

MCC Athletics brings 'a different type of energy' to campus



By Alex Freeman

The Montcalm Community College Centurions took their first foray into basketball this season in year No. 2 of the return to athletic competition for the college.

With volleyball dominating last year as the only true team spectator sport that the college hosted, basketball extended the efforts of the MCC Athletic Department this year. So far, it's been a pleasant transition.

"It's just nice to continue providing athletic events during the winter hours," said MCC Athletic Director Hunter Redman. "Last year, it all ended in November and that was it, so it's kind of nice that we can get another team sport to progress into February and March."

Both the men's and women's basketball teams have seen their fair share of successes and bumps in the road in their inaugural season, but it's a learning process for all involved — coaches, players and staff members. The one thing that has been a welcomed mark of consistency is the attendance and community support of the Centurion basketball teams in their first season of play. Redman said he's been pleased to see spectators show up to the games and the events they tie into them.

"This year, we implemented more game day sponsorship opportunities," Redman said. "We hosted a high school

night, heroes day, adopt-a-family day, alumni day, green out, hunger games, MCC faculty and staff appreciation night and more to help add excitement around our games."

Basketball will go through March while bowling will continue through February. The lone spring sport, men's golf, is set to tee off on April 4 as the Centurions travel to the Ancilla College Invitational.

The men's golf team has lofty expectations after a strong start to their fall season. Competing in 10 tournaments, the Centurions won six of them and finished second in two tournaments. In fact, the only two tournaments where the Centurions did not finish in the top two were tournaments featuring four-year universities.

"I think it's expected, we're looking at nationals, for sure," Redman said. "Last year, we would have gone if we were eligible to. I don't think we're hoping to go, I think it's an expectation at this point."

From their fall season, the Centurions are currently ranked as the No. 31 team in NJCAA Division II and ranked first in their region. Each region is guaranteed to send two teams to the national tournament.

If the golf team can secure a trip to nationals, it would certainly be a great ending to a successful second year

of athletics. Redman has seen athletics make more of a positive impact on campus life in year No. 2.

"Even from the beginning of the fall semester, I think we've noticed a different type of energy on campus, especially when we've had a lot more students here in person," Redman said. "There are more students hanging out at the Woodside Café and our athletes usually hang out before and after practice and they intermingle with the other students. I think the culture that (sports are) bringing, people recognize themselves more as a Centurion instead of just being an MCC student. That's been a lot of fun to see that change." ■

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