



Waukesha County Technical College

Technical College At

While often under-rated, Wisconsin tech schools boast highly successful sports programs

BY MARK MILLER

For years, technical colleges have enjoyed a solid reputation throughout Wisconsin for teaching trades like cabinetmaking and automotive repair. While just about everybody knows about the local tech schools' success in preparing students for these type of careers, very few know about the intercollegiate athletic programs at five of the 16 technical colleges in the State.

Indeed, the members of the Wisconsin Technical College Conference (WTCC) are just beginning to gain some recognition for their prowess in intercollegiate athletics. Case in point: the highly successful baseball program at Madison Area Technical College (MATC), considered by many to be the Cadillac program among WTCC schools. The WolfPack qualified for the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division II Tournament in Millington, Tennessee for the first time on May 22 by defeating their longtime nemesis, Iowa Central Community College.

The story was big news in Madison. The *Wisconsin State Journal* devoted two color photos and a front-page story on its sports pages to the landmark victory. Heck, for one day at least, MATC received more coverage than its big brother down the street, UW-Madison. "A lot of people think of tech schools and immediately think of welding and woodworking," says Stephen Hauser, now in his sixth year as Athletic Director at MATC. "That perception remains because of our name. But in reality, we are a community college. We have 100 different certificate programs, but the biggest program we have is liberal arts studies. It is also our goal to give our students an extraordinary experience rather than just an ordinary experience. We want to have students here who will move on and play at four-year schools," Hauser explains.

That is certainly the norm for the players in the MATC baseball program. Coach Mike Davenport came to MATC after previous stops as Head Baseball Coach at Kishwaukee Junior College in Illinois and Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa. He is familiar with success at the NJCAA Division II level after leading Kishwaukee to a national title in 1999. "The majority of our kids do want to go on to four-year schools, but we also have some kids who earn the two-year degree in the field of their choice and at the same time, enjoy an intercollegiate athletic

experience," Davenport adds. "But helping kids move on to the next level in baseball is one of our big selling points."

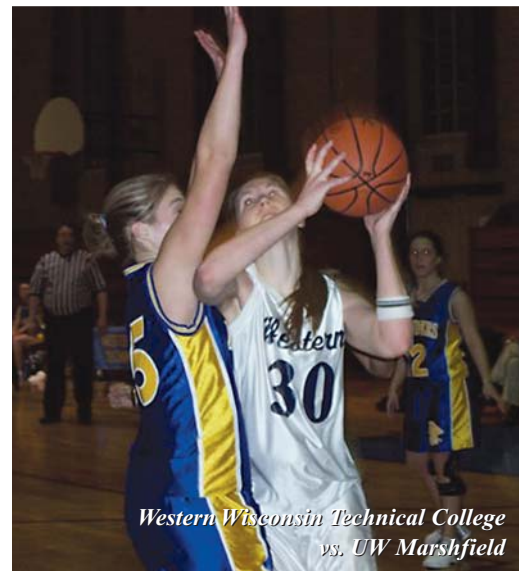
Growing up in nearby Lodi, Kelby Mack knew about the status of the MATC baseball program, even if his high school classmates did not. "Most people probably don't understand the opportunities a school like MATC can give to baseball players," Mack comments. "I knew the baseball program was elite because of the work put in by former Coach Leo Kalinowski."

Kalinowski led MATC to three straight NJCAA Division III titles from 1995-97 before helping the school transition to the Division II level in 2000. He stepped down as baseball coach following a 23-23 season in 2003. Thanks to Kalinowski, the baseball program at MATC is able to award tuition scholarships because of its Division II affiliation. All of the other programs within the WTCC are Division III members of the NJCAA, which means they cannot award scholarships. "Our baseball program was an okay program for years and years," Hauser recalls. "We had some nice success, but then Leo Kalinowski took over in 1991 and basically worked his tail off and really recruited."

Another highly successful program within the WTCC is the men's basketball program at Waukesha County Technical College. In Bill Hartmann's seven years at the school, the Owls have won 20 or more games four times and have played in the Wisconsin Junior College Athletic Association (WJCAA) State title games four times, winning twice. The WJCAA includes five technical colleges and 13 UW system junior colleges—UW-Baraboo, UW-Fox Valley, etc.—in Wisconsin. "When I first started here, recruiting was horrible because nobody knew about our athletic program," Harman says. "It took a few years to get it going and to gain the trust of local high school coaches, but we are now at the point where we have around 50 kids per year who come to our school and



Madison Area Technical College



Western Wisconsin Technical College vs. UW Marshfield



Madison Area Technical College

hletics

visit. We have to cut between 30-35 players per year.”

Over at Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids, Coach Randy Casey’s men’s basketball program has produced some stellar individual talent in recent years. Freshman DeJuante Wade, a former Milwaukee Vincent athlete, earned Honorable Mention All-American honors recently after averaging 25.9 points and 11.2 rebounds per game while shooting an amazing 75% from the floor. “Men’s basketball has always been a very successful program here, and we are trying to build our other programs to that level,” Mid-State Athletic Director Stephany Hartman says. “I feel we are on the right path as our women’s volleyball and

basketball programs will benefit greatly from our recent recruiting.”

Western Wisconsin Technical College has won the past two WTCC women’s volleyball championships behind the strong play of Belleville’s Megan Keyes. In fact, the athletic programs within the WTCC have become so competitive, recruiting is now at an all-time high. “I think we’ve put more of an emphasis on recruiting than we did 10 years ago,” says Scot Vesterdahl, the Men’s Basketball Coach at MATC. “We want to be respected as one of the better programs in the State and on the national level. That only happens when you recruit well. The kids we are recruiting are also being recruited by some of the schools within the Wisconsin

Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) and by the private schools in the State.”

Then there’s Milwaukee Area Technical College, which has an extensive athletic program and enjoys the most success in men’s soccer. Coach Matt Eggert has built a solid program with the help of players from the outstanding high school programs in the metro area. The Stormers finished 10-4-0 last season and won the WJCAA before falling in the NJCAA district playoffs.

Without question, the landscape of technical college athletics has changed rapidly in Wisconsin. Further growth in upcoming years is anticipated as many programs continue to expand and grow. Whether they’re studying welding or English literature.

Wisconsin Technical College Conference

The 5 of 16 technical schools that have a competitive athletic program in Wisconsin.

Western Wisconsin Technical College

Location: La Crosse

Men’s Sports: Baseball, basketball

Noteworthy: The women’s volleyball team captured its second WTCC championship in a row last fall behind the strong play of All-Conference Championship performer Megan Keyes of Belleville. . . The men’s and women’s basketball teams and the women’s volleyball teams play home games at Holy Cross Seminary in La Crosse. . . Milwaukee Brewers catcher Damien Miller has worked out with the members of the Cavaliers’ baseball team during the winter.

Nickname: Cavaliers

Women’s Sports: Volleyball, basketball



Waukesha County Technical College

Location: Pewaukee

Men’s Sports: Baseball, basketball

Noteworthy: The women’s basketball team went 17-10 under Coach Greg Hanis last season to notch the first winning record at the school since the 1994-95 season. . . The men’s basketball program has had three seasons of 20 or more victories under Coach Bill “Scooter” Hartmann. . . On May 26, WCTC administrators decided to eliminate golf, softball and cheerleading due to severe budget cuts at the school.

Nickname: Owls

Women’s Sports: Basketball, volleyball



Mid-State Technical College

Location: Wisconsin Rapids (main campus)

Men’s Sports: Basketball

Noteworthy: DeJuante Wade, a Milwaukee Vincent graduate, earned Honorable Mention All-American honors among NJCAA Division III schools after averaging 25.9 points and 11.2 rebounds per game during the 2004-05 season. . . Jayson Jackson has been hired to coach the women’s basketball program. . . Coach Lisa Berndt guided the women’s volleyball program to a .500 record last season and anticipates a successful season in 2005 with the return of several players. . . The Cougars did not field a women’s basketball team in 2004-05, but will return to varsity status for the 2005-06 season.

Nickname: Cougars

Women’s Sports: Basketball, volleyball



Milwaukee Area Technical College

Location: Milwaukee

Men’s Sports: Baseball, basketball, golf, soccer, volleyball

Noteworthy: The Stormers won the WTCC title in soccer last fall. . . Milwaukee Tech plays home basketball games at Alverno College. . . Like Mid-State Tech, Milwaukee Tech did not field a women’s basketball team in 2004-05 but hopes to return to the hardwood in 2005-06.

Nickname: Stormers

Women’s Sports: Softball



Madison Area Technical College

Location: Madison

Men’s Sports: Baseball, basketball, soccer, golf

Noteworthy: MATC baseball program awards tuition scholarships and is a Division II member of the National Junior College Athletic Association. The WolfPack qualified for the NJCAA Division II World Series for the first time in school history this season after winning three national titles in Division III from 1995-97. . . The MATC golf team won seven of 10 invitationals and captured its third straight WTCC Title and fourth consecutive WJCAA crown last fall. . . The men’s basketball team finished 27-7 and lost in the NJCAA District XIII title game to Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

Nickname: WolfPack

Women’s Sports: Basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball

