**ODAC Champs Again: Field Hockey Takes VWC 2-1**

By Danielle Steckly

Staff Writer

The success of the women’s field hockey team has been constant and almost predictable this season. Over the weekend the Lady Royals defeated Washington and Lee, and Virginia Wesleyan en route to an Old Dominion Athletic Conference Championship.

On Friday, the team took on W&L in a semi-final match of the ODAC tournament. EMU won 5-0 against the third ranked team in the conference. Jonalyn Denlinger scored two goals for the Royals, with Kristin Moyer contributing a goal and two assists. Also registering goals were Stephanie Derstine and Tessa Grubb, and Ashley Byler added an assist. Goalkeeper Emily Chamel had three saves, and registered her third shutout of the season.

The true test of the tournament came on Saturday in the finals match against number one ranked Virginia Wesleyan. After losing to Virginia Wesleyan two weeks ago, the Royals avenged their defeat by winning 2-1. Denlinger scored both of EMU’s goals to end the perfect season of Virginia Wesleyan. Chamelin allowed just one goal and contributed four saves to the EMU effort. The victory gave the Lady Royals their first ODAC Championship in three years.

The team, which has been ranked in the top ten teams of Division III throughout much of the season, advanced to the NCAA tournament. The Royals take on Messiah College at Salisbury on Friday, Nov. 14 in the first round of the tournament. Senior Kristin Moyer, who leads Div. III in both goals and overall points, and sophomore Denlinger, who continues to lead the team in assists, will lead the Lady Royals against the third seeded team in the South Atlantic region of the division.

"I plan to play to our hearts, who go out and play as hard as they can.” Senior guards Mike Culen and Jeremy Newman, at 6’1” and 6’0” respectively, have become leaders on and off the court, due to their work ethics, according to Dean. EJ Arrington, a junior forward, who at 6’4” led last year’s team in both offensive and defensive rebounding, and was a top scorer, is primed to do the same this season. He’s “so physically and athletically talented,” said Dean, “he’s double dangerous to ODAC opponents.”

The regular season begins Nov. 11 at the McDaniel Tip-Off Tournament in Westminster, MD. The Royals face Shenandoah University at EMU on Nov. 25, and return from Thanksgiving break to begin ODAC play. In Lexington on Dec. 13, the Royals will take on Dean’s former players in a non-league game at VMI. Pre-Christmas play ends on Dec. 15 against Randolph-Macon. "We just want to as many games as possible, and continue to work to get better throughout the year,” are Dean’s goals for this season’s squad. A trip to the NCAA tournament in the post-season wouldn’t be such a bad thing either. “It’s all about the tournament. Anything becomes possible if you get in the tournament,” said Dean.

"On the court we need to play as hard as we can be, unfishable and work hard every day,” said Dean. Only time will tell whether the ‘03-’04 season was a success, but Dean’s work ethic just might make the difference.