Men’s Basketball Set To Host Region XVI Tourney Mar. 5-6

The stage is set for the STLCC-Meramec men’s basketball team to return to the NJCAA National Tournament if they can uphold their number one seed and win the Region XVI Tournament Fri. and Sat., Mar. 5-6 at Meramec. The winner of the tourney automatically advances to the 16 team NJCAA National Tournament in Danville, IL Mar. 19-23.

It marks the first time in over a decade that the Magic will host the event, and adds a distinct edge to Meramec who was 12-2 on their home floor this season. Meramec, the top seed, will take on the winner of a first round game on Tuesday, Mar. 2, between fourth seed STLCC-Florissant Valley and fifth seed STLCC-Forest Park. That game will tip off at 5:00 Friday.

In the other semi-final, perennial rival and two seed Penn Valley from Kansas City will battle third seed North Central. The two teams split a pair of games this season, but the Penn Valley win was later ruled a forfeit in favor of North Central when it was discovered that Penn had used an ineligible player in that contest. That semi will tip off at 7:00 Friday.

The championship game is slated for 2:00 Saturday, Mar. 6. Meramec is hoping for its first Region XVI championship since 2005 when it went on to capture a third place trophy at nationals. During the past decade, Meramec has battled Penn Valley in the title game every year but one.

The Magic feature 6’5” sophomore center Dallis Johnson (Lafayette) who is averaging nearly 17 points a game, 6’4” sophomore forward Josh Dale (Affton), and freshman guard Dietrick Sooter (Pierce City, MO) who is adding nearly 11 points a game with his uncanny, long range three point shooting. Sooter is also a 87% free throw shooter who has been as high as 92% during the season.

Grapplers Earn 4th Place National Team Finish; 6 Win All-American

The STLCC-Meramec wrestling team earned a fourth place team finish at the NJCAA National Tournament in Des Moines, IA Feb. 26-27, while six grapplers won All-American status for interim coach Nick Vogt. Among them, Deron Winn (Liberty, MO) won a national title at 184.

The Magic finished the tourney with 96.5 team points with Harper College winning the team championship. All-Americans from Meramec were: Craig Chiles (Hillsboro), a seventh place finish at 133, Tyler Holloway (Brookline, MO) at 141 who won a 4th place medal, Quinten Haynes at 157 who came in third in his weight class, Anthony Saulle (Delray, NJ) at 165 who also won third, John Vogt (Ste. Genevieve, MO) who won fourth at 174, and Winn who won the championship at 184.
Baseball Team Opens Season In Texas; Home Opener Mar. 5

The Magic baseball team has opened its 2010 campaign in Texas, with four games there Feb. 27-28. Meramec took it on the chin in its opening doubleheader to Northeast Texas, dropping 11-1 and 4-0 decisions.

It will be a whirlwind week for the team - after returning late Sunday from the Lone Star State, they’ll depart Tuesday morning (Mar. 2) for Kansas City for a rare, early season Region XVI match up against rival Maple Woods. (The two squads can now take claim to supplying the St. Louis Cardinals with half its infield - first baseman Albert Pujols is a Maple Wood alum, while third baseman David Freese played for the Magic in recent years.)

Meramec returns just four sophomores, but quality ones at that. David Williams (Maplewood/Richmond Heights) will be a leader on the mound. The 6’4” righthander had a stellar freshman year, tossing 63 innings and allowing just a 3.36 ERA. He also struck out 74 hitters.

On the infield, veterans Jerry Roam (Francis Howell North) and Justin Wilson (St. Charles West) will anchor the team in the middle. Roam, a shortstop, hit .421 a year ago with 27 RBI’s. Wilson, a team leader and second baseman, hit .331 with 24 RBI’s. Brett Nelson (Owensville), a power hitting first baseman, is also back after smashing six home runs a year ago along with 34 RBI’s and a .344 average.

Key newcomers that eighth year head coach Tony Dattoli will look to are: catcher Ben Smith (Rockwood Summit), speedy outfielder Vince Howard (Sikeston, MO), and pitchers Mike Bibas (Vianney), Adam Hall (Pacific), Hank Williams Jr. from the ’09 state championship Fort Zumwalt South High team, and Seth Gorman (St. Dominic).

The Magic make their home debut on Friday, Mar. 5 at 3:00 taking on Joliet (IL) in a 9 inning game. Two years ago, Joliet won a NJCAA Div. III national championship. When the two squads met last year, Joliet won a pitching duel, 1-0. On Saturday, Mar. 6 Meramec will face the Lindenwood JV team at 1:00 followed by the College of DuPage at 3:00. The weekend concludes on Sunday with Joliet the opponent at 1:00 and Lindenwood JV at 3:00.

Softball Slated To Open Season Mar. 2 At Lindenwood JV

The softball team will have a busy opening week of the new season, playing at Lindenwood on Tuesday, Mar. 2 in addition to three other doubleheader dates that week. The team, under new head coach Kim McCall, is looking to improve on last year’s 29-29 mark.

Tiffany Stock (Pacific), a pitcher, is the Magic’s lone returning player from a year ago. However, the squad is loaded with Missouri talent, with the exception of outfielder Tiffany Theobald (Houston, TX), a transfer sophomore from Texas. Around the infield, the Magic feature first baseman Nicole Molly (Seckman), second baseman/shortstop Jess Boeger (Affton), and third baseman Kayla Mahoney (Fox).
Jamie Aldrich (Parkway South), a catcher, can also play third. Cera Armistead (Rolla, MO) adds versatility as a catcher/utility player while Shannon Beatty (Kirkwood) and Patsi Huebner (Washington, MO) are both utility players.

On Mar. 3 (Wed.) the Magic travel to Union, MO to face East Central at 2:00 before making their home debut on Friday against Marshalltown in a 3:00 doubleheader. On Saturday, (Mar. 6), Meramec hosts Iowa Central in a 1:00 twin bill.