The Aurora University athletic teams that competed in the Northern Athletics Conference (NAC) captured the 2006-2007 All-Sports Award in both men’s and women’s sports, the fourth consecutive All-Sports Championship for the Spartan program. The previous three awards came in the former Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference following the 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 seasons.

AU won eight NAC championships in women’s soccer, women’s cross country, men’s cross country, men’s basketball, softball, volleyball, men’s indoor track and field, and women’s golf. Second-place finishes included men’s soccer, and men’s and women’s outdoor track and field; and third-place finishes in women’s basketball, and women’s indoor track and field.

“Winning the NAC All-Sports Award for both men and women is a testament to the dedication of our student-athletes, coaches and athletic training staff. Aurora University is extremely proud of their outstanding efforts,” said Mike Moser, Vice President for Student Life.

The Spartans out-distanced Concordia University, Wisconsin, 250 points to 221 in the women’s sports and Edgewood College 163.5 points to 136.5 in the men’s sports. NAC member teams are awarded points for each sport’s finish in the regular-season conference standings and in conference tournament finishes. “It is a great way to start the history of the conference,” said Mark Walsh, Athletic Director.

With the on-field success came postseason honors for numerous coaches and players for the AU teams from the NAC. Four Spartan student-athletes were named NAC Player of the Year in their respective sports, while six AU head coaches in eight sports were named NAC Coach of the Year.

Spartans named NAC Player of the Year were junior Larry Welton (men’s basketball), senior Sarah Campbell (volleyball), junior Dana Cebular (softball) and senior Fran Sikorski (women’s cross country).

Softball’s Mike McKenzie, one of six AU coaches named NAC Coach of the Year, in action.

Head coaches named NAC Coach of the Year were Kanute Drugan (women’s soccer), James Kluckhohn (men’s and women’s cross country, men’s indoor track and field), Jerry Continued on next page

Men’s Basketball Head Coach James Lancaster, NAC Coach of the Year, and his staff watch the play on the court.
AU Names Athletes of the Year
Welton, Cebular Earn Honors

The Aurora University Athletic Department named its 2006-2007 male and female Athletes of the Year at the annual Spartan Sports Spring Banquet on Wednesday, May 16, 2007. The awards, as voted on by members of the AU Athletic Department, were presented to junior men’s basketball forward Larry Welton and junior women’s softball third baseman Dana Cebular.

On hand to honor these two fine student-athletes were Aurora University Vice President for Student Life Mike Moser, Director of Athletics Mark Walsh, members of the spring sports teams, their families and friends, as well as Men’s Basketball Head Coach James Lancaster and Softball Head Coach Mike McKenzie.

Men’s Basketball Head Coach James Lancaster led the festivities by announcing the Male Athlete of the Year recipient, junior basketball standout forward Larry Welton. The prestigious awards keep coming for Welton in his three seasons as a Spartan. This season, Welton averaged 20.0 points and 6.7 rebounds per game, en route to being named NABC Second-Team All-American, D3hoops.com Third-Team All-American, NABC and D3hoops.com First-Team All-Region, Northern Athletics Conference Player of the Year and First-Team All-Conference. Both conference awards mark the third-consecutive year that Welton has been recognized for his tremendous on-court play. The previous two seasons came in the former Northern Illinois-Iowa Conference. In his three seasons at AU, Welton tallied double-figure scoring outputs in 80 of the 84 contests, while tallying 20 or more points 46 times in his career. Welton has been named to five All-American teams, All-Region six times, conference Player of the Year three times and All-Conference three times. Welton continued to add to his AU legacy during his junior season, which included moving into the top five on the AU all-time scoring list with 1,736 points, which places him fifth. The all-time leading scorer is AU legend Mickey Johnson with 2,453 points.

McKenzie continued by announcing the Female Athlete of the Year winner, junior women’s softball standout third baseman Dana Cebular. The Northern Athletics Conference (NAC) softball Player of the Year, National Fastpitch Coaches Association First-Team All-Region and NAC All-Conference recipient, Cebular continued to rewrite the Spartan record books. She extended her own career record with 27 home runs after having set...
Men's Track and Field

Men's Track and Field Competes on the National Level

The 2007 Aurora University men's track and field team recently finished its outdoor season, marking the first season of play in the newly formed Northern Athletics Conference and also achieving a milestone along the way with AU's first NCAA championship qualifier.

The 2007 season also included a second-place finish for AU at the Northern Athletics Conference tournament, hosted by Wisconsin Lutheran College. Despite the eight-team field, the Spartans finished second to Concordia University Wisconsin by a final score of 219-198. At the meet, Kibiersza won the shot put and discus throw events, and Jeff Fellers won the pole vault. Other Spartan winners included the 4 X 400-meter relay team of Mariano, Quigley, Anderson and Mathew; Travis Quigley in the 400-meter hurdles; Kevin Peters in the 10,000-meter run; David Mathew in the 800-meter run; and Craig Mariano in the 400-meter dash.

Kibiersza was also named the AU team Most Valuable Player and Freshman of the Year, and senior Aaron Smith was honored with the Spartan Award.

Overall, the 2007 season was marked by national recognition for the Aurora University men's track and field team. The second place conference finish bodes well for the Spartans; they will head into next year with aspirations of a conference championship.
Women’s Softball
Spartan Softball Finishes Another Successful Campaign

The Aurora University women’s softball team recently finished another impressive season under fourth year Head Coach Mike McKenzie. The 2007 Spartan squad finished with a 35-8 overall record, along with a 21-1 Northern Athletics Conference record. The season was highlighted by a 3-0 showing at the inaugural Northern Athletics Conference tournament, hosted and won by the Spartans.

The Spartans began the season, going 7-3 on the spring trip in Florida, and managed to sustain that momentum. Upon coming back north, AU embarked on its first season in the NAC — finishing with a conference best 21-1 regular season record. AU finished the conference tournament with a 24-1 overall record in conference play. Although AU’s season was shortened by not gaining an NCAA Regional bid, the Spartan softball team can still reflect upon a very successful season.

Dana Cebular led or finished second in almost every offensive category this season for AU. The junior third baseman finished the season with a .483 batting average, 10 homeruns, 38 RBIs, 16 doubles, seven triples, 130 total bases, and a .897 slugging percentage. For her efforts, Cebular was named Team MVP, All-Conference and NFCA First-Team All-Region. Along with her regional and national recognition, Cebular also set the single season runs scored record (60) and added 27 homeruns to her career record.

Although Cebular gained most of the recognition, other Spartan performers also received attention for their on-field performances. Sophomore designated player Abby Young finished the season with a .424 batting average, four homeruns, and 39 RBIs. Nikki Veen, a sophomore centerfielder, finished the season with a .383 batting average, four homeruns and 40 RBIs. Both Young and Veen were named NAC All-Conference and NFCA First-Team All-Region.

The Spartan pitching staff was led by second team All-Region selection Brittany Butcher, who went 13-3 with a 1.51 ERA. Sophomore Nicole Capone continued to add to her growing resume by going 15-4 with a 2.35 ERA, while newcomer Anna Snyder went 7-1 with a 0.73 ERA. All three Spartan pitchers were awarded for their efforts by being named NAC All-Conference and Snyder being named to the All-Rookie team.

Sophomore pitcher Nicole Capone delivers a strike for the Spartans.
The Aurora University women’s track and field team finished its 2007 season with a second-place showing at the Northern Athletics Conference (NAC) championships. At the inaugural NAC event, AU finished second behind Concordia University Wisconsin.

AU’s success was due to its domination in the distance events. Senior Fran Sikorski finished second in the 800-meter run and won the 1,500-meter (5:04.72), while Morgan Jacquette won both the 5,000-meter run (19:51.38) and the 10,000-meter run (45:02.78). Allison Shopinski also came through with a third-place finish in the 10,000-meter run.

Sarah Brennan won her second consecutive conference championship in the hammer throw, with a distance of 40.06 meters. She also finished fifth in the shot put. Sikorski was named the AU MVP and received the Spartan Award. Jacquette was named the Freshman of the Year.

Senior Fran Sikorski finished a fantastic career and was named the Women’s Track and Field MVP.
Men’s Golf
Team Continues Steps Toward Success

The Aurora University men’s golf team finished its 2006-2007 season on a high note, winning two tournaments and placing second in two more. The fall season consisted of a traditional schedule and conference tournament, while the spring season allowed for more out-of-conference play.

During the fall’s Northern Athletics Conference (NAC) play, AU placed two underclassmen on the All-NAC team. Gaining All-Conference honors were sophomore Mark Frantzen (AU Team MVP) and freshman Shane Roland. Frantzen and Roland both proved that they could consistently compete at a high level of collegiate play.

The spring season marked another successful campaign for the Spartans. Beginning with the Benedictine University Invitational, held at Seven Bridges Golf Course in Woodridge, IL, AU placed first or second in four consecutive events. This stretch included first place finishes at the Benedictine University and Rockford College Invitationals and a second place showing at the Aurora University Invitational, held at Blackberry Oaks Country Club.
The Aurora University baseball team managed to close its 2007 season with a three game winning streak. The 2007 campaign witnessed the Spartans accumulate a 17-21 overall record, and an 8-12 Northern Athletics Conference (NAC) record. The season ended on May 6, as AU swept the University of Chicago in a double-header.

The 2007 season did not go as expected for AU, which was ranked as the 12th best team in the country in the NCAA Division III pre-season poll. However, the team did have its share of highlights, including efforts of the graduating seniors. One of the most accomplished classes to ever come through Aurora University’s baseball program, this group managed to provide leadership and a positive attitude on a somewhat disappointing season. The senior class consisted of the five captains, pitcher Jonathan Turek (NAC Honorable Mention All-Conference), pitcher Ryan Fair, catcher Zach DeGrush, outfielder Jay Zimmerman and third baseman Ryan Losacco.

For their careers, the senior class accumulated a 113-63 record, good for a .642 winning percentage. As if their record was not impressive enough, the senior class also managed to win two conference regular season championships, two conference tournament championships, appear in three NCAA Regional tournaments, win two NCAA Regional tournaments, make two NCAA Division III World Series appearances, and place third (2004) and seventh (2006) in the nation. Although the Spartans had leadership from the five seniors, they were a predominantly young team. AU started six under-classmen in the field, and managed to work numerous others into the pitching rotation. Sophomore shortstop Josh Damore proved to be a more than worthy replacement for departed All-American Aaron Thor. Damore, the 2007 AU MVP and NAC Honorable Mention All-Conference recipient, managed to lead the Spartans in average (.340), at-bats (150), hits (51), doubles (14), RBIs (34), total bases (70) and slugging percentage (.467).

Tony Wellner, NAC All-Rookie team member and AU Freshman of the Year, was another bright spot for the Spartans. The freshman centerfielder hit .301, with eight doubles and 21 RBIs in 37 games for the Spartans. Fellow freshman Matt Anklam also shined when called upon. In limited action for the Spartans, the freshman designated hitter managed to hit .280, with two home runs and 10 RBIs.
Men’s Tennis
Men’s Tennis Seniors Go Out In Style

Senior captain Cole Guetschow in action. He was the team MVP.

The Aurora University men's tennis team finished its first season in Northern Athletics Conference play with a fourth place finish at the NAC Tennis Championships, hosted by Concordia-Wisconsin at the Pleasant Valley Club in Jackson, WI.

The Spartans were led all season by senior captain and team MVP Cole Guetschow, who finished fourth at the conference championships at no. 5 singles. Also finishing fourth were no. 4 singles player Andrew Price and no. 2 singles player Brian Crouch. The Spartans top-seeded performer, junior Marshall Reed, finished fifth.

Highlighting the conference meet was senior Jimmy Hunt, who finished second at no. 6 singles. Hunt also fared well in doubles play, where he paired with fellow senior John Donovan to finish second at no. 3 doubles. The conference meet marked the end of multiple successful collegiate careers, while also marking the end to another season for Aurora University men's tennis.

Spartan Report to Go Electronic!

In an effort to enhance quality, minimize costs and reach a greater audience, the Spartan Report will be converted to an electronic newsletter beginning with the fall 2007 issue.

The electronic version will contain color photos, feature stories and a student-athlete spotlight in addition to the team preview and recaps.

To ensure you are a part of the new Spartan Report electronic mailing list, please e-mail spartanreport@aurora.edu with your name, phone number, e-mail address and affiliation (alumnus, fan, current/past/prospective parent and current/prospective student) with AU.

The Spartan Report
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Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please direct all correspondence to:

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