

**For Immediate Release**

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**Meramec Magic Athletic News**

**June, 2008**

## **FIRST STRING SCHOLARS** **Student/Athletes Earn Academic Honors**

The recently completed academic and sports year has yielded a number of classroom honors for STLCC - Meramec student/athletes, including several earning the coveted NJCAA Academic All-American status.

The four are: **Bill Brandenburg** (Kirkwood), the men's basketball center and also a second team All-American for his court play; **Nikki Torno** (Oakville), a standout middle hitter on the volleyball squad; **Jake Morgan** (Mehlville), one of the top pitchers the last two years for the baseball team; and **Ryan Sutton** (Oakville), a heavyweight wrestler who achieved great success on the mat and was an All-American for his grappling ability in '07.

Brandenburg, Torno, and Sutton achieved perfect 4.00 grade point averages during the spring semester.

Also being recognized for their diligence in the classroom during the spring semester is the women's basketball team, which has captured the President's Cup for the highest team composite GPA. It is the second time the women's basketball team has won the award, also earning it in the spring, 2004 semester.

The semester saw 17 student athletes named to the Athletic Director's Honor Roll with a 3.50 GPA or better. Among the 17 scholars, the aforementioned Torno, Brandenburg, and Sutton, along with cheerleader **Lindsay Ward**, men's soccer **Matt Mantia** (Oakville), and baseball player **Kevin Mahler** (Mehlville) all also excelled with 4.0 GPA's.

The Coaches Honor Roll saw 19 student/athletes earn between a 3.00-3.49 GPA for recognition. Nine of those athletes were from the baseball team.

### **Men's Soccer Team Signs Area Talent For Fall Season**

Getting ready for another run at the elusive Region XVI title, the men's soccer team has signed some of the area's top talent for the fall season that begins in August.

Recent signees include a pair of Lindbergh High kickers in **Austin Killian** and **Chris Eason**, as well as **Justin Billmeyer** from Gibault High in Illinois, and **Matt Schildz** (DeSmet), a Division I transfer from Drake University.

Billmeyer was a first team Post-Dispatch All-Metro selection last fall and will be looked to for scoring punch. The 6'2", 170 lb. Billmeyer tallied 19 goals with four assists for the Hawks.

Another key signee is goalie **Clayton Uptain** from Cape Central High in Cape Girardeau, MO. Uptain, a varsity goalie all four years in high school, finished his senior season with eight shutouts and a 85% save percentage.

“I’m looking forward to playing at Meramec and with Coach Smugala,” said Uptain. “Coach Smugala has a great program and a great reputation in the Metro St. Louis area as well as across the nation and I hope to give my all and help the Magic.”

Eason, also a goalie, led the Flyers to a 14-7 record. He notched six shutouts along with a 1.31 goals against average as Lindbergh’s main starting goalie. The pair should solidify the traditionally strong goalkeeper position for the Magic

Eason’s Lindbergh teammate, Austin Killian is a speedy, hard-nosed forward/ midfielder. Killian had four goals and three assists last fall for the Flyers and in all the right spots - three of his four goals were game-winners.

A pair of transfers from other universities will add needed experience to the Magic. Defender **Eric Schmidt** (Oakville) transfers in from SIU-E as a freshman following a red shirt season with the Cougars. Schmidt, a back, starred at Oakville High as a three year starter and a first team All-Conference pick as a senior. He was also tabbed the Oakville Defender Of the Year.

Coming in from across the Atlantic is **Marc Bowron**, a native of Aberdeen, Scotland transferring from Belhaven University in Mississippi. Bowron is a 6’3” back and considered an impact player.

Matt Schildz returns to his St. Louis roots following a year at Drake. His DeSmet senior campaign in ‘06 was a good one - the Spartans went 19-6 with Schildz, a midfielder playmaker recording six assists.

The Rockwood School District has three top players heading to Meramec in **Steve McMahon** (Lafayette), **Taylor Landon** (Marquette), and **Britton Gibbs** (Eureka.) McMahon was a big part of a highly successful Lancers team that went 18-4 in ‘07. He scored 13 goals (four game-winners) along with five assists.

Landon played forward for a 13-9 Mustangs team, scoring eight goals (four game- winners) along with three assists. The 6’1” Landon is described by coach Smugala as a “great ball winner and very physical.” Gibbs had 10 goals and four assists for the Wildcats.

Two players from strong private school programs entering are **Brett Bozesky** (CBC) and **Tony Pancer** (Vianney.) Pancer knocked in nine goals to go with four assists for the 14-9 Golden Griffins.

In 2007, the Magic went 17-4-1 and advanced to the Region XVI championship game before being upended in double overtime 2-1. Coach Smugala enters his fourth season as head coach with a combined mark of 46-11-4.

## **Ethridge To Join Softball Coaching Squad For ‘08-09**

Winning experience will definitely be a part of the STLCC-Meramec softball coaching staff next season as P.E. Instructor **Shelly Ethridge** will become the new assistant coach to Linda McQueen.

As head coach at Belleville Area College (now known as Southwestern Illinois College) from 1991-’97, Ethridge compiled a 189-33 mark. The team won three conference championships and one regional title during her tenure. Twice Ethridge was named Coach Of The Year in the Great Rivers Athletic Conference.

During her playing days, she was equally successful. Ethridge played on the 1991 Olympic Festival Softball team, and also played semi-pro ball from 1990-’94. She was an All-State player at Mater Dei High in Breese, Il.