

sports

IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE!

By Michael Novak
Contributing Writer

I know. This is ACC country. Most people who are fans follow their favorite Division I college teams for men's and women's sports: The Pack. The Pirates. The Heels. The Demons. That place over in Durham. It's in the air around here and hard to escape. Despite the price, the parking, the crowds, we all go when we can. And we almost never meet or know the athletes we work so hard to follow. Can't tell 'em from Adam's housecat.

But you are missing something amazing if you don't look closer to campus. Right here in your classes and dorms are some of the most remarkable athletes I have seen in over 50 years of playing and following organized sports. And there is something extraordinary about watching people you know compete at a very high level of athletic achievement.

This last week afforded some excellent examples of what is available five minutes from your dorm.

On Friday in the late afternoon sun I watched our cross country team in a three team race against Peace and N.C. Wesleyan. (I've seen them practice: you run until you can't breathe and then run a bunch more, trying to shave thirty seconds off your best time for a 3+ mile run.) Off they all went, down a course that would force them through woods and up hills, pounding against ground that was uneven, sustained only by their own will and conditioning.

We got a few updates, but in the end waited for the long finish up a half mile of hill, hoping our team would finish five runners with better times than any other team's best five. What a thrill as we saw the jerseys begin to appear up the hill—one, two, three, four—all the first four finishers in the beautiful maroon of Meredith. And by their styles of run we knew that Joyce, Audrey, Lauren and Katie had guaranteed our win. I left feeling great.

On Saturday, a beautiful day, I watched our soccer team play the 4th best DIII team in the entire nation. It was free and the seats were front row. And beyond all belief, our team played them dead even for the entire first half and, in fact, for most of the game. Things like



this don't often happen in sports. We didn't win, but right to the end we were in it even though we shouldn't have been. And the reason we were in it was because people I knew from class—Anna, Sam, Maggie—played their hearts out and did astonishing things that are still fresh in memory. Again I left feeling great.

And then on Wednesday, our volleyball team faced a conference powerhouse that our current players and coach had never beaten. We had come off some tough losses and could have caved in when Methodist took a quick lead with the first game. But we—Leslie, Mallory, Laura—fought back and won two of the next three. Remarkable.

It went all five games, with the lead changing hands many times and never growing greater than four points, and as the final game built toward an incredible finish, we—MaryBeth, Morgan, Sarah, Kayla, Emily—played some of the best volleyball I have ever seen and came from behind to win! I left the electrified gym so excited that I went home and graded exams for two hours and didn't even notice. Imagine that.

I rest my case. There is a special thrill in watching your friends do remarkable things. Take an hour or two and see what I mean. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Oct. 3

Volleyball vs. Mary Baldwin
Volleyball @ Averett

Saturday, Oct. 4

Cross Country @ Hagan Stone Park
Cross Country Classic
Soccer @ Ferrum

Tuesday, Oct. 7

Tennis @ Catawba
Volleyball @ Roanoke

Wednesday, Oct. 8

Soccer @ Salem

Friday, Oct. 10

Soccer @ Guilford

Saturday, Oct. 11

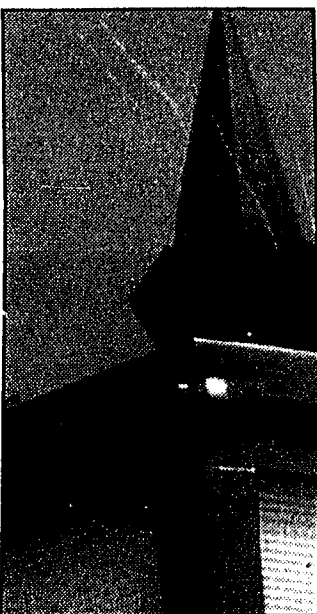
Soccer @ Averett

Wednesday, Oct. 15

Volleyball @ NC Wesleyan

SPORTS OVERVIEW: CONFERENCE VICTORIES

By Apiffany Gaither
Sports Editor



On Weds., Sept. 24th, Meredith's soccer team beat N.C. Wesleyan with a 4-3 advantage to gain their first conference victory. The team beat the Battling Bishops with a score of 20 to 10. Two goals each were scored by both Maggie Hart and Alex Calvert. Calvert scored the game point with an assist from Anna Buryk; Hart was the high point scorer with five on the assist to Calvert.

Falling behind early on Sat. 27th, Meredith gave up two goals to Christopher Newport. With a 2-0

advantage, the Captains headed into halftime. The Captains then shot another goal at the beginning of the second half to secure the win for Christopher Newport. Next, Meredith journeys to Ferrum on Saturday, Oct. 4, to challenge the Panthers at 2 pm.

Weds., Meredith volleyball gained their first USA South conference triumph over Methodist, winning the match in five sets. Meredith unfortunately lost the first set with a score of 22 to 25. The team countered from their shortfall to tie the

match at 1-1 with a 25-22 win. The Avenging Angels gained the third set with a 25 to 20 success. Methodist took the fourth set with a score of 25-22 allowing for a fifth and final set. Winning 16-14, Meredith gained another set. Morgan White led the team with 18 kills and two block assists. Mallory Booker inserted 10 kills and 17 digs. At the net, Lesley Bass remained tough with two solo blocks and three block assists. With 43 assists and 11 digs, Laura Sayabouth encouraged the team to victory.

On Sat., the Avenging Angels gained another conference success by slamming Shenandoah in the first match of the day with a win of 3-0. With 12 kills on 22 attempts, Morgan White led the way to a win. The Meredith volleyball team proceeded to host Greensboro in the second game of the day. The Pride won the match 3-0. Meredith next travels to cross-town rival Peace College on Tuesday, October 1 at 7pm. ■