2014 Women’s Soccer Season in Review

With a young roster this year comprised of mostly first-year and sophomore players, the Bethany College Women’s Soccer team continued to improve in 2014. The Bison finished the season with more wins (5) than last season and continued to battle in the rugged Presidents’ Athletic Conference. The 5 wins are the most wins since 2011.

Despite only winning the five games, the Green & White were on the cusp of many more, falling by two goals or less in six contests.

Following a three-game skid to open the season, the Bison notched their first victory of the year by defeating Marietta College, 3-2. That contest saw Bethany rattle off three second-half scores en route to the win. Senior Mckenna Junkin, sophomore Madison Cochran and freshman Michaela Hinerman supplied the goals, while freshman goalkeeper Taylor Sasak recorded her first win of the campaign.

After a loss at Franciscan, the Bison would then go on a two-game win streak defeating Penn State – Altoona and Penn State – Beaver by a combined score of 15-3. In the 12-0 rout at Penn State – Beaver, Hinerman was the star of the show, scoring five goals en route to setting a new Bison record for most goals in a single game. The previous mark was four goals set by Missy Miller in 1995. Hinerman accounted for all three of Bethany’s first-half scores (19th, 21st, 25th), while adding two more in the second half of action (61st & 67th).

Following the victory, Bethany continued their winning ways, downing Penn State – Altoona, 3-2. This game showed the Bison mettle as they trailed 2-1 at half, before scoring two goals in the second frame for the win. Hinerman was once again the Bethany offense, as she notched her second-career hat trick.

The middle of the season saw the Bison hit a rough patch, as they lost several key players to injuries over a six-game slide. However, Bethany would rebound nicely stringing together their second two-game win streak of the season by defeating Presidents’ Athletic Conference foes Chatham and Thiel.

In the 4-0 triumph over Chatham, the Bison had a balanced attack, receiving goals from sophomores Brittany Fullbright and Julie Slezak as well as Junkin and Hinerman. Sasak once again was impressive between the pipes, racking eight saves in the victory.

The Bison showed their toughness in the 4-2 win over Thiel, as they roared back with four second-half goals after trailing 2-0 at intermission. Slezak was one of the main reasons, as she notched her second multi-goal game of the season, logging two scores. Sophomore Michelle Paugh and Cochran also added a goal each.

Unfortunately, that would be the last Bison win of the year, as Bethany was unable to secure a victory in its last three games. The future is bright for the program, however, as the Green & White had 16 different freshmen or sophomores see action, including making a combined 140 starts.

At the end of the season, both Hinerman and Slezak earned All-PAC Honorable Mention selections. Hinerman had an outstanding year, ranking fifth in the league in goals (12) and sixth in points (26). She scored goals in six different contests, including two career hat tricks. Along with her five-goal performance against Penn State – Beaver, she tallied three scores in a 3-2 win over Penn State – Altoona.

Slezak turned in yet another outstanding season, as she ranked eighth in the conference in both total shots (55) and shots per game (3.24). Her best individual performance came in a win over Penn State – Beaver, where she scored three goals and added an assist. Finding the back of the net in five different matches, Slezak is quickly turning into one of the cornerstones of the Bison program.

The Bison graduate only 3 seniors in Maci Caster, McKenna Junkin, and Taylor Lewis from this year’s team. With only one senior (Bri Steich) on the roster next season, the Bison will once again look to their youth to contribute to their success in 2015. They will look to continue their climb in the PAC as they strive to reach their goal of qualifying for the PAC Tournament. Only the top 4 teams can qualify in the 10 team conference.