Volleyball Gears Up

By Michael Zucconi
Contributing Writer

After a stellar rookie season, with his team finishing third overall in Division III and ending with a 19-7 overall record, Coach Jason Axford is looking forward to this season’s men’s volleyball team.

King and Musselman will be complemented by returning seniors Nate Artz, Nick Bernardo and Sophomore Josh Kerr will have an immediate impact the season. “It is a dream come true that they are a part of this team and on campus,” said Axford.

Axford also points to First-years Scott Eyre, Josh Kautz, IEP student Adnane Haimani and transfer junior Kirk Miller as key factors for this year’s squad.

For the Royals to improve upon last season, Axford has set a few goals that include staying healthy and to qualify for the NECVA tournament and head to the Final Four.

This year’s Royals squad will have to overcome key losses at the outside hitter position. Zac Stark and Brad Gerbrandt both graduated after being starters for last year’s 19-7 team. To fill the void, coach Axford is expecting Matt Musselman and Derek King to take over where Stark and Gerbrandt left off. “I expect them to be the backbone of the team and to be leaders on and off the court,” said Axford.

King, a returning senior, will play outside hitter and serve as co-captain. King has second in kills behind only Stark last year and is ranked 30th in the Royals record book for all-time kills and is fourth in the Royals record book in 2000.

Standing at 6’6”, King will add needed size to the court,” said Axford.

Axford will also rely heavily on the other returning players such as Junior Geoffrey Sakuda and Sophomore Mac McCreathen. McCreathen was the team’s Libero last year and could serve as outside hitter this season while Sakuda, who stands at 6’5”, will add size and strength to the middle.

Their added depth will be crucial this year as they will take on archival Division III Juniata for the first time in three years. Juniata College has held a commanding record over the Royals in their previous meetings. “Playing Juniata is an honor and we are looking forward to this match,” said Axford.

EMU moved from the Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association last season to the North Eastern Collegiate Volleyball Association. NECVA consists of 30 teams, all of them members of the NCAA Division III.

In March, the Royals will travel to LaVerne, CA to take on Division III champion LaVerne in the LaVerne Invitational. EMU will also play Clare College and UC Santa Cruz. This will be the first trip for the Royals to California and the first match against these three teams.

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Skiers, Boarders Ready to Hit Slopes

By Lindsay Deel
Contributing Writer

With Massanutten just a 30-minute drive and Wintergreen, Snowshoe and Canaan Valley only a few hours away, EMU is in an ideal place for some Virginia snowboarding and skiing.

Massanutten, located about 10 miles east on Route 33, is the closest resort to campus. While the opening date is still undetermined, it is expected to open sometime near the beginning of next month. The resort offers four trails at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels, in addition to a tubing park and a terrain park.

While the regular season daily adult lift tickets can run at up to $47 on weekends and $33 on weekdays, one alternative for the college student is the Monday Night Madudson special. This special runs every Monday night (excluding holidays) from 5:00-10:00 p.m., offering lift tickets and rentals for $10 each.

Wintergreen Resort is located approximately an hour south-east of Harrisonburg and is slightly larger than Massanutten with 20 trails. There is a tubing park, terrain park and beginner through expert slope levels. Wintergreen was scheduled to open at the end of November.

Two other resorts located fairly close to campus (each just over a 2-hour drive into West Virginia) are Canaan Valley Resort and Snowshoe Resort. Snowshoe offers 67 trails, plus the nearest halfpipe for skiing and snowboarding tricks, not to mention a student discount for anyone with a valid ID.

While Massanutten and Wintergreen make almost all of their own snow, Canaan Valley and Snowshoe get much more snowfall in the average winter, requiring less artificially produced snow and better powder.

To make things even more convenient, EMU is offering both skiing and snowboarding as classes this spring. Harlan DeBruin will be driving students to Massanutten every Wednesday evening this spring for the ski and snowboard classes offered by the resort.

The two courses combined will include about 62 students and are split pretty evenly between the two sports. They will be broken up into skill levels—beginner-to-advanced—on the first day. Each session will last about one hour and the students will be able to ski for free for the rest of the evening if they wish. Massanutten will provide the necessary equipment for those who do not own any, but the cost of the course will be slightly higher.

The course is worth one credit.