Baseball Inspires Other Sports to New Heights

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The Defender baseball team secured a berth in the GPAC post-season field for the first time since the league was formed. The team leaned heavily on a senior group of 11 players, many of whom have been regulars in the lineup for three and four seasons.

Cam Gingerich will leave Dordt as the all-time hits leader and is the only player in the program’s history to surpass 200 career hits. Jake Thayer, who dealt with injury much of the first half of this season, leaves Dordt with nearly 200 hits and ranks second all-time.

During the course of this season Connor Hopkins became the all-time strikeout leader at Dordt, surpassing a record that had stood since Barry Miedema graduated in 1979.

Colton Van Otterloo, a junior, also had a season to remember with two walk-off homeruns in league play, a batting average of .355, and a team high 55 hits when the regular season ended. He also surpassed 100 career hits early in the season.

The softball team featured just one senior on its roster and surpassed pre-season expectations with a 21-20 season record. The Defenders were in the hunt for a runner-up finish in the GPAC regular season race going into their final doubleheader of the year.

Michal Huizenga put together a strong senior season. She had a .339 batting average, knocked in 23 runs, and moved into the top-20 with 125 career hits.

The Defenders qualified for the GPAC post-season tournament for a fourth straight season.

The track and field team posted several new school records, and high jumper Jacob Moats punctuated the regular season with record setting performances on two straight weekends. The senior from Knoxville, Iowa, cleared 6-11.5 in the high jump at the Sioux City Relays on April 21 and then claimed the high jump title by clearing 7-1 at the prestigious Drake Relays on April 29.

Entering the GPAC Championships in early May, the Defenders had four relay teams and seven individuals meet automatic or provisional qualification standards for the NAIA National Championships in late May at Gulf Shores, Alabama. At the GPAC Championships Miranda Velgersdyk claimed a 400-meter championship and also led the Defender 4x400 relay team to a title.

The men’s golf team finished its year in late April with junior Tony Kallevig and sophomore Will Mulder leading the team with 78.2 averages. Kallevig earned GPAC Player of the Week honors after claiming the individual title at the Midland Spring Invite.

The women’s golf team saw marked improvement with an influx of young players. Four and sometimes five freshmen made up the lineup for the Defenders this season. Alyssa Fedders and Erin Olsen lead the way with scoring averages of 87.6 and 87.8 respectively.