ On Up

The Aurora University men’s golf team continues to improve. The Spartans finished the 2005 campaign 23 strokes better than in 2004 and finished third at the Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference (NIIC) tournament meet at Prairie View Golf Club in Bryon, Ill. AU finished with 655 points, 25 behind NIIC champion Clarke College.

Top individual scorer for the Spartans was Kevin Cook, who shot a two-day score of 157 to finish fourth in the meet, five strokes behind the winner. Cook was named NIIC All-Conference following the meet. Other top performers were Matt Brandt and Tim Wirth, who both shot 163; Matt Reed, who shot 172; and Paul Garcia, who shot 179.

Women’s Track and Field: Taking Big Steps Toward a Bright Future

Like their male counterparts, the 2005 Aurora University women’s track and field team set standards that future teams will strive to achieve and surpass.