

MERCYHURST PREP ATHLETIC OVERVIEW

By William Bengel

In researching this article, this first thing I discovered was that records for the pre-70's era are very sketchy. The Great Depression and World War II impacted on the information available in yearbooks and student newspapers. There just wasn't enough money and materials to devote space to athletic accomplishments. Athletic programs had not yet reached the status afforded them in today's society and therefore less attention was paid to the activities portion of the overall educational program. The school's records on the '50's and '60's are also somewhat limited.

The second discovery coming from this research was that the athletic program at Mercyhurst Prep has come a long way since the days of the "Sems."

ATHLETICS PRE-1970

According to the yearbook, the 1929 basketball season was described as "the keenest in school history." The team, coached by Mr. Frank Schwab, finished the season with a 7-4 record. The season highlight was a 35-3 victory over St. Edwards.

At the end of the '30's, the Seminary's athletic offerings included: tennis, swimming, volleyball, field hockey and basketball. Many of the games involved spirited competitions between classes and just a few competitions against teams from other schools. Each year the big field hockey game was against The Park School of Buffalo. The 1938 basketball game against St. Benedict's Academy was canceled because the Seminary faculty felt the rivalry caused a "physical output that interfered with lessons." The "extra-mural" season featured two victories over Cranesville.

During the '40's, field hockey was a very popular sport. The 1945-46 basketball season must have been a tough one. The memory book sends out a "rah rah" to Miss Weary who led the Sems through "many a trying game." The 1947-48 basketball team finished with a 5-3-2 record. (That's right?-two ties!) The big game of the year was the contest with St Benedict's, which ended in a tie. (So much for the next day's lessons!)

Mr. Ted Fuhrman coached the Sems to an 8-3 record during the 1963 basketball season. The offense was paced by Janet Reiser, Judy Rutkowski and Corrine Vickey. Defensive strategy revolved around Betty Hulick, Judy Williams and Kathy Meyers. (How many remember the three offensive, three defensive players format for girls' basketball?) The 1966 team, coached by Mr. Clemens Lynch, claimed an exciting 27-25 win over St. Benedict's. In '68, Sue Finnegan led Mercyhurst to a city championship.

Certainly there were other athletic events of significance between 1926 and 1970, but the school's records are very incomplete. If you can supply any additional information, I hope you will let us know.

THE 1970'S-CHANGE IS IN THE AIR.

The decade of the '70's saw greater emphasis placed on school's co-curricular activities as educators saw the importance of supplementing classroom learning with meaningful after school programs. With the admission of male students in 1974, the activities program at Mercyhurst Prep began to expand in order to keep pace with increased interest on the part of both male and female students. The school colors officially became Kelly green and white and the athletic nickname "Lakers" was adopted.

In 1974, the girls' tennis team, led by captain Anne Kelly, posts an impressive 13-1 record and claims a Metro championship. The squad was coached by Mrs. W. Kelly. The boys' tennis team follows suit in 1976 when Mr. Chuck Stachera coached the team to a perfect 14-0 season and a Metro championship. Dennis Borczon, Mark Baginski and Ravinder Sabherwal go undefeated in match play. Mark Baginski and Ravinder Sabherwal met for the District 10 championship in 1978 while Matt Gregory and Joe LoCastro did the same in 1980. Mary Dailey claimed a District 10 championship for the girls' program in 1978 and Wendy Sturm became Mercyhurst's first state champion when she won the tennis championship that same year.

Bridget Whalen was a member of the 1975 volleyball team that claims the Upper Allegheny Valley League championship. Mercyhurst's Gil Thorpe, Chuck Stachera coached the squad to a very successful season.

The first boys' basketball team took the floor during the 1974-75 season. The team was coached by Mr. Joe Cook and competed in a conference comprised of private schools from Buffalo and Canada. At the conclusion of the first season of competition, the team posted a 9-4 record. The very next year the team is awarded a spot in the PIAA District 10 tournament.

In 1977, Ed Zenewicz took over the reigns of the boys' program. Coach Zenewicz would lead the Lakers to several UAVL championships before Mercyhurst is admitted to the Metro League. In that same season, Betty Burke coached the girls' squad to an Upper Allegheny Valley League championship.

Baseball became a varsity sport in the September of 1975. Nick Young and Joe Boesch provided the offensive punch for Mercyhurst's first team.

As the decade ended, swimmer Mary Kaliszak earned a spot in the District 10 finals and qualified for the PIAA state meet.

THE 80'S-NEW PROGRAMS, NEW HEIGHTS

During the decade of the 80's, several new sports were added to the athletic offerings and the Mercyhurst Prep athletic teams reached levels never before experienced.

MPS principal, Sister Maura Smith saw the need for a program to provide an opportunity for participation by students who did not choose to play the "traditional" sports. Inspired by the acceptance and popularity of the program at Mercyhurst College, Sr. Maura established a rowing program at MPS. Mr. Jack Gartner was chosen to guide the newly formed sport and to procure the necessary shells and equipment. Needless to say, the sport caught on with students and parents alike. A boathouse was erected at the foot of Sommerheim Drive and the first MPS Regatta was held in 1981. In this very first home regatta, the Lakers emerged as champions. The men's varsity-8 took first place in both the 1981 and 1982 regattas. The women's varsity-8 claimed first place medals in 1981, 1982 and 1983. Paul Mokha took his abilities as a coxswain to Temple University and later became a rowing coach in Florida. In 1985, the Mercyhurst rowers claimed the Misery Bay Rowing Club Challenge Cup and Dave Bennett, Katie Connolly and Michelle Simmons were invited to

attend Junior National Camp. This program would remain strong and continue to grow into the 90's and up to present day.

Cross country became a varsity sport at MPS in 1982. By the mid-80's, the girls' program had become extremely competitive, due in part to the great individual performances turned in by Lisa Filutze. Lisa reigned as Section One champ in 1983, '84 and '85, setting the records at both Frontier Park (18:44) and Brown's Farm (18:57.) During the 1984 dual meet season, Lisa took seven firsts, losing only one race by one-half of a second. From 1983-85, Lisa qualified for the PIAA state tournament each year. She finished in the top twenty each year, her best finish being fourth in 1985. In 1986 Lisa's mom, Barb took over the program and guided the girls to an undefeated Metro season. This team was paced by Section One champ Dana Butts, Rosanne Siggia, and Jen Horan. Both Jen and Dana qualified for states, finishing fifty-fourth and eighty-ninth respectively.

Another great individual performance in the 80's came from tennis star Kelly Erven. During her four years at MPS, Kelly won four District 10 titles (1983, 84, 85 and 86) and two PIAA state championships (1985 and 86.) Kelly was named to the National High School Athletic Coaches All-American team. If that was not enough, Kelly and tennis partner Brad Prince won the District 10 mixed doubles championship in 1986 and Kelly picked up another state championship medal as a member of the 1986 girls' basketball championship team. Kelly has returned to Mercyhurst Prep to serve as our girls' tennis coach.

Track and field was another sport new to Mercyhurst in the 80's and by 1989, MPS had an individual champion in the sprints. Allen Thomes won District 10 titles in the 100M, 200M and 400M in '89. Having earned a trip to the PIAA state meet, Allen brought home the gold in both the 200M and 400M.

Girls' basketball was not new to Mercyhurst, but the heights this team reached were new for any girls' basketball team in Erie city or county! The Lady Lakers, who had won District 10 AA titles in 1984 and 85, completed a triple crown sweep in 1986, winning the Metro League, District 10 AAA and State AAA Championships. The team capped a 30-1 season with an exciting come-from-behind victory over Valley View in the state

championship game. Fans who made the trip to Hershey certainly got their money's worth as the Lakers trailed Valley View 20-26 at the half. Kelly Erven was assigned to guard Sue Serafini, who had already scored 20 points, in the second half. Kelly's defense, along with the scoring and rebounding of Sue Heidt and Lisa Maxson, helped turn the tide for the Lakers. Point guard Renee Dahlkemper kept the ball in the hands of our scorers and Mary Haughney bounced off the bench to knock down four key long range baskets. Lisa Kaczenski contributed several key rebounds during the first half and Kelly Erven held Serafini to just four points in the second half. Sue Heidt hit three clutch free throws as time ran down and the Lady Lakers cut down the nets and accepted the championship trophy. Both Sue Heidt and Lisa Maxson scored over 1,000 points during their high school careers and both went on to be named All-Americans in college.

Several outstanding performances by the boys' teams paved the way for formal admission to the Metro League in 1984. According to Sr. Maura Smith, "Becoming a co-educational school and being admitted to the Metro League served to place athletics in an even more important role. Both the boys' and girls' programs were strengthened by these moves. Coaches took our programs seriously and trained our athletes with good results."

The boys' basketball team had advanced to the state tournament in 1981 by defeating Commodore Perry and Maplewood in the District 10 tournament. The Lakers moved into the second round before falling to AC Valley. Howie Fox closed out his high school career with a total of 168 assists. To demonstrate that the Lakers were ready for Metro League competition, Ed Zenewicz' squad posted a foot-stomping 63-60 overtime win over Strong Vincent during the 1982 season. Ivan McBride ended the season with 383 points while Pete Alex contributed 343. John Sargent pulled down 203 rebounds.

The school's first District 10 team championship was won by the 1984 baseball team, coached by Mr. David Andrews. The Lakers were paced by the all around play of pitcher Ivan McBride who helped the team finish the season with a lofty 22-4 record. Other significant contributions came from Bo Veneziano, Dave Rezepecki, A. J. Lilly, Brian Donikowski, Kurt Wagner and the rest of the team.

Girls' soccer made its debut in 1981 and this program proved to be a model of consistency throughout the 80's and the 90's. In 1982, the girls won their first Northwestern Pennsylvania Girls' Soccer League championship. Erich Wollman coached the squad while Debbie Baldauf, Lynn Bielanin and Debbie DeWitt fulfilled the duties of co-captains. Offensive support came from Renee Dahlkemper, and Dina Lawson. Goalie Shelly King finished the season with a 1.375 goals against average. Coach Marikae Cerami continued the winning ways in 1983 and 84 by coaching the Lady Lakers to two more NWPAGSL championships. Over the course of the 1983 season, the team scored 88 goals while giving up only 10. The first Metro championship came in 1984 when the team finished with a 14-1 record. The Lakers claimed the crown by virtue of a thrilling 3-2 overtime victory over Villa. In 1986, coach Jamie Borowicz's squad grabbed another Metro title as Veronica Sansom scored 21 goals over a 16 game stretch. "V" would go on to an outstanding soccer career at Mercyhurst College. Coach Borowicz's 1988 team would go 16-2 and claim both the Metro and District 10 championships. Also during the 80's, MPS standout Cindy Baldauf was named to the Western PA Select Soccer Team.

The boys' soccer team under Coach Frank Amicucci brought home District 10 championships in both 1987 and 1988. Over his fifteen years of coaching at MPS, coach Amicucci's teams won six District 10 titles. The 1986 team was the first to compete in the Metro League. Doug Bakka paced the Laker attack scoring 16 goals in 22 games. The 1987 squad shared the District 10 title with Fairview. The Lakers advanced to the western quarterfinals before bowing to AA power Peters Township. Captains Mark Baer and Brian Kridler sparked the Laker's performance. Scott DeWitt and John Baldauf led the 1988 team to an outright District 10 title by virtue of a 1-0 victory over Fairview in the finals. Chris Trejchel and Brian Hurley were also players of note during the Lakers successful run of the '80's.

Mercyhurst Prep swimmers and wrestlers also turned in standout performances during the 80's. In 1986, both Tina and Patty Kaliszak qualified for Nationals. Senior Pat Carroll won the District 10 championship for the 50 yard freestyle in 1987. Pat clocked a time of 22:31 at the Edinboro pool. The next year, Kaisa Haikanen won two District titles and qualified for states in the 50 yard freestyle and the 100 yard butterfly.

The year 1985 was a stellar year for the now defunct MPS wrestling program. During that season, the Laker program produced three Section I champions: Brian Roach at 105 pounds, Kevin Pastewka at 132 pounds and John Bielanin at 138. Kevin Pastewka went on to win the District 10 AA championship and place fifth at the state tournament.

That same year, the bowling team won its third straight Metro title and the MPS volleyball team continued along its path of steady growth by posting its best season to date. Sister Joachim, Victoria Hoff, Carol Costello, Lynn Kellogg and Marlene Stroup all had a hand, as coaches, in the bowlers' success. PBA bowler Ron Palombi honed his skills in the MPS intramural bowling program in the mid-'80's. Coaches Chuck Stachera and Jennifer Maser relied heavily on the talents of Lisa Stroup, Sheryl Kroto, Leanne Madurski and Michelle Mallory to keep the volleyball program headed in the right direction.

The 1988 District 10 AAA softball title belonged to the Lady Lakers as Coaches Bridget Whalen and Mary Ann King led the Lakers to 14 straight wins. The arm of Kelso Brophy and the speed of Veronica Sansom were the keys in the Lakers 2-1 win over Villa to claim the crown. In that same year, the girls tennis doubles team of Denise Robison and Ashlie Franklin grabbed the District 10 crown and advanced to the state quarter finals.

As the decade came to a close, MPS golfer John Wiler won the 1989 District 10 title and placed fifth in the state while Jen Eberlein also qualified for the state tournament and finished fourteenth. And as an indication of good things yet to come, Khyl Horton led the Metro League in scoring with an 18.8 points per game average. Khyl will be heard from again as the Laker teams moved into the '90's.

THE 90'S AND BEYOND:
NEW FACILITIES, TWO NEW PROGRAMS
AND KISSES FROM HERSHEY

The 90's saw the opening of the new athletic wing and the dedication of the baseball field. Mercyhurst athletes were given the opportunity to participate in newly formed

football and ice hockey programs. This decade was highlighted by the state championships in boys' and girls' basketball.

The addition of the new athletic wing gave MPS a regulation size gym for volleyball and basketball. The gym featured a hardwood floor with two side courts, separated by a retractable curtain, allowing for greater flexibility in the scheduling of physical education classes and athletic practices. A new weight room provided an area where athletes could condition and allowed weight lifting classes to have access to state of the art equipment. Four locker rooms, a classroom and office space were also part of the new wing.

The baseball field was an ongoing project coordinated by Mr. Mike McCormick. The field was constructed on land given by the Sisters of Mercy, just north of the athletic complex. Our baseball team finally had a home field for varsity and junior varsity games right outside our backdoor. The field is also used as a practice area for the football and track teams. Physical education classes are able to schedule outdoor activities on the field as the Erie weather permits. The first varsity game was played on March 31, 1999. On the mound for the Lakers was Greg (Tex) Ross and the first hit was delivered by Chris Allen as the Lakers beat Saegertown.

Football came to MPS in the fall of 1990 when a varsity reserve team was organized under the leadership of legendary coach Ron Costello. The team walked to their practice field on Gore Road each day and played home games at Biletnikoff Field and Mercyhurst College. This first edition team went 8-2 and brought home a Metro Reserve League championship. The first varsity win over a Metro opponent would come the very next season when the Lakers defeated East. By 1993, Terry Costello had taken over the program and continued to build on the foundation already established by Ron Costello. The team claimed its first Metro League AA/AAA championship and earned a berth in the District 10 tournament, losing to Northwestern in the first round. Standout performers on this team were Brian Ostrum, Mark Gorney, Russ Smith, Curtis Jones, Harry Carpenter and place kicker Bill Gehrlein. Eric Hicks received a full scholarship to the University of Maryland where he was a defensive co-captain for two years. Eric is currently playing for the Kansas City Chiefs in the NFL.

The football program would go on to win three straight Metro AA/AAA titles in 1998, 99 and 2000 under coach Jeff Nichols. Major contributions came from Matt Dubowski, Donnie Staaf and Cory Rush in '98. The '99 team featured the line play of Ishmael Trainor, the kicking of Justin Harris, the hard running of Brian Morgan and the sure hands of receiver Joe McFadden. The 2000 edition earned a spot in the District 10 tournament to go along with their league title. Dywon Rowan broke Craig Woodard's school scoring record while brother Levonne earned second team All-State recognition as a defensive back. Dan Bukowski and Zack Brandt were also recognized for their contributions at the end of the season. The team lost only two players to graduation, so a host of talented players will be returning to a team that coach Nichols feels should contend for the District 10 finals. Seems this team has some unfinished business

Ice hockey joined the list of MPS sports offerings in 1994. Greg Williams was tabbed to be the first coach of the team and this first team featured the talents of Bob Loomis, Jason Makin and Mackenzie Williams. The team had their most competitive season in 1996-97. In 1999 the program switched league affiliation and joined the PIHL. Coach Pierre Legace is set to lead the team into the 2001-02 season.

The MPS basketball teams received two Hershey "kisses" 'in March of 1991. The boys' team, having adopted the slogan "Whatever it takes!" made it to the state finals as the number three team from District 10. Coach Greg Majchrzak's team brought a 26-5 record into the championship game against a 30-0 Wilkes Barre GAR team that featured the play of Bob Sura. (Sura went on to star at Florida State and to an NBA career with the Cleveland Cavaliers.) Sura and MPS star Khyll Horton took turns dominating the game as the Lakers trailed GAR 43-48 after three quarters. Craig Woodard and Brian Buerger hit key baskets at crunch time enabling the Lakers to pull ahead by a 54-53 score. Brian Dahlkemper's driving basket with just 36 seconds to play clinched the championship for Mercyhurst. Final score: MPS 58, GAR 55. Khyll Horton scored 20 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the game while Brian Buerger and Craig Woodard chipped in with 12 and 13 points respectively. Brian Wedzik led the offense and controlled the tempo for Coach Majchrzak and solid defensive contributions came from Ron Swanson and Mike Modzelewski. Horton would go on to a solid collegiate career at George Mason and Gannon.

The girls' team took the floor just as soon as the celebration ended. The girls were making their second appearance at Hershey in six years and were ready to square off against Allentown Central Catholic and Michelle Marciniak. Marciniak scored over three thousand points in her career and was Parade Magazine National Co-Player of the Year. The Lady Lakers had already claimed the Metro League and District 10 titles on their way to a 29-2 season. When Central Catholic grabbed the lead in the second quarter and switched to a zone defense, guards Jena DiBello, Danielle and Denise Baginski promptly knocked down outside shots to force CC back into a player-to-player defense. This enabled the Lakers to take advantage of their strong inside game. The inside duo of Teresa Szumigala and Angie Potthoff would combine for 50 points and 27 rebounds as the team would shoot 53% from the field. Stephanie Russo came off the bench to provide backup support for the potent inside game. The guard trio of Denise and Danielle Baginski and Jena DiBello combined for 17 points and Denise Baginski held Marciniak to 23 points. The girls' victory (67-55) meant that the Lakers had "swept" Hershey and that the bus ride home and the victory parade in Erie would indeed be sweet! The team motto "Yes we can" quickly changed to "Yes we did." Teresa Szumigala finished her high school career having scored 1,981 points. Teresa would go on to play at Mercyhurst College where she would earn All-American status. Angie continued her playing career at Penn State where she was named All Big Ten and All-American. She played professionally for the Columbus Quest and the Minnesota Lynx. Both Teresa and Angie have been voted into the Erie Metropolitan Sports Hall of Fame. Reflecting on the two state championships, Sr. Maura Smith stated, "This reinforces the notion that Mercyhurst students can excel in athletics as well as academics."

The girls' program would go on to win additional District 10 titles in 1992 and '94. Coach Randy Bowers took over the program in 1997 and in that same year Amy Galla, who was headed for Mercyhurst College, won the Metro League scoring title with a 16.1 ppg average. In 2001, senior Amber Krumpe was accorded the honor of Metro League MVP.

The boys' team would enjoy yet another solid season in 1998 as the Lakers received strong performances from Chris Kozik, Bryan Sammons and Ray Schlaufman. The Lakers earned a trip to the state tournament but fell in the first round to a powerful Aliquippa team. One year later, Bob Amendola's troops shocked all of Pennsylvania by

knocking off the state's number 1 team in the AA division in the District 10 championship game. George junior Republic came into the game as a heavy favorite, but the Lakers, were able to pull off one of the greatest upsets in state basketball history. Bryan Sammons ran the ball control offense to perfection and the team benefited from solid performances from all of the starters. The senior leadership of Greg Merski and Sean Baer helped the Lakers maintain their composure against the bigger and quicker Tigers. Matt Burke converted a driving lay up late in the game as the four corners offense provided an easy basket that gave MPS control of the game. Sean Baer made a clutch steal as the clock wound down to clinch the upset victory and the District 10 title for Mercyhurst. The next days headlines read: "By George, the Lakers Beat the Tigers!"

The boys' and girls' soccer programs continued their pursuit of excellence throughout the '90's. Frank Amicucci's program claimed District 10 titles in 1990, '94, '95 and '98. The girls, under Jamie Borowicz, claimed District titles in 1990 and '96. Both teams collected their share of Metro titles as well. This particular time period saw many talented players put on the green and white jerseys to represent their school and bring honor and glory to themselves and their programs. Over the course of the decade, Jason Kast, Dave DiSanza, Brian Hurley, Chris Trejchel, Dom DeLuca, Daryle Wingerter, Ara Pardini, David Novak-Sturm, Mark Malloy, Phil Miller, Andy Dulin, Sean Baer, Brian Donovan and Joe Stazer were among the many who contributed to the team's success. The girls' program benefited from the athletic abilities of Jena DiBello, Melissa Obmann, Lisa DeLuca, Erin Filutze, Lori Krzeszewski, Alyssa Murosky, Amanda Johnson, Megan Snyder, Mackenzie Williams, Nicki Krahe, Aja Pardini, Katie Brabender and many others. Needless to say these lists could go on and on. Special recognition also goes out to keepers Kevin Cornish and Julie DiGello for the job they did between the pipes during their tenures. Julie Byrne completed her high school soccer career as the leading scorer in MPS history, having scored 87 goals and Erica Mozdy's talents earned her First Team All-State recognition.

The MPS rowers certainly had their share of glory in the '90's under head coach Brad Fairfield. The Lakers dominated the Three Rivers Regatta, winning six team championships from 1991-98. In '92, the team placed two boats in the finals of the Stotesbury Cup in Philadelphia. Over the years MPS has been a "bad host", winning our own regatta in 1994, '95, '96, '97 and '98. In 1995 the Lakers, qualified no fewer

than five boats for the US Nationals, with the men's novice 8+ taking sixth place. At Canadian Nationals in 1996, Mercyhurst placed four boats in the finals, bringing home two bronze medals. The men's heavyweight boat qualified for the finals at Canadian nationals for the first time in 1997. The guys placed fourth overall. During the course of the decade, the MPS rowing program benefited from outstanding performances by H.J. Bender, Matt Anderson, Liv Laiann, Jason Makin, Elicia Henry and Sherri Jaworski. Liv Laiann would later be selected to the Norwegian National Rowing Team. In 1997, Julie Lillis and Caitlin Welsh were named to the United States Rowing Association Honor Roll. Over the course of the decade, more than sixty MPS rowers went on to receive some form of financial aid to row in college. Mr. Dave Geiger is now in place to lead the program into the next decade.

The softball and baseball teams have each claimed their first Metro League championships in the past two years. Coach Brian Kirsch's team took full advantage of the pitching talents of Nikki Pacinelli, the smooth fielding of Amanda Ross and hitting power of Melissa Rizzo and Michelle Munksgard to claim the title in 2001. Nikki Pacinelli was named league MVP on the basis of her 12-2 pitching record and her earned run average of 1.35. Nikki proved she can do it all on the field by batting a lofty .400. The Lady Lakers made it to the District 10 finals before losing to a very good Meadville team. Since Nikki is only a junior, league and district opponents will have to face her in yet another season!

In 1999 the baseball team, coached by Doug Owens, claimed their first Metro League title. League MVP Greg Ross teamed with catcher Donnie Staaf to keep opposing batters guessing while Chris Allen provided plenty of power at the plate. Allen's consistent performances over his career earned him three first team All-Metro selections.

The Laker baseball squad had a strong AA tradition to build on. Under coach Ted DeSanti, the Lakers had claimed a District 10 title in 1994. Pitcher Hany Carpenter spun a nifty four hitter as the 'Hurst beat Lakeview 3-2. Chris Sperdutto and Mike Dombkowski turned in stellar performances during the close contest. Dombkowski hit a two out, two run homer onto the roof of Roosevelt to put the team in a position to win. The Lakers advanced and won their first round game in the state tournament by a 5-0

score over Cannevin. The team claimed another District 10 title in 1996, this time under coach Doug Owens. Strong all-around performances came from Tony Cuzzola, Brian Meyers, Mike Driehorst, Mike Cirino and Dave Leisering as the Lakers beat Cranberry 5-1 at Jerry Uht Park.

The MPS bowlers of coach Ed Rohrbach claimed three league titles in the '90's as consistently high averages were attained by Natalie Stano, Shelby Wiley, Nikki Michali, Bethany Johnson and Johanna Hanes.

The girls' tennis team had a remarkable run of three straight Metro championships beginning in 1995. Over a three year period, the girls would post a 35-1-1 record for coach Sally Reed. The team's lone loss came at the start of the '97 season to Warren by a 3-4 score. District 10 doubles championships were claimed by Leah Batkiewicz and Jane Reed in '94, by Leah Batkiewicz and Natalie Brown in '96, by Laura Schindelholz and Lindsay Zimin in '99 and by Laura Schindelholz and Stacey Batkiewicz in '00. Based on their strong performances in the state tournament, Natalie Brown and Leah Batkiewicz were selected to the Second Team All-State squad while Jane Reed and Lindsay Zimm were accorded Honorable Mention. In 1999, Lindsay Zimm and Laura Schindelholz also claimed the PIAA AAA state championship in doubles play. The Lady Lakers, under Kelly Erven-Maslar won the District 10 team title in 2000.

The boys' tennis team would send Pat McCreary and Antonio Camara to the state tournament in 1998. Pat would return to the state tournament the very next year.

The MPS volleyball team posted very respectable records in '95 and '96, going 10-5 and 11-4 over the two year stretch.

MPS cross country runner Tullia Bruno had her chance to shine in '98 when she claimed the Section I championship.

During the '99-00 season, the girls' swim team would claim win number one hundred for the program as Cindy Haibach and Beth Warner helped Tom Doyle's Lakers race to a 14-4 season.

Members of Mercyhurst Prep's track teams also distinguished themselves over the course of the '90's. In 1990, Melissa Bules won the District 10 championship in the 400m run. Craig Woodard claimed the Metro title in the high jump (6'4") and the long jump (21'9") in '92. In that same year, Metro championships were also won by Tony Tate in the 100m (11.15) and by the 400m relay team of Tate, Woodard, Chris James, Darren Jones and Jeff Sansom. Andy Ruppertsberg claimed another Metro championship in '94 by winning the 1600m run. One year later, DJ Fuhrman ran a 41.14 to claim the Metro title in the 300m hurdles. Performances that would have to be described as remarkable were turned in by Erin Filutze and Amanda Johnson. Erin claimed the Metro gold in the '93 1600m (5:27) the '94 800m (2:27) and the 1600m (5:21.) Erin capped her career by claiming a championship in the 3200m (11:24) at the District 10 meet. Amanda Johnson was also consistently strong in her events. Amanda was Metro champ in the 1600m run in '95 (5:23) '96 (5:27) and '97 (5:3 1.) In '96 she also took a first in the 3200m with a time of 12:15. In that same year, Amanda claimed District 10 championships in both the 1600 and 3200m runs by turning in times of 5:27 and 11: 52 on the McDowell track. The '01 track season produced three more Metro champs for MPS. Sean McCullough and Lindsay Havko each took first place honors in the 1600m run while Kristy Allegier won the 300m hurdles. Lindsay made a trip to state meet as a freshman. Mercyhurst sprinter Levonne "Coop" Rowan represented our school well in the state AA meet by bringing home the gold in both the 100m (10.98) and 200m (22.42) dash. Coop hopes to return to states to defend his titles during his senior year.

Over the years, Mercyhurst teams have enjoyed and benefited from the enthusiasm of the various cheerleading squads and the Spirit Squad. We have had cheerleading squads on both the junior varsity and varsity levels for the sports of football and basketball. While the wrestling program was active, there was yet another eager group of cheerleaders present to lend their support. During the 80's, the school also sponsored some very talented twirlers. While cheerleading is not yet a sanctioned competitive sport, MPS coaches and athletes alike would indicate that our squads would undoubtedly fare well in any form of competition. The Spirit Squad was very active in the '80's under the guidance of Mr. Jon Sedelmyer. The tradition has been kept alive in the '90's thanks to the leadership of faculty moderator Mr. Ed Curtin and a

host of spirited seniors. No matter what the outcome of a given athletic event, "we've got the worm!" The contributions made by these squads throughout the years cannot be truly measured but they are certainly appreciated by coaches, athletes and fans!

Also working hard to ensure the continued success of our athletic programs are the various sports specific booster groups. These organizations have done so much over the years to help strengthen our programs and to keep them strong. The involvement and support of these groups has been very much appreciated by the administration, coaches and athletes of MPS. It would be safe to say that we would not be where we are today without the strong commitment of these groups!

As the '90's came to a close and the new millennium began, the Times-News published a list of the "Best of the Century" and several MPS athletes were among those honored to be on the list. Topping the list of "Erie's Top Female Athletes of the Century" was Mercyhurst's own Angie Potthoff. Joining Angie on the list were May Ann Roberts Fessler, Teresa Szumigala, Kelly Erven-Maslar and Barb Filutze. Making the list of the "Century's Best" were PBA Bowler Ron Palombi, Sue Heidt, Lisa Maxson, Kelso Brophy, Veronica Sansom, Khyll Horton and Eric Hicks. Former girls' basketball coach Bill Bengel was listed as one of the "Top Coaches of Female Teams."

All things considered, we have a lot to be proud of as a school. We have many outstanding team and individual athletic accomplishments to go along with our school's strong academic tradition. Being a well-rounded individual is one of the trademarks of a Mercyhurst Prep education and this approach still provides plenty of opportunity for athletic accomplishments to come shining through. To all of the former Sems and Lakers, "thank you" for all you have done for Mercyhurst Prep over these past seventy-five years. We hope to continue to build on the traditions you have established for us and to consistently reach for even loftier standards of consistency and achievement while upholding the notion of the well-rounded Mercyhurst Prep graduate. Judging from the accomplishments of these past few years, we are well on our way!

This school year was truly a banner year for MPS athletics. By the end of the school year there were five District 10 championship banners hanging in the gym and three teams had advanced to the western finals in their respective state tournaments.

The football team kicked off the year by going a perfect 9-0 during the regular season before losing a hard fought contest to Sharon (7-14) in the first round of the District 10 tournament. The team's success brought much attention from college coaches and two Lakers, Jovon Johnson (Iowa) and Levonne Rowan (Wisconsin) earned division one scholarships. Jason Sibley (Gannon) and Justin Gannoe (Mercyhurst) received division two packages for football. Andy Willis continued his football at Westminster College.

This talented Laker squad also made a great showing on the All-Metro teams. The first team offense included Jovon Johnson, Dywon Rowan, Jason Sibley, Zach Brandt and Mike Potter. Jovon Johnson became the first MPS player to be selected to and play in the Big 33 game. Levonne Rowan, Jason Sibley and Jovon Johnson were named to the first team defense. Second team honorees were John North, Justin Gannoe and Craig Glover on offense and Mike Potter, Zach Brandt, Andy Willis and Dywon Rowan on defense.

The 2001-02 season was the first undefeated regular season as well as the best overall record in MPS football history! This was truly a season to remember!

The girls' tennis team completed an undefeated regular season and claimed another Metro and District championship. The Lady Lakers finished with a 12-0 overall record, their only loss coming at the hands of Lower Merion in the state tournament. Stacey Batkiewicz was the District 10 singles champ and qualified for the state tournament and advanced to the quarter finals. District 10 doubles finalists were Erin Delaney and Jenny Wilson while Stacey Batkiewicz, Monica Capozziello and Allison Haener were selected to the first team All-Metro.

Strong showings by MPS teams during the winter made the season pass quickly and helped people forget about the long Erie winter. The boys' basketball team racked up a 26-5 overall record while finishing second in the Metro League and first in the AA

District. The Lakers brought home a first place trophy from the North Broward Holiday Tournament in Palm Beach, Florida and were only one win away from Hershey before losing in the Western Finals. Doug Merski surpassed the 1,000 point mark for his career and was a unanimous selection to first team All-Metro. Doug will continue his basketball career at Penn State Behrend.

The girls' basketball team also excelled during their season. The Lady Lakers were co-champs of the Metro League and won the District 10 AAA championship. The youthful squad compiled a 25-7 record and made an appearance in the Western Finals. Chelsea Gordon was named D-10 Freshman Player of the Year by the Western PA Girls' Basketball Association. During the 2002-03 and 2003-04 seasons, the girls will move up to AAAA.

MPS diver Pat Bukowski finished second in the District 10 meet with a score of 392.35. His point total was the highest among Metro divers and earned Pat the Metro Diver of the Year award. Pat went on to place seventh in the state meet held at Penn State. S Only a sophomore, Pat has two seasons of high school diving to look forward to.

The Mercyhurst bowlers, paced by Lauren Eighmy's 180.6 high average, went 11-0 and won the Metro League championship. The Lady Lakers went on to states and claimed second place in the "B" division. Michelle Munksgard bowled the tournament high series with a score of 618. Michelle Munksgard, Lauren Eighmy and Jen Munksgard were all selected for All Metro recognition.

The spring season brought still more outstanding performances by Laker teams. The baseball team rolled up a 16-8 record on their way to a second place finish in Metro. In the District 10 finals, the pitching of Bob Ohmer and the defensive play of Matt Calabrese and Chris Campbell made the only run of the game (scored by Zach Brandt) enough as the Lakers defeated Franklin to claim the championship. The guys advanced all the way to the Western Finals before being eliminated by Lewistown, the eventual state champions. Mike Potter wore the Metro League batting crown and Mark Tupek was awarded a gold glove for his play at second base. Matt Driehorst joined

Potter and Tupek as first team All Metro selections. Bob Ohmer, Mark Fogel and Chris Campbell were named to the All Metro second team.

The softball team grabbed second place in the Metro League and compiled a 12-5 overall record. The Lady Lakers qualified for districts but were eliminated by Meadville in a classic pitchers' duel, 3-2 in nine innings. Senior captains for this year's squad were Nikki Pacinelli and Nicole Palermo.

Track season brought additional honors to MPS student-athletes. The boys' team surprised more than a few people in District 10 by racking up 81 points on their way to their first D-10 AA track championship. Strong individual performances during the season contributed to the teams' overall success. Jason Sibley was the Metro shot and discus champ. Jason was also the district discus champion. Jovon Johnson excelled in the triple and long jumps, claiming first place in both events during the Metro meet. Levonne Rowan also claimed Metro championships in two events—the 100m and 200m dashes. "Coop" would go on to win his second gold medal in the 200m dash at the state meet. He was runner up in the 100m dash, bringing home a silver medal. Sean McCullough ran to district gold in the 1600m event and would go on to finish seventh in the same event at states. Lindsey Havko received recognition for the girls' team as she was a dual district champion in the 800m and 1600m runs. Lindsay made a strong showing at states by finishing third in the 1600m event.

This school year's achievements represent the best overall performances by MPS teams and student-athletes in school history. There was obviously much to cheer about and be proud of.

2002-03

The 2002 season was one of rebuilding for the MPS football team. The leadership of seniors Kyle Bentley, Zach Brandt and Travis Matson helped hold the team together through the tough ten game schedule. Travis Matson was selected to play in the Save-an-Eye City-County game. The Lakers can look forward to the return of many underclassmen for the 2003 season.

The girls' soccer team went undefeated in Metro League play on the way to posting a 13-3-4 season record. The girls advanced to the District 10 finals, where they lost to a very good General McLane team, 0-2. Junior Tami Krzeszewski earned first team All-Metro honors and was named to the Pennsylvania Soccer Coaches' Association All-State Team. Tami's offensive stats were indeed impressive; she scored 12 goals and had 8 assists for the season.

It was all MPS when the District 10 tennis tournament concluded. The Lady Lakers of coach Kelly Erven-Maslar (MPS class of '87) cruised through the league and district play undefeated. Marcie Cappiezzello and Stacey Batkiewicz advanced through their respective brackets to square off in the district finals. Stacey prevailed, thus claiming her second straight district title and earning a trip to the state tournament in Hershey, where she advanced to the quarterfinals. The team itself won their third straight district championship by defeating Warren in the finals. They were eliminated from the state tournament by Freedom, the eventual state champion. The District 10 doubles title was won by Alison Haener and Monica Cappozziello by virtue of a hard fought match against Cristina Schreckengost and Erin Delaney. Quite an impressive showing and a great representation for MPS!

The Mercyhurst volleyball team completed a successful season with a 13-8 record. The girls finished second in the Metro League and came in third in the District 10 tournament. Tracie Kendziora, Jenna Fitch and Melisa Rizzo were honored by being selected to the second team All-Metro.

Our boys' golf team wrapped up a successful season on the links by finishing with a 9-4 record, good enough for a second place tie in the Metro League. During the course of the season, MPS defeated McDowell for the first time in school history. Patrick Wiley was a second team All-Metro selection and he would choose to continue to cultivate his appreciation for the game of golf by enrolling in the Methodist University Professional Golf Management Program.

One of the highlights of the girls' golf season would have to be their two consecutive victories over McDowell. Senior Allie Wisinski finished second in the Metro match while junior Rachel White took third. The Lady Lakers finished the season with eleven wins.

Brett Heher paced the boys' cross country team by winning two Metro races. The fleet feet of Katie Froehlich and Cyndi Lee carried the dynamic duo to top twenty-five finishes in the district meet. The team capped their season by running in the Disney 5K invitational.

After completing a grueling Metro League schedule, the boys' basketball team found themselves facing Girard in a crucial first-round game of the District 10 tournament. Only the winner of this game would advance to second-round play and the Lakers needed to do just that if they were going to qualify for the state tournament for the third consecutive year. This hard-fought, see-saw battle came down to the last few seconds when Pat Wiley dropped in a short shot from the baseline to give the Lakers the lead with only seconds left to play. Girard managed a desperation shot from half court that fell short, giving the Lakers an opportunity to play Sharpsville in the second round. The Lakers would move on to face a clutch-shooting Eisenhower team in the finals, losing by just two points. MPS moved on to the state tournament for the third straight year, representing District 10 as the AA runner-up. Senior Mark Fogel was recognized for his solid guard play by being named to the second team All-Metro. Patrick Wiley finished his career with 1,078 points and was selected to the first team All-Metro.

The girls' varsity basketball team moved through their league schedule without a loss and also captured the District 10AAAA title on their way to a sterling 26-3 season. Two of the three losses came at the hands of a strong Oakland Catholic squad that would go on to claim the AAAA state championship. With several key players returning and plenty of depth off the bench, the players and coaches are hoping to move even deeper into the playoffs next year. Chelsea Gordon and Mashea Williams were both tabbed for first team All-Metro honors while Erin Kerner was chosen for the second team. Chelsea was further honored by being named Metro League Player of the Year and by her selection to the third team class AAAA All-State Team. She was the only sophomore on the AAAA All-State Team.

MPS diver Pat Bukowski claimed the District 10 AA diving championship. Bowler Lauren Eighmy was named Times-News Bowler of the Year as the team won their second straight Metro title and qualified for the state tournament. Lauren Eighmy and Jen Munksgard were selected to the All-Metro first team while Emily Plonski was chosen for the second team and Sarah Gdaniec earned honorable mention.

The Lakers hockey team racked up eight wins during the regular season and led by seniors Wayne Zimmer and Jon Wallin made their first ever appearance in the Ohio League playoffs!

The spring sports season found the MPS softball team claiming their first District 10 title since 1988! The Lakers earned the crown by beating a tough McDowell team 4-2 at the Lincoln Avenue field in Meadville. Laura Bednar paced the offense by knocking in three runs while pitcher Jena Fitch scattered six hits and worked out of several tough situations. As always, the defense was solid behind Jena. Third baseman Lisa Oberacker came up with a big catch of a fly ball to end a Trojan rally in the third inning. The team advanced to the state quarter finals, the farthest any softball team had gone in school history.

Led by senior captains Mark Tupek and Mark Fogel, the baseball team advanced to the District semi-finals before their season came to an end. The Laker squad also received significant contributions from first baseman Zach Brandt, pitcher Ian Hodap and catcher Mike Mackowski. A definite highlight of the season was the opportunity to play a game at PNC Park in Pittsburgh against Montour.

The track team certainly grabbed their share of time in the local spotlight during the '03 season. Lindsay Havko was once again Metro champion in the 1600m and 800m runs, setting a record for the 800m (2:19.176) in the process. Lindsay was District champ in the 1600 (5:21.28) and earned another trip to states in her junior year. Tim Majewski grabbed the Metro gold medal in the 800m (2:00.43) event and thereby earned a chance to compete at the state meet.

Crew had a very successful season, starting with competition in four regattas where they captured several medals. Once the ice left the bay, the rowers made up for lost time and prepped themselves for top notch competitions in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Ontario and U. S. Nationals in New Jersey. The Laker rowers proudly claimed the overall points trophy from our own MPS Regatta!

The boys' tennis team made the trip to Hilton Head to better prepare for the tough Metro schedule. The trip must have been beneficial as the team advanced to the District 10 AA finals and Mike Amory made an appearance in the AA singles championship match.

And so at this point we close the book on 2002-03 and look forward to continued excellence and enjoyment in the athletic area during the seasons of 2003-04. May the Mark of Pride and Spirit continue to shine proudly upon the athletes and programs of MPS!

2003-04

The 2003-04 athletic years would be the last hurrah for the Erie Metro League due to the realignment of District 10 that is set to go into effect in 2004-05.

Both the boys' and girls' golf teams ended Metro play with successful seasons. The girls' team finished their season with an impressive 15-5 record which was good enough for a second place finish in the league. The team sent three players, Rachel White, Sherry Orinko and Angela Wisniewski, to districts. Rachel was the highest MPS finisher, claiming fifth place and earning a selection to the All-Metro first team. Angela, Sherry and Hillary Mando were named Honorable Mention. The boys' team sported a 9-3 record and finished in a tie for second place in the Metro.

The team fared well in major tournaments at Warren, Franklin and MPS and was able to defeat McDowell for the first time in match play. Junior Chris Moore took third place in the District tournament and went on to States where he finished 48th. Chris was also named to first team All-Metro for his consistent play and scores.

The girls' cross country team was led by freshman Lydia Wardi who finished first in four meets. The girls finished a respectable third in the Metro standings and Lydia was chosen for All-Metro honorable mention recognition. The boys' team also claimed third place in the Metro League. The team was paced by freshman Mike Stolar who finished first in five meets. Mike and teammate Andy Nowak were named first team All-Metro. Both the boys and girls enjoyed and benefited from the opportunity to go to Orlando, Florida to compete in the Disney 5K.

The varsity football team was overall a young squad that was still able to display pride and courage in spite of a losing record. Seniors Shaun Carney, Brett Gephardt, Mike Baniszewski and Matt LeFavier helped the younger players stay motivated and focused as the team looked forward to better days ahead. Linebacker Joe Chevalier was named to the second team All-Metro defense.

The girls' tennis team continued to play at a high level by finishing their season with an outstanding 8-1 record and yet another District 10 team title. The Lakers also picked up the singles championship when Allison Haener defeated teammate Jenny Wilson for the crown. Jenny and Ashley Zuern went on to make it an MPS sweep by defeating McDowell for the District doubles title. Allison, Jenny and Ashley were honored as first team All-Metro selections.

The girls' volleyball team wrapped up their season as champions of the Iroquois Tournament and with an overall record of 9-3. Their regular season performance was good enough to earn the team an invitation to the District 10 tournament where they lost to McDowell in the first round. Seniors Megan Ferrie and Melanie Blais were tabbed for first team All-Metro honors while Jenna Fitch and Kate Pisano were named to the second team. Megan Ferrie was further honored by her selection as Times News Player of the Year!

The boys' soccer team ended the regular season campaign with a 9-10-1 record, good enough for a third place finish in the league. The season highlight was a hard-fought victory over East at MPS on Senior Night. Colin Cook was chosen for the first team All-Metro while freshman Zack Miller was named to the second team.

The girls' soccer squad battled their way through the regular season and the District 10 semis on the way to a finals match up against McDowell. The match would prove to be a classic struggle between two evenly matched teams. Unfortunately it would also prove to be a heartbreaker for the Lady Lakers and their fans as the team lost to McDowell 1-2 in overtime. The season concluded with the Lady Lakers sporting 14-7-1 record. Molly Rinn, Karla Vogt and Tami Kreszewski received first team All-Metro honors while Maggie Bowser, Lindsay Havko, Ashley Walchak, Megan Swoger and Megan Joint were named to the second team.

The winter sports season began with the attention of the city and the state focused on the MPS Lady Lakers basketball team. The attention and hype didn't bother Randy Bowers' team as they cruised into the state AAAA finals against an undefeated Harrisburg team. Before a wildly cheering throng of 6,600 rabid fans, the Lakers benefited from a huge momentum swing when Erin Kerner hit a long three pointer just before the halftime buzzer. Erin's shot gave MPS a 22-19 lead, a lead they never relinquished. The energized Lakers came out and started the second half with a 15-5 run and went on to outscore Harrisburg 35-22 in the second half. Over the course of the game, the Laker defense forced 22 turnovers on the way to a 57-41 victory. Chelsea Gordon led MPS with 20 points and 14 rebounds while Erin Kerner hit for 15 points. Mashea Williams and Megan Bielanin combined for 15 points while Katie Nick held Harrisburg's high-scoring point guard to a 4-15 shooting performance. The team finished the season with a stellar 29-1 record, a ranking of first in the state and twenty-second in the nation! Erin, Chelsea and Mashea were named to the first team All-Metro squad and Megan was named to the second team. Chelsea and Mashea were also chosen for the All-State first team and Mashea was named the Times News Player of the Year. Yet another honor was to go to Coach Randy Bowers as he was named Coach of the Year in Pennsylvania. With many players returning next season, the Lakers have to be strong contenders to return to Hershey in March of 2005 to take a shot at back-to-back state championships!

The boys' basketball team jumped out to a 4-0 start to their season by virtue of wins over Warren, Bradford, Fairview and Saegertown. Seniors Dan Badders and Zach

McCoy helped the team to Metro wins over East, Central and Villa. The players and coaches spent their Christmas holiday in Phoenix playing in the Cactus Jam Tournament. The Lakers earned a spot in the District tournament, but lost a close game to Union City in the opening round. The season ended with the Lakers sporting a 9-16 record. Dan Badders and Pat Kozik received All-Metro recognition.

Seniors Chris Cook, Christie Haibach and Pat Bukowski provided the leadership for this year's swimming and diving team. Season highlights included the girls' victory over East and Pat Bukowski's championship at the State College Diving Invitational. Christie Haibach qualified for the District 10 meet and Patrick Bukowski won another District 10 diving championship. He went on to the state meet where he finished ninth. Patrick was also named first team All Metro.

When conversation turns to bowling, MPS students and fans have to think dynasty. The keglers of Coach Jen Galla claimed their third consecutive Metro championship with a perfect 11-0 record. The girls went on to win Districts by beating McDowell 20-8 and then moved on to Philadelphia for States where they finished thirteenth in a field of 32 teams. Lauren Eighmy lived up to her pre-season billing as Bowler of the Year by rolling the team's high series of 654. High game of the year was rolled by Sarah Gdaniec when she hit a 258. Both Sarah and Lauren were selected to first team All-Metro while teammates Krissy Munksgard, Lauren Michalski, Megan Schupp and Katie Koziorski also received All-Metro recognition.

How would you describe a softball game for the District championship that goes twenty innings and lasts for more than four hours? Fans and sports writers who were there used terms such as "the game of the ages" and "the greatest softball game ever played in District 10." Two long-time rivals, Mercyhurst and McDowell came into the game with 13-5 and 15-4 records respectively. The game proved to be a pitchers duel between two outstanding performers, Jenna Fitch and Brianna Scrofano. Halle Stockton led off the bottom of the twentieth inning with a triple and then scored the winning run when Emily Sukitsch singled to center field. Jenna Fitch had struck out ten batters on the way to the win and the team's second straight District 10 AAA championship. Consensus among fans in attendance was that either team was good enough to move into the state

tournament, but it was the Laker squad that would move on to face Baldwin in the opening round. The physically and emotionally drained Lakers lost in the first round, but finished the season with a second place finish in the Metro and the District championship. Six seniors formed the strong nucleus of this team: Emily Sukitsch (first team All-Metro), Jenna Fitch (second team All-Metro), Kate Pisano (second team All-Metro), Halle Stockton (second team All-Metro), Kim Adams and Ali Buettner. Joining Emily as a first team All-Metro selection was junior Lisa Oberacker.

The MPS baseball team went through a rebuilding year in 2004. Seniors Mike Baniszewski and Jon Arrigo provided leadership and experience for the young Laker squad as they prepared for their season with a spring training trip to Stuart, Florida. The team and coaches are looking forward to next season and the opportunity to play in the realigned regions of District 10. Mike Baniszewski and AJ Kaye received All-Metro recognition for their performances during the season.

The boys' tennis team's spring training trip must have been a good one because the Lakers regular season was highlighted by convincing wins over Harborcreek, General McLane, Corry and Girard. The Lakers earned a spot in the District tournament, but lost a tough match to Warren in the semi-finals. Senior team members were Dan McCandless, Joe Schember, Nick Shaffer and Dave Schaaf.

The MPS track teams continued to make strides in the right direction by each claiming a win over East during the regular season. Tim Majewski turned in a solid individual effort by claiming the metro championship in the 800M run and qualifying for states where he took fifth. Sophomore Kristen Fournier set a new school record in the 300 hurdles by turning in a time of 50 seconds flat at districts. Tim and Kristen will join a host of returning participants who are looking forward to continued progress and success next year.

2004-05

The 2004-05 school year marked the beginning of interscholastic competition in the newly realigned regions of District 10. The leagues of the past were replaced by newly

created regions made up of schools of similar size within a given geographic area of District 10. The concept was embraced by the vast majority of the schools in the district and the fall season began the first two-year cycle of regional play in District 10.

The girls' soccer team completed one of their best seasons ever by going undefeated in regular season play and earning another trip to the District 10 finals. The team had already wrapped up the first Region 3 championship by shutting out McDowell 3-0 behind goals from Samantha Kaiser, Ashley Walchak and Tami Krzeszewski. Molly Rinn kept the Trojans off the scoreboard by turning in another outstanding performance in goal. From there it was on to the District 10 Tournament and an easy first-round victory over Central to set up a championship match against McDowell. The match was played in driving rain that was pushed by winds gusting to 40 mph. The contest was hard fought and well-played, given the inclement conditions. McDowell prevailed in OT by a score of 1-2, handing the Lady Lakers their first and only loss of the season. Once the players dried off and warmed up, the sting of the loss was overshadowed by the great season they had put together. The team had finished first in the Region and had racked up 20 wins along the way. Several players received post-season recognition for their outstanding play. Senior Tami Krzeszewski was named to the first team All-State, first team Region 3, District 10 All-Star and District 10 Player of the Year! Tami has accepted a scholarship to North Carolina State where she will continue her soccer career. Joining Tami on the All-Region first team were Molly Rinn, Ashley Walchak, Karla Vogt and Mackenzie Light. Named to the second team were Megan Swoger, Samantha Kaiser, Laura Jeffery, Lauren Ott and Maggie Bowser. Joining Tami as District 10 All-Stars were Molly Rinn and Karla Vogt. Coach Dave DiSanza and the MPS community certainly had much to be proud of at the end of this season!

The boys' soccer team certainly enjoyed the competition brought about by realignment as they finished their season with a 15-6 record, good enough for third place in Region 2. The team swept their two game regular season series with both Girard and Seneca and received an invitation to the District 10 Tournament. Senior Kyle Kendzior capped his career at MPS by being named to the first team All-Region and the District 10 All-Star team. Sophomore Zack Miller joined Kyle on the All-Region team.

Todd Kinnear's three yard touchdown run proved to be the difference in the Lakers win over Maplewood. Joe Chevalier had scored earlier on a 25 yard pass play from Craig Baniszewski while Adam Macrino was busy rushing for 192 yards. The final score of 16-8 gave Coach Matt Morgan his first win and turned the corner toward bigger and better things to come for MPS football. Over the course of the season, the team played close games against Girard, Seneca and Union City and they hope to be on the other side of these scores next season. Senior linebacker Joe Chavelier was named to the second team All-Region 4 defense. With a solid nucleus returning and several younger players ready to contribute, this team is capable of really making some noise next season!

Girls' tennis, to no one's surprise, had yet another championship season. The girls compiled 13-1 record on their way to Region 2 and District 10 championships. The team qualified for the State Tournament, where they finished third. Allison Haener won the District 10 AA championship and made her third trip to Hershey. Allison was also named Region 2 and District 10 Player of the Year. She has accepted an offer from Indianapolis so she will continue her tennis career there for the next four years. Candace Tomczak and Nicole Winarski joined Allison as District 10 All-Stars. Candace and Nicole were named first team doubles for the Region 2 All-Stars while Emily Sanner and Griffin Currie were selected as second team doubles. Candace and Nicole moved through the state brackets all the way to the doubles semi-finals.

While the girls' cross-country team found the going to be tough this season, the boys team raced their way to a perfect 6-0 regular season. The guys claimed victories over both McDowell and Prep on their way to the Region 6 championship. Lakers Tim Majewski, Andy Nowak, Mike Stolar and Ben Havko earned spots on the Region's first team All-Star squad and qualified for States where Mike Stolar was the school's top finisher in tenth place.

The MPS volleyball team concluded their season with a 7-5 region record, good for third place in Region 4, and an overall record of 8-10. The ladies finished their season on a high note with wins over East and Strong Vincent. Perhaps the most exciting moment

of the season occurred during the Villa match on October 5. Trailing by six points in the final game, the Lakers scored the last eight points to win the game and the match! Alexis Jones and Megan Mitchell were named to the first team Region 4 All-Stars while Karin Waskiewicz and Amanda Northrup made second team. The team finished in third place in Region 4.

The girls' golf team grabbed second place in Region 2 and posted an overall record of 13-4. The teams' scores at Districts were good enough to earn them a second place finish. The regular season included wins over McDowell, Warren and North East. Sherry Orinko was named a Region 2 second team All-Star.

The MPS boys' golf team checked in with a 9-5 record in match play, earning a third place finish in Region 5. The regular season included two team wins over both Harborcreek and Villa and an individual championship for senior Chris Moore in the Franklin tournament. The Lakers finished a respectable fourth at Districts and Chris Moore was named to first team All-Region and first team All-District 10 All-Stars.

Before the winter sports season even began, basketball fans across the Commonwealth knew the MPS Lady Lakers had the potential to once again bring home the gold from Chocolate Town. The *Times News* Preseason Starting Five included three MPS players—Chelsea Gordon, Erin Kerner and Preseason District 10 Player of the Year Mashea Williams. Coach Randy Bowers squad cruised through the regular season with a stellar 21-3 record that included the championship of the Cactus Jam Tournament in Phoenix. The Lakers found themselves matched against Villa in the District 10 finals and once again MPS prevailed and brought home yet another District 10 title. The girls survived scares from Hopewell and Moon in the State Tournament and found themselves matched up against St. Basil in the championship game. The Lakers used their vaunted defense and potent running game to take control of the game in the third quarter, outscoring St. Basil 18-4. From there the Lakers cruised to a 57-33 win and a second consecutive State Championship. Williams, Gordon and Kerner all scored in double figures and Sarah White scored nine points on three three-pointers while Kristen Fournier contributed four points and six rebounds. The team ended the season with a 28-3 record and became the first Erie team to win back-to-back state championships!

Chelsea Gordon was named State AAA Player of the Year and Coach Randy Bowers was once again named Coach of the Year, this time in the AAA classification. Both Chelsea and Mashea earned another selection to First Team All-State while Erin Kerner was named to the Third Team. After taking the state by storm, honors continued to pile up for the Lady Lakers back home in District 10. Both Mashea and Chelsea were named to the *Times News* All-District Team while Erin Kerner joined them on the Region 4 First Team All-Stars. College scouts were also impressed with the three 1,000 point scorers and each of them accepted Division One scholarships. Erin chose to continue her career at Quinnipiac, Chelsea will be playing for Illinois and Mashea will be wearing the blue and white of Penn State. MPS and Erie sports fans are certainly looking forward to following their careers at the next level.

The boys' basketball team put together a solid 17-8 season that included two wins each over Girard, Villa and Fairview. The Lakers also had a huge win over East High on December 23 at East. Coach Pat Flaherty's team was invited to the prestigious Chevy Shootout where they went 1-1, beating Bishop Guilfoyle 60-51 in the first round. The guys played every regional opponent tough and their third place finish was good enough to earn an invitation to the District 10 Tournament, where they came up short against Union City in the first round. Seniors Pat Kozik and Chris Moore were chosen for Region 2 second team All-Star honors.

The MPS bowlers capped another outstanding season with yet another Metro championship. (Bowling remains under the jurisdiction of the Metro League.) The Lady Lakers edged McDowell 15-13 in the championship match to claim the title. Senior Lauren Eighmy led the way with a 591 series while freshman Samantha Mikowski rolled a 558. No fewer than seven MPS bowlers were named to All-Metro teams. Lauren Eighmy earned first team recognition and was named Player of the Year. Lauren had the leagues high average (178.5), high series (625) and high game (256). Also repeating on the first team was senior Sarah Gdaniec. Sam Mikowski joined her teammates on the first team. Krissy Munksgard and Megan Schupp were tabbed for second team honors and Lauren Michalski received honorable mention. The five seniors, Lauren, Sarah, Megan, Krissy and Lauren ended their high school bowling

careers having won four straight Metro League championships. Not many athletes can make that claim!

The MPS track team set the pace for a successful spring season by claiming two gold and two silver medals at the District Ten meet. In the boys' AA meet, Tim Majewski won the 800m run with a time of 1:55.89. His finish was good enough to earn Tim a trip to the state meet. In girls' AAA, Mashea Williams won the 100m dash with a time of 12.94 seconds. Maggie Bowser claimed the silver in the same event with a time of 13.07. In the 400m run, Lauren Ott claimed another silver medal for MPS with a time of 1:02.82, just 1 second behind the winner.

When the end-of-season honors were announced, Tim Majewski was named a District 10 All Star for the 800m run. First team Region 5 All Stars included Mashea Williams for the 100m dash, Lauren Sulecki for shot put, Lauren Ott, Maggie Bowser, Laura Jeffery and Mashea Williams for the 400m relay. Second team Region 5 honors went to Lauren Ott (400m), Rachel Buckley (1600m) and Lauren Sulecki (discus).

The baseball team posted a 13-7 overall record, good enough to finish in a tie in Region 3 and a trip to the District 10 Tournament. The Lakers swept regional opponents Iroquois, Girard and Seneca but lost to Sharon in a 10-12 slugfest in the first round of the District 10 Tournament. Mike Mackowski (third base), AJ Kaye (catcher), and Greg Stolar (second base) were selected to the Region 3 All Star Team.

Our Lady Lakers finished the softball season with a 7-14 overall record; good enough for a second place finish in both Region 6 and District 10. The team finished the regular season with five consecutive wins, beating McLane, McDowell, Warren, East and Villa. The momentum wasn't quite enough to get past McDowell in the District championship game as the Ladies lost to the Trojans 0-3, giving up all three runs in one inning. Alexis Jones was named a first team All Region outfielder while Lisa Oberacker and Tiffany Joyce were selected for second team honors at shortstop and pitcher respectively.

The boys' tennis team found the going tough in Region 2. The guys finished with a 2-9 record that included a 5-0 shutout of Girard. Senior Mike Amory capped his career by advancing to the District 10 semi-final round.

Having completed the first year of regional play in the district, it would be fair to say the Laker teams enjoyed the opportunity to begin to build athletic relationships with some new schools as well as continuing to compete with some old rivals. The teams and coaches are looking forward to continued and even greater success during the second year of the cycle. Following the 2005-06 seasons, the regions will be reorganized based on schools reported enrollment figures.

2005-06

The girl's tennis team continued their tradition of excellence under head coach Kelly Maslar during the second season of regional play in District 10. The young Lakers, led by D-10 Player Of The Year Stephanie Novakowski, cruised to a region championship and a second straight District team title. In the D-10 finals, Mercyhurst shutout Wilmington 5-0 to claim the crown.

The D-10 singles championship match was all MPS as Stephanie Novakowski and Rebecca Haener squared off for the title. In the end, Stephanie (a sophomore) prevailed over Rebecca (a freshman) to claim the championship. Her victory earned Stephanie a spot in the PIAA State Tournament and recognition as the D-10 Player Of The Year!

On the heels of their team title in D-10, the Lakers moved into the State Tournament, opening play with a 3-2 victory over Sewickley in the first round. Christy Calvert (singles), Candace Tomczak (doubles), Emily Sanner and Griffin Currie (doubles) were victorious in their matches. Next up was a quarter-final match against Allentown Central Catholic, which the Lakers won 4-1 on the strength of victories from Rebecca Haener, Christy Calvert, Nicole Winarski and Candace Tomczak, Emily Sanner and Griffin Currie. Their great run came to an end in the semi-final round by virtue of a 1-4 loss to

eventual champ Harrinton. The Lakers ended yet another stellar season as the third place team in the entire state!

At season's end, Rebecca Haener joined Stephanie on the All District 10 singles team while Christy Calvert earned a spot on the second team.

The MPS football squad turned in one of their best efforts this season, finishing with a 6-4 overall record. The Lakers featured a punishing running game coupled with an accurate passing attack to play every opponent in Region 4 tough. Three of the 4 region losses (North East, Harborcreek and Northwestern) came by a combined total of 5 points. Jayson Nickson rushed for 1,277 yards for the season to break the previous school record of 1,106 set by Curtis Jones in 1993. Also contributing to the strong rushing game were Buddy O'Leary (853 yards) and Sam Kinnear (575 yards). The passing attack was spearheaded by the strong and accurate passing of Jake Agresti, the number 1 ranked QB in District 10. Jake wound up the season with a QB ranking of 137.96. Jake threw for 641 yards and 6 touchdowns. Leading receiver for the Lakers was Terrance McLaren who had 13 catches, good for 262 yards and 4 TDs.

Honored as All Region 4 players at season's end were Hank Bink (first team offense) and Jayson Nickson (first team defense), Jake Agresti, Andy Kunik and Terrance McLaren (second team offense) and Eric Komar and Matt Hawryliw (second team defense). This team returns a solid nucleus for the 2006-07 season and they will undoubtedly be looking to build on the success and momentum of 2005-06.

The MPS girls' soccer team continued their winning ways in '05 by compiling a 16-4 regular season record and earning another invitation to post-season play. During the regular season, the Lady Lakers scored a whopping 146 goals while giving up a paltry 15. The team faced off against General McLane in the first round of the District 10 tournament and walked away with a 5-0 win and the right to play McDowell in the finals. In a hard-fought match, the Lakers came up just short, losing 2-3 in overtime, ending their season with a 17-5 overall record and an Honorable Mention in the State Rankings. Five members of this squad were named to the All Region3 Second Team: Sam Kaiser, Courey Schaetzle, Laura Jeffery, Maggie Bowser and Taylor Stetson.

Sam Kaiser was further honored by being selected to the Pennsylvania All-State Team and the Female East Regional All-American Team.

The boys' soccer team put together a great regular season, finishing at 10-0-0, good enough to claim the Region 2 championship. During their run to the championship, the Lakers swept Fairview, Villa, Girard, Iroquois and Eisenhower. In the first round of the District 10 Tournament, the Lakers ran into some tough sailing as they opened up against Eisenhower. The Lakers dropped a 3-4 decision in a well-played and hard-fought match and were eliminated from further play. Based on their strong performance during the regular season, several players were chosen for post-season honors. Named First Team All-Region were Kyle Kozik, Ryan Grove, Zack Miller, Shawn Walsh and Zack Hopkins. Paul Sykes and Brian Badders were named to the Region 2 Second Team. Kyle Kozik was further honored by being named to the All-District 10 Team. Coach Pedro Arguez's team will have a tough act to follow next year, but he will undoubtedly have his squad well-prepared for the task!

The girls' volleyball team's season was highlighted by two wins over rival Villa Maria. The girls ended region play with an 8-4 record, good enough for third place in Region 4, and finished with an 8-8 overall record. Alexis Jones and Karin Waskiewicz were named First Team All-Region while Jenny Hanson was selected to the Second Team.

Cross country coach Helen Gruneisen started the season with boys' and girls' squads that were relatively young and inexperienced. However, over the course of the season, both teams exhibited considerable growth and improvement. The boys' team finished third in Region 6 behind McDowell and Prep. Mike Stolar won both the Region and District 10 races and was the first male MPS runner to be crowned District 10 champion! Mike went on to the State Meet where he finished twentieth, earning a medal and All-State honors. At season's end, Mike was named District 10 Runner Of The Year, a All-District 10 All-Star and a First Team Region 6 All-Star. Teammate Mark Carlucci and brother Nick Stolar were selected to the Region 6 Second Team. This team returns a strong nucleus next year and should once again be a strong contender in both Region 6 and District 10.

The girls' team was also fairly young, relying heavily on freshman Sarah Grove and junior Rachel Buckley. The entire squad had a solid season and showed great improvement from the beginning to the conclusion. Sarah was the top-finisher for the Lakers at both the Region and District championships, finishing third in the Region and eighth in the District. Her finish at districts was good enough to earn a trip to the State Meet, the first female from MPS to do so in the past eight years. Sarah was named a Region 6 First Team All-Star while Rachel was chosen for the Second Team. Both runners will be back next year to help the team reach for greater heights.

The MPS golf teams hit the links in late August hoping to continue the consistent play our linksters have been known for. The girls' season was highlighted by two wins over Northeast and a split with McDowell. The Lady Lakers record of 8-6 gave them a winning record and a third place finish in Region 1. Angela Wisniewski was named a First Team Region 1 All-Star.

The boys finished their season with a 9-9 record that was good enough for third place in Region 5. Their season featured a two match sweep of Villa and a single match win over Northeast. With only one senior on the squad, the Lakers should have plenty of experience in the lineup next year.

Coach Patrick Flaherty's basketball team completed regular season play with a third place finish in Region 5. But there was lots of basketball left to be played as the District 10 tournament rolled around. The boys were matched against Sharpville in a play-in tournament game. This matchup proved to be no problem for the Lakers as they cruised to a 53-26 victory and moved on to beat Lakeview 52-37. In the semi-finals, the Lakers faced Fairview and emerged victorious by a 66-62 score. The win earned MPS a spot in the finals against North East, a team that had beat the Lakers twice during the regular season. It was far from smooth sailing for the Lakers as they found themselves down by a score of 34-17 in the second half. The team refused to give up and fought their way back into the contest by controlling the high-powered Picker offense over the last 8 minutes. David Ritchie then tied the game at 37 with a driving layup to force overtime. During the extra session, Ritchie converted 5 of 6 free throws and the Lakers claimed a hard-fought come-from-behind victory and the District 10 AA championship.

David led the MPS offense with 16 points and got plenty of help from teammates Bobby McFadden and Brandon Stewart. The title was the second for the Laker guys since 2002. The team then moved into the State Tournament but lost in the first round 42-56 to a very talented Jeanette team. At the season's end, the team had posted a 21-8 record and Bobby McFadden and Brandon Stewart were selected to the All-Region 5 second team.

The girls' basketball team lost six seniors to graduation, but still managed to finish their season with a winning record of 13-12. Their win total included impressive victories over McDowell (68-59) and General McLane (62-53). The Lady Lakers, led by captains Anne Ryan, Kristen Fournier and Kristen Sienicki finished in second place in their region and qualified for the District 10 tournament. The team put forth a great effort but came up short, losing to Slippery Rock 35-43. Kristen Fournier was chosen for first team All-Region while Anne Ryan earned second team honors. Kristen will be continuing here basketball career next year at West Virginia Wesleyan College.

The MPS swim team re-surfaced during 2005-06 after a one year hiatus. First-year coach Paula Allshouse directed the boys to a 2-3 record and the girls to a 3-4 season. The boys' and girls' seasons were highlighted by wins over both Central and East. Captains Matt Mackowski, Steve Wittuck and Lauren Pacinelli provided strong leadership and helped to lay a firm foundation for next season as the program continues to grow.

The girls' bowling team, led by senior Karla Vogt, finished in third place in the Metro League with a 6-4 record. That is certainly a respectable record considering the squad lost five seniors to graduation. The team secured all six wins at the expense of Villa, Strong Vincent and East. Season's end saw three bowlers earn All-Metro recognition: Samantha Mikowski, first team; Jullie Malinowski, second team and Erica Cipriani, honorable mention.

As winter eased its icy grip on northwest Pennsylvania, spring sports moved into full swing at MPS and the baseball and softball teams were hot, hot, hot! The baseball team, behind the sliders and heaters of Chris Hay and Thurman Schaetzle cruised to 15-3 regular season record, good enough to earn the Lakers a share in the three way

tie for the region 3 championship with North East and Northwestern. The regular season featured two wins over both Villa and Northwestern as Chris and Thurman finished with microscopic ERAs of 0.36 and 1.52 respectively and batted over .300 for the season. The District 10 tournament's first round opponent was Sharon High School. In a classic pitchers' duel, the Lakers squeaked past the Tigers by a score of 2-1. Both teams could muster only four hits, but the Lakers made theirs count. Sharon's only run was unearned and the Lakers moved into the semis against Northwestern, a team they had beaten twice during the regular season. This time, however the Wildcats would not be denied as they prevailed by a 6-4 score. Chris Hay threw a strong game, striking out seven and not allowing a single walk, but unfortunately the season came to an end with the Lakers sporting an impressive 17-4 record. End-of-season honors went to Chris Hay (D-10 first team, Harry Farnbaugh Pitcher of the Year) and Terrance McLaren (Region 3 second team OF).

The softball team also found their place in the sun by finishing in second place in Region 6 and earning a spot in the District finals. The regular season featured victories over General McLane, Strong Vincent, Villa and McDowell and over the course of the season, Tiffany Joyce mixed her pitches effectively and kept opposing batters guessing how best to solve her. Offensive power came from the bats of Alexis Jones, who hit over .300 for the season and Courey Schaezel. Unfortunately, the District 10 championship game proved to be a tough one for the Lakers as the Trojans prevailed by a 3-1 score. While the loss was certainly difficult to accept, the team's spirits were lifted by the fact that the Lakers earned six spots on the All-Region 6 teams. Selected to the first team were catcher Courtney Schwenk, 1st base Angela Wisniewski, 3rd base Julia Cline, outfielder Alexis Jones and pitcher Tiffany Joyce. Outfielder Breezy Slaney was chosen for second team recognition.

The boys' tennis team completed their season with a 4-6 overall record. The guys were led by seniors Adam Soety, Jeff Cline and Rob Barger, who was hobbled somewhat with a nagging injury. Regular season wins included victories over Girard, Harborcreek and General McLane.

The Laker track teams were able to bask in more than the balmy spring sunshine thanks to the glory generated by several outstanding performances turned in at both the

District and State levels. Both squads had solid regular seasons; the boys picking up 4 wins, the girls 5. During this part of the season, Brandon Stewart established a new school record in the triple jump by springing 44'4". As the District meets began, the Lakers expected high level performances from several team members and they certainly delivered. Maggie Bowser took a first in the 100m dash with a time of 12.66 and thus qualified for States, the only female from District to make it in that particular event. Mike Stolar also took a first in the 3200m run with a time of 9:36.59. Ben Havko took a second in the 800m by clocking a time of 2:02.01, and a third in the 1600 by running a 4:38.05. Brandon Stewart grabbed fourth in the high jump by clearing 6'2", and placed second in the triple jump by soaring 42'10 1/2". The three young men earned the right to join Maggie at the State meet. At States, Brandon took a sixth in the triple by jumping 43'8". Mike Stolar the bronze medal by running the 3200 in 9:29.60. When the Region 5 all-star selections were announced, the Lakers had a strong representation. Maggie Bowser was a first team choice for the 100m and the Laker 400m relay team of Kelly Nowacinski, Sarah Smicker, Lauren Ott and Maggie Bowser was also chosen for the same honor. Ben Havko's time in the 1600 earned him a first team selection while Mike Stolar was awarded second team for his performances in both the 3200 and 1600. Brandon Stewart joined the All-Star club by earning a spot on the second team for his strong showing in the high jump.

The rowing season was highlighted by several outstanding performances during the season. At the Ridley Sprints, the men's varsity 4 took a first while the men's junior varsity 4 raced to a second place finish. More than one hundred and sixty teams competed at the Canadian National Championships and MPS boats distinguished themselves by turning in very respectable performances. The men's varsity 4 advanced all the way to the semi-finals and just missed out on the opportunity to row in the finals. The women's mid-weight 8 also made it all the way to the semis. At the annual Mother's Day Regatta, the women's mid-weight 8 took third overall while the men's JV 4 claimed 6th place in their division. The men's varsity battled their way to the semi-finals and just missed the finals by 3 seconds. At the Head of the Ohio, Tom Draskovic took first place in the men's novice single.

Which was the best overall sports season in MPS history? Based on the overall success of the fall programs, a strong argument could certainly be made for the 2006 fall season. The Laker football squad got it all going by finishing the season undefeated (10-0) by beating Cambridge Springs 27-6 in a blinding snowstorm at Mercyhurst College. The strong running game, paced by Jayson Nickson (157 yards), Buddy O'Leary (109 yards) and Sam Kinnear (77 yards) and tough blocking by the offensive line brought the Lakers the Region 2 championship. Not to be overlooked was the MPS defense that registered six shutouts over the course of the season. The Lakers kept the momentum going into the first round of the District 10 tournament by shutting out Lakeview 39-0. Craig Baniszewski threw for 80 yards while Kinnear (122), O'Leary (104) and Nickson (101) rushed for a combined 327 yards. Unfortunately, the Lakers, ranked 10th in the state, lost a heartbreaker to Sharpsville in the second round. The game wasn't decided until the second overtime period as the Lakers fell by a 20-17 score. The team had completed the best football season in school history, won a region championship, won the school's first football playoff game and was ranked 10th in the state at the end of the regular season. Jayson Nickson ended his high school football career as the school's all-time single season rushing leader and was chosen Region 2 Player of the Year and was selected to the All-State Second Team. Named to the Region 2 First Team Defense were Jason Dorich, Sam Kinnear and Jayson Nickson. Named to the First Team Offense were Andy Kunik and Jayson Nickson. Andy Kunik was selected to the Second Team Defense while Buddy O'Leary, Jason Dorich and Blake Huntsman made Second Team Offense. This team really set the bar high for future Laker gridders.

Speaking of high levels of performance, the MPS girls' tennis team continued their tradition of excellence by finishing the regular season with a perfect 12-0 record and yet another Region championship. In fact, the Lakers were so dominant that they shutout eleven opponents during the regular season and only lost one set to Fairview. The doubles team of Nicole and Melissa Winarski won every doubles match they played during the regular season. The Lakers dominance continued through the District 10 tournament as they claimed the individual, doubles and team championship. Stephanie Novakowski won her second consecutive individual district crown by defeating

teammate Rebecca Haener, 6-2, 6-4 and thus qualified for the state tournament where she lost in the first round. Haener teamed with Griffin Currie to win the D-10 doubles championship by defeating Sharon 6-1, 6-3. Then it was on to states for the Lakers where the team advanced to the state quarter finals for the third straight year. The team's season came to an end here at the hands of Quaker Valley by a 3-2 score. However, the season wasn't over for the MPS doubles team of Rebecca Haener and Griffin Currie. Rebecca and Griffin posted tournament victories over Bedford (6-3, 6-0), Trinity (6-0, 6-1) and Quaker Valley (6-2, 6-1) and earned the right to play Harriton in the finals. After splitting the first two sets, it all came down to the decisive third set. The girls found themselves down 2-5 but staged an amazing rally to claim the gold medals which they proudly displayed at the school's annual open house. According to coach Kelly Maslar, Rebecca and Griffin "displayed great heart and determination to come from behind and win the championship". In the midst of all this good news there is a bit of bad news to report to future opponents—this dynamic duo will be back playing together next year for another season of hard-fought competition! As you might imagine, there were plenty of honors to be handed out at the season's completion. Stephanie Novakowski was named first team All-Region, Region 2 player of the year and District 10 player of the year. First team All-Region honors also went to Nicole and Melissa Winarski who were also named to the All District 10 team for doubles. Joining them on the All District team was Rebecca Haener for singles.

Second team All Region singles players were Rebecca Haener and Griffin Currie.

The boys' and girls' cross country teams both finished their seasons with winning records; the girls with a 4-3 dual meet record while the boys checked in with a perfect 6-0 mark and a region championship. At the District 10 meet, the girls finished 25th and the boys claimed 5th. Senior Mike Stolar won his second consecutive championship by blazing the course in a time of 17:11, a full 42 seconds ahead of the second place runner. Mike received plenty of support from brother Nick who finished 14th (18:20) and Mark Carlucci who grabbed 20th in a time of 18:34. At the state meet in Hershey, Mike Stolar finished his high school cross country career with a top 10 finish, taking 5th in the state with a time of 16:09. Junior Mark Carlucci ran a 17:42, good for 127th while Nick Stolar's time of 18:02 was good enough for 174th. At the end of this very successful season, Sarah Grove was selected to the Region 6 first team as were Mike Stolar and

Mark Carlucci. Mike Stolar was also named Region 6 and District 10 Runner of the Year!

The girls' golf team finished 2nd in region play and 4th in the district. Junior Kim Wisniewski was named to the Region 1 second team. The boys team finished with a 6-3 record, including a match play win over McDowell. The guys went on to finish 4th in the District 10 tournament.

The girls' volleyball team finished their season with a 9-8 overall record, going 8-6 in the region—good enough for 4th place. The season was highlighted by wins over Franklin and two wins over Villa. At season's end, Senior Jenny Hanson was named first team All-Region.

The MPS girls' soccer squad would also make a significant contribution to the overall success of the fall season. The Lady Lakers finished their season with an impressive 19-1 record, going 15-1 in region play. The only loss of the regular season came at the hands of McDowell 2-1, a loss the Lakers would later avenge. Throughout the regular season the Laker defense and the goal keeping of Courey Schaetzle only allowed opponents a miserly seven goals. In the district 10 finals, the Lakers faced McDowell, having split with the Trojans during the regular season. The finals match would be all Lakers as MPS cruised to the championship by a 4-0 score. The goals came from Lauren Ott, Taylor Stetson, Samantha Kaiser and Sara Livingston as Courey Schaetzle delivered yet another shutout between the pipes. The championship was the first for coach Dave DiSanza and the first for the Lady Lakers since 1996. Then it was on to the state tournament where the Lakers opened with a convincing 4-0 shutout win over Hopewell. Unfortunately, the speed of Moon Township proved to be too much for the Lakers as they bowed out in the second round by a 3-0 score. The season ended with the squad sporting a 22-2 record, a Region 3 championship and a District 10 title. Individual recognition went to many team members following this very successful season. Named to the All-Region team were: Courey Schaetzle (keeper), Lauren Ott (offense), Taylor Stetson (offense), Maggie Bowser (defense), Alena Costello (defense) and Lindsay Moore (defense). Sam Kaiser was named Region 3 Player of the Year as well as District 10 Player of the Year. Other players receiving All-District recognition

were Maggie Bowser (defense) and Courey Schaetzle (keeper). Lauren Ott, Samantha Kaiser and Maggie Bowser would all continue the soccer careers at the collegiate, Lauren and Sam at Duquesne, Maggie at Gannon.

Not to be outdone by the girls, the boys' soccer team also contributed their fair share to the overall success story of the fall season. The hard-fought regular season brought a Region 2 co-championship to MPS as the team shared the title with North East, both teams sporting a 14-2-0 record. When the District 10 tournament rolled around, the Lakers began by shutting out first round opponent Slippery Rock followed by a 3-1 victory over Warren. By virtue of these two victories, the Lakers earned a trip to the district finals against region rival North East. Unfortunately the guys found themselves on the short end of a 4-2 score but their second place finish in the district was good enough to earn them a spot in the state tournament against South Park, the number one team from District 7. The Lakers played well in the match but South Park prevailed 1-0 to bring the season to a close. MPS finished with a 17-5 record that included an eleven game win streak and a victory over Cathedral Prep. Seniors Kyle Kozik (offense) and Shawn Walsh (defense) were selected to the Region 2 first team while Fredrico Ferraz (offense) was selected to the second team. Both Kyle and Shawn were named to the All-District 10 squad while Kyle was further honored as Region 6 Player of the Year. Kyle capped his high school soccer career by being named to the PA Soccer Coaches Association All-State team for a second consecutive year.

When the winter season rolled around the MPS hoopsters were eager and ready to go in their respective regions. The boy's team started out by taking first place in the Slippery Rock tip-off tournament by defeating Woodland Hills (62-44) and Slippery Rock (62-42). The guys followed their first place tournament finish with an impressive 54-51 win over quad A McDowell. Then came a nail-biting, buzzer-beater against Corry. Corey Husband's layup off a steal gave the Lakers the dramatic win by a 56-54 score. Over the course of the season, the Lakers showed they were capable of winning the close ones when they defeated Bradford (46-45) in OT and Bishop Guillfoyle (46-42). Their 16 win season also featured two wins over rival Villa Maria. Unfortunately there were tough losses to Fairview and Girard that kept our team behind them in the standings. After taking third place in Region 3, the Lakers squared off against Farrell in

the District 10 quarterfinals. The team played with great pride and determination but fell short of a victory by a 58-52 score. The guys, paced by senior co-captains Mike Stolar and Thurman Schaetzle, and the strong inside presence of junior Sam Hvezda, finished their season with a 16-9 record. Post-season recognition went to junior Sam Hvezda as he was named a Region 2 first team All-Star and Region 3 co-player of the year.

The MPS Lady Lakers, under first-year head coach Dan Perfetto, won the Region 4 championship with a perfect 14-0 league mark. The team began their season by winning the Butler tip-off tournament with wins over Gateway and Butler. The girls promptly claimed their third win of the season by besting 4A rival McDowell 57-41. MPS also claimed the championship trophy in the Indiana Holiday Tournament and defeated Slippery Rock 59-41 before region play began. During the regional season the Lady Lakers swept General McLane by scores of 49-43 and 52-45. In the opening round of the District tournament, the region champs cruised by Hickory 59-37 as Kelly Nowacinski, Lindsay Moore and Corey Schaetzle led the scoring attack with 20, 12 and 10 points respectively. This set up a second

round matchup between the Lakers and Slippery Rock at Slippery Rock University. In this game, a healthy Jence Rhoads made the difference as the Rockets topped the Lakers by a 51-40 score. The Lakers once again had balanced scoring from Kelly Nowacinski (13 points), Corey Schaetzle(12) and Kirsten Olowinski (12). The season ended with a 50-47 loss to region rival General McLane in the District 10 consolation game, 50-47. Although the team just missed getting into the state tournament, their Region 4 championship, their state ranking of 6th during the season and a 21-3 overall record were certainly indicators of a successful season. All-Region honors went to Kelly Nowacinski (first team), Kirsten Olowinski (first team) and Lindsay Moore (second team).

Our bowling team compiled a 6-4 league mark, good enough for third place. Since this squad did not have any seniors on the roster, coach Jen Galla viewed the season as an opportunity for these athletes to “grow and come together” in anticipation of the 2007-08 season. In spite of their youth, our keglers were able to post two wins over rival Villa and place two players on the All-Star team. Samantha Mikowski led the team with a 160 average and was chosen as a first team all-star while Julie Malinowski followed with a 155 average and selection to the second team. With both Samantha and Julie

returning next year along with a talented group of emerging bowlers, next season should be fun to follow.

The MPS swimmers posted a combined record of 11-22 which represented a marked improvement over last season's mark. The boys finished with 5 wins including victories over Girard (2x), East, Union City and Central. The girls 6 wins included victories over Girard (2x), Union City (2x), General McLane and East. The boys' and girls' teams combined to send 11 swimmers to the District 10 meet where junior Matt Mackowski placed fifth in the 200 IM and freshman Maria Tarbell took fifth in the 200M freestyle. Sophomore Tess Frawley received All-Region 2 second team recognition for her time in the 100M backstroke. Over the course of the season the many talented underclassmen benefitted from the capable senior leadership of Steve Wittuck, Elizabeth Fisher and Maggie Bowser and next season should also be characterized by continued improvement for this program!

The arrival of spring to NW Pennsylvania meant the baseball fields, softball diamonds and local tracks were nearly clear of snow and the winter ice was practically off the bay. Well, almost! Spring wasn't quite in the air as the baseball team began the season by winning six of their first seven games. The guys made it through their regional schedule with a record of 11-2, the only setbacks coming at the hands of Villa Maria. During the regular season, MPS won independent games against both General McLane (12-6) and Cathedral Prep (4-2). Their second place finish in Region 3 was good enough to earn the Lakers a spot in the District tournament where they once again faced Villa Maria. The Lakers made it close but fell to Villa in extra innings by a 3-2 score in a well-played game. The team finished up with a glossy 17-4 record and had several players who were among the statistical leaders in the District. Swinging the heavy lumber were Jason Henry (.382), Ethan Magoc (.345), Thurman Schaezle (.310) and John Torres (.310). The pitching staff was anchored by the bionic arm of Shane Hodapp who finished the year with a 1.45 ERA.

Softball placed a very young team on the field, led by their only senior, catcher Courtney Schwenk. The girls went 4-6 in region play and 6-8 overall. Their region record included two wins against General McLane and was good enough for a 4th place finish

but not quite good enough to make the playoffs. During the season, Kristen Seburnia (.491), Courtney Schwenk (.490) and Autumn Anderson (.426) swung the heavy metal against opposing pitchers while pitcher Chelsea Graml mowed down opposing batters and posted a 1.37 ERA. The Region 5 second team included catcher Courtney Schwenk, second baseman Shannon Zoltowski and pitcher Chelsea Graml. With many underclassmen returning, the Lady Lakers are setting their sights on returning to the District 10 tournament next season.

During the early weeks of the crew season the rowers were hampered by poor weather conditions and the resulting lack of time on the water. That lack of water time was evident as the Lakers began the season at the Ohio Governor's Cup where only the lightweight girls boat was at a competitive level, finishing a solid third. By early May the team had shown considerable improvement and times were steadily dropping. At the Pittsburgh Sprints the varsity boys placed first as did the women's lightweight 8. The Mother's Day regatta in St. Catharines, Ontario saw MPS competing against more than fifty-five teams and placing 8 of our 9 boats in the finals. The lightweight women placed 2nd and the varsity men placed 3rd. This overall showing was the best MPS had ever accomplished at a race in Canada. When it came time for the annual MPS regatta, the Lakers were determined to defend their home waters and they certainly did just that—winning the men's and women's trophies as well as the overall championship and trophy! As the races began, conditions were tough to say the least. Race officials shortened the course from 1,500M to 1,000M to avoid having to cancel the event. The Laker rowers rose to the occasion and overcame both the elements and the competition. Solid finishes ruled the day with highlights coming in the form of wins from the girls' lightweight 8, the boys' novice 4, the boys' varsity 4, the boys' novice 8 and the boys' varsity 8. When the final results were tabulated, the girls' finished 10 points ahead of Ridley, their closest competitors, while the boys finished 6 points ahead of Mount Lebanon. The boys also excelled at the Ridley Sprints where they took first for the second consecutive year. From there it was on to Nationals where our rowers turned the best performance MPS has ever had at this prestigious event. Competing against 150 teams from all over North America, most of the MPS crews advanced to the finals while the boys' and girls' varsity boats just missed the finals by scant inches. The girls' mid weight placed 6th overall and the girls' varsity placed 4th as did the girls' junior

lightweight 4. This year's teams were led by captains Tom Draskovic and Michaleana Lancaster.

The boys' and girls' track teams finished 1-5 and 2-4 respectively in dual meets but several outstanding individual performances were turned in during the regular and post-seasons. Senior Mike Stolar earned first team Region 5 recognition in the 1600M and 3200M runs. Junior Maggie Bowser was first team Region 5 in the 100M dash and second team in the 200m event. The MPS 400M relay team, consisting of Kelly Nowacinski, Maggie Bowser, Kristen Elia and Micala Migneault, also earned second team recognition. In the District 10 meet, Mike Stolar continued to shine by winning both the 1600M (4:26.84) and 3200M (9:45.84) runs, and qualified for states in both events. Mike concentrated on the 1600M run and states and the strategy paid off as he finished second and brought home the silver medal. Maggie Bowser sprinted to the gold in the 100M dash (13.10) and also qualified for the state meet. In addition to the All-Region honors already mentioned, Mike earned All-District recognition in the 1600M event.

With 2006-07 seasons in the books, the Lakers look to 2007-08 in hopes of doing just as well or even better!

2007-08

Sports fans know it is a daunting task to follow up an undefeated regular season with another successful season. The MP's football team accepted that challenge and responded with Laker pride and spirit and ended their regular season with another 10-0 record. That feat was the team's third undefeated season in the past seven years. The region schedule ended with a 35-0 win over Cambridge Springs which earned the Lakers of Coach Matt Morgan the Region 6 championship and a trip to the District 10 tournament. The Laker's run in the D-10 tourney was a real fan-pleaser to say the least as the team won three nail-biters to claim the first D-10 title in the school's football history. In the opening round the defense saved the day by stuffing Linesville's attempted two point conversion with less than 4 seconds left in the game. Matt Abata and Jason Dorich stopped the running back at the line of scrimmage to deny Linesville

the win. The offense put up 21 points in the first half and those points proved to be enough as the Lakers squeaked by Linesville 21-20. Alex Macrino led the ground attack with 82 yards rushing while QB Marshall Huntsman kept the defense honest by throwing a 43 yard TD pass to Zach Miller as the Lakers moved on to a semi-final matchup against Farrell. This game would also prove to be a test of nerves as MPS came from behind for another 21-20 victory as Billy D'Andrea dented the end zone with less than a minute to play and Ryan Cammidge tacked on the PAT to secure the win. The MPS running backs kept the Farrell defense guessing throughout the game as D'Andrea rushed for 91 yards and Joe Jelinek added 83 more yards on the ground. The stage was now set for a rematch with Mercer, a team the Lakers beat 10-0 in the season opener, for the championship. Once again the team scored 21 points in the first half and led Mercer 21-12 at the half. Mercer had the only score of the second half and pulled with 2 points going into the fourth quarter. Late in the fourth quarter the Mustangs pushed the ball to the Laker 27 but the drive ended when Nick Arrigo picked off an errant Mercer pass to clinch the win. Joe Jelinek led the rushing game with 144 yards, including a 74 yard scamper for a TD on Lakers first play from scrimmage. Tim Shaliko and Nick Arrigo each caught passes from Marshall Huntsman and MPS had its first District 10 championship in football!

The team squared off against Kane at Erie Veterans' Stadium in the first round of the state tournament and it was there the story book season came to an end by a score of 7-12.

The Lakers ended their historic season as Region and District champions with an overall record of 13-1. Jason Dorich and Nick Arrigo earned AP All—State honors and Jason was also chosen for the All-District team and as the Region 6 player of the year. First team All-Region offensive honors went to Joe Jelinek (RB) and James Kowles and Jason Dorich (OL). The All-Region defense included lineman Jason Dorich, linebackers Billy D'Andrea and Alex Macrino, and defensive back Nick Arrigo. Kicker Ryan Cammidge was an All-Region specialist for his clutch performances and accuracy throughout the season. All-Region second team offense included running backs Billy D'Andrea and Alex Macrino as well as offensive lineman Joe Conde. The second team defense included lineman Matt Abata and defensive back Robert Carson.

Over the course of the season, Jelinek averaged 6.9 yards per carry while D'Andrea was close behind averaging 6.6. Quarterback Marshall Huntsman threw for 538 yards

and six touchdowns. On both the individual and team levels, this was truly a season to remember!

Coach Kelly Maslar is no stranger to success nor is her MPS tennis team who completed yet one more stellar season in continuing their impressive streak of successful campaigns! Led by senior Stephanie Novakowski, the squad finished with a perfect 10-0 record and another Region and District championship. The team also took first place in the State College tournament on the way to a 12-1 overall record. This team was so talented and so deep that they won just about everything they could and distinguished themselves throughout the district and the state. In D-10 team play, Novakowski, Rebecca Haener and Griffin Currie all posted wins in singles play as the Lakers claimed their fourth consecutive AA championship with a 3-2 win over Grove City. In singles play, senior Stephanie Novakowski won her third consecutive singles crown while Griffin Currie and Rebecca Haener were the D-10 doubles champions for the second straight year. Stephanie was eliminated in the first round of state singles play and Griffin and Rebecca were state doubles runners-up. In the first round of team play against Greensburg Central Catholic, both Steph and Rebecca won their singles matches but it was not enough as the Lakers fell by a score of 3-2.

At season's end, Stephanie Novakowski was named District 10 and Region 2 player of the year and joined team mate Rebecca Haener on the All-District team and as All-Region first team singles player. Remarkably, Stephanie did not lose a match to a District 10 opponent over three seasons! Additional honors went to Griffin Currie who was named to the Region 2 second team singles while the doubles teams of Melissa Winarski and Cassidy Schultz, Nicole Winkler and Laura Sanner were named to the Region 2 second team.

The girls' volleyball team under second year coach Amanda Blaszczyk, continued to show growth and improvement over the course of a 7-10 season. Captains Dana Macrino and Julie Malinowski provided much needed senior leadership as the team sought to come together and maintain their dedication to the game while keeping an eye on the future. The highlight of their season was a 3-0 win over Villa during the second round of region play. With a JV team that went 10-7 this season, the program can look forward to greater success in years to come.

The girls' soccer team put together another outstanding season by posting a 13-2-1 region record, good for a second place finish in Region 3. Overall the girls finished with a 14-7-1 record as they continued their tradition of playing some of the best teams in the state. That strong independent schedule and their high level of play were impressive enough to earn the team a PSCA Honorable Mention ranking during the regular season. In the first round of the D-10 tournament, the Lakers eliminated the Warren Dragons 2-0 as Becca Costello scored two first half goals and Shannon Zoltowski needed only one save to secure the win. In the finals, traditional rival McDowell avenged last year's 4-0 loss to the Lakers in the finals by a 0-3 score, eliminating the Lakers from the post-season tournament. The season did, however, have many individual success stories. Keeper Courey Schaetzle was stellar between the pipes as she allowed only 16 goals over the entire season—a .88 goals against average. Freshman Kaylin Akerly was the team's high scorer, finishing with 14 goals and 10 assists. Sara Livingston provided offensive balance by scoring 9 goals and dishing out 12 assists. Courey was named All D-10 goalie and chosen for the All-Region 3 first team. Joining Schaetzle on the first team All-Region were Sara Livingston, Kristen Elia and Katelynn Hobbs. Lindsay Moore's defensive skills earned her a spot on the All-Region second team.

The boys' soccer team also experienced their share of success during the season as they put together a 13-3 region record and a 19-5 overall mark. Team speed and team chemistry were the strengths of this year's squad and Coach Pedro Arguez cited the team's overall balance as an additional key to the team's success. The guys cruised through the first two rounds of the districts, beating both Hickory and Slippery Rock by identical 2-0 scores. Keepers Jordan Felice and John Eisenman both posted shutouts in the two wins while Jared Ott, Pichi Fitzmaurice and Rommel Uribe all scored goals. The Lakers faced North East in the finals and lost 0-4 but still advanced to the state tournament where they faced Steel Valley in the opening round. The two teams were evenly matched and the score was tied with less than a minute to play. Disaster struck when Valley punched in a goal with only 21 seconds left on the clock. Even though the team had played their best game of the season, they lost the match and were eliminated from the tournament. At season's end, Pichi Fitzmaurice was named to the Region 2 first team and Corey Hamilton and Sean Say were chosen for second team

honors. Jared Ott was the team's leading scorer with 11 goals and 4 assists while Carlos Solis scored 10 goals and had 1 assist. Pichi Fitzmaurice contributed 7 goals and 4 assists.

The boys' and girls' cross country teams continued to post solid results as both teams proved to be competitive at both the region and district levels. The boys' team finished in a three-way tie for the Region 6 championship in a season that featured a 27-29 victory over Cathedral Prep. Mark Carlucci won the region meet at Brown's Farm in a time of 16:33.2, earning the honor of being the Region 6 runner of the year. Rounding out the boys' top five were John Storey (6th), Nick Stolar (7th), Mike Reilly (13th) and Nick Wojtasik (23rd). The girls finished third at their region meet as sophomore Suzanna Kearns grabbed second place with a time of 20:26.3. Suzanna's finish was good enough to earn her a trip to the state meet (as a sophomore) where she turned in a time of 20:32 and finished 51st. Our top five finishers were Julia Yurkovic (14th), Eileen Borczon (15th), Bethany Coon (19th) and Emma Holland (30th). The District 10 meet at Buhl Park provided yet another opportunity for the MPS harriers to show their stuff. The ladies' efforts were good enough for 16th place as Kearns, Yurkovic, Borczon, Coon and Sarah Grove made up the top five. Suzanna's finish was good enough to earn her a spot in the state meet (as a sophomore) where she finished fifty-first in a time of 20:32. On the boys' side, strong performances from Mark Carlucci (17:03—4th) and Nick Stolar (17:36—21st) led the team to a 4th place finish as both runners qualified for states. The other top 5 runners were John Storey, Joe Laughlin and Nick Wojtasik. At the state meet, Carlucci ran a 17:15, good for 22nd place while Stolar's 18:25 put him in 158th. Post season accolades went to Mark Carlucci—All District 10 team, Region 6 first team and Region 6 runner of the year; John Storey and Nick Stolar—Region 6 first team and Mike Reilly—Region 6 second team. For the girls, honors went to Suzanna Kearns—Region 6 first team and freshman Julia Yurkovic—Region 6 second team.

When the Laker linksters hit the course, the mark of pride and spirit goes with them and good things seem to follow. While both teams were relatively young this season, they both had definite highlights over the course of the year. The girls claimed third place in Region 1 and sent six golfers on to districts. Kim Wisniewski played steady golf all season long as the number 1 player, receiving consistent support from Maria

Brzozowski and Lindsay Gotkin. The guys finished fourth in Region 5 and took an impressive fifth place at the Tam O'Shanter tournament in Sharon. Ricky Majewski led the Lakers over the course of the season with solid contributions coming from seniors Pat Arrigo and Nicky Bell. The boys' district tournament was played at the par 72 Grove City Country Club where Majewski shot an 82, good for 33rd place overall. Pat Arrigo's 85 put him in a four-way tie for 52nd. The girls' tournament was at Riverside Golf Club, also a par 72 course. Maria Brzozowski's 86 gave her a 10th place finish while Kim Wisniewski (88-11th) and Lindsey Gotkin (92—15th) were not far behind. Second team All-Region honors went out to Ricky Majewski, Maria Brzozowski and Kim Wisniewski. Coaches Kirk Skelton and Bridget Whalen, along with the returning players, are already looking forward to next season.

The Lady Lakers of Coach Dan Perfetto began the winter sports season by winning their first eleven games, including the San Diego Surf Slam championship. That momentum carried the team to a Region 4 championship and independent wins over both McDowell and Villa. The girls went 23-1 for the regular season but were upset by the Meadville Bulldogs in the second round of the district tournament. The team regrouped and came back to beat Warren in the consolation game and earn the right to play Punxsutawney in a PIAA sub-region game, a contest won by the Lakers 66-22. The win put MPS in the state tournament with a first round game against WPIAL champion Hampton. In that game the Lady Lakers overcame several double-digit first-half deficits to edge the Talbots 49-44 in overtime. Kirsten Olowinski led the comeback by scoring five points in the OT and twenty-six for the game. The Lakers second round game had the fans on the edges of their seats once again as the team trailed Westinghouse throughout the first half. The defense rose to the occasion and Lindsay Moore's offensive outburst brought the Lakers back. Lindsay's two free-throws tied the game at 43 with just over thirty seconds to play. The game finished with Kristen Olowinski at the FT line with .01 seconds to play. Kirsten converted 1 of 2 to secure a win over the District 8 champions. Bellefont (22-6) was the Lakers quarter-final opponent. The game was close going into the fourth quarter but the girls unleashed a balanced scoring barrage as Ellen Bach, Vickie Majewski, Lindsay Moore and Kirsten Olowinski combined for thirteen points to clinch the victory. In the state semis, Gettysburg loomed as a formidable opponent as MPS hoped for a trip to the finals. The

girls were not to be denied, but the team needed a strong defensive performance to control Gettysburg's high scoring guard. With Courey Schaetzel leading the way, the Lakers used several different defensive matchups to get the job done and earn that special trip to State College. Their opponent in the finals was Mount Saint Joseph from the Philadelphia area. The Magic came into the game with a 28-3 record and a starting lineup that featured two Division 1 recruits. MPS trailed 27-21 at the half as cold shooting kept the offense from getting untracked. Trailing 31-38 going into the fourth quarter, the Lakers were ultimately forced to foul and wound up on the short end of a 53-43 score. Olowinski was high scorer for the game as she scored 18 points and pulled down 12 rebounds. Lindsay Moore also scored in double figures with 12 points. A dream season, characterized by a great deal of pride and spirit, had come to an end but the great memories would live on forever. Kirsten Olowinski was named to the Associated Press AAA All-State first team. She also made the All-District 10 team, Region 4 first team and Region 4 Player of the Year. Lindsay Moore joined Kirsten on the Region 4 first team.

The boys' basketball team completed their Region 3 schedule with an 11-3 record; good enough for a second place finish. MPS senior Sam Hvezda joined the 1,000 point club during the Lakers 62-28 win over Iroquois. During the Christmas break, the Lakers flew to Phoenix to compete in the prestigious Cactus Jam Tournament where they went 2-1 against some very good competition. In their final game of the tourney, the Lakers topped Horace Mann of the Bronx 55-31. Derek Crane-Huston paced the offensive attack by knocking down 15 points while Sam Hvezda and Josh Chojnacki contributed 10 and 9 points respectively as the team claimed third place overall. At the conclusion of the regular season, the charges of Coach Pat Flaherty were once again in the District 10 tournament, facing a strong Northeast team in the quarter finals. The Picker's defense held the Lakers to 16 first-half points and the slow start was just too much to overcome as the Lakers were eliminated from post-season play. Sam Hvezda lit up the scoreboard for 26 points and was the game's high scorer. Sam would be named Region 3 Player of the Year and was an All-Region first teamer. Sophomore Josh Chojnacki was a Region 3 second team all-star.

The MPS swim team continued to make progress during the 2007-08 season. Both the boys' and girls' teams made respectable showings at invitational meets, the girls finishing tenth at Northeast and the boys grabbing ninth at Iroquois. The team sent no less than 12 swimmers to districts, including seniors Katie Malue, Shannon Zoltowski and Matt Mackowski. For Katie and Shannon it was their second trip to districts and for Matt, it was his fourth. Noteworthy performances came from the MPS 200m relay team of Tess Frawley, Katie Malue, Maria Tarbell and Lauren Curtin. Their time of 1:56.35 was good enough for third place. Maria Tarbell was also a standout in the 500m freestyle, taking second place with a time of 5:37.27 as the girls' team finished sixth in the meet. Matt Mackowski's time of 2:05.36 in the 200IM earned him a second place finish and he would grab another second in the 100m breaststroke with a time of 1:01.74 helping the boys to a tenth place finish. Both Matt and Maria went on to represent MPS at the state meet where Matt took sixteenth in the 100m breaststroke and earned a state honorable mention. All-Region honors went out to Maria Tarbell in the 200m freestyle where she was a first teamer and in the 500m freestyle where she received second team recognition. Tess Frawley's season was highlighted by her second team honors in the 100m backstroke. Senior Matt Mackowski had the distinction of being a four-year qualifier for districts and being chosen as team captain for all four years he swam.

The girls' bowling team, under the expert tutelage of coaches Jen Galla and Lauren Eighmy finished the season with a glossy 8-2 record and a share of a three-way tie for first place in the Metro League. On their way to their share of the title, the Laker keglers split with Strong Vincent and swept Villa Maria. Turning in first team All-Metro performances were Julie Malinowski and Morgan Palombi and representing MPS on the second team were Nicole Post and Erica Cipriani.

The '08 edition of the Laker baseball team wound up their regular season with a 13-6 overall record. Their 9-4 region record gave them a fourth place finish in the region, but it was not quite enough to earn a spot in post-season play. The squad featured the steady arm of Shane Hodap (5-3; 2.35 ERA) and the booming bats of Matt Tobin, Chris Henry, Shane Hodapp, Paul Yoculan, Jarrad Brown, Billy D'Andrea and Brandon Forcier who all hit over .300 for the season. Junior Chris Henry made the All-District

team as a designated hitter and was a Region 3 First Team All-Star along with senior pitcher Shane Hodapp. Shane also earned second team recognition as a second baseman along with senior outfielder Billy D'Andrea. The returning players and coaches are looking forward to once again being a force in District 10 next year.

The MPS softball team finished their season at .500 in Region 5, their 5-5 record good for a third place finish. Highlighting their season was a sweep of General McLane and a split with Warren. Senior Shannon Zoltowski was a Region 5 second team selection at second base.

The boys' and girls' track teams both had respectable showings at their district meets, the boys finishing seventeenth and the girls finishing seventh. The girls received significant contributions from Christine Harvey and Rachel Kloecker in the 800m and Micala Migneault in the triple jump. The 400m and the 1600m relay teams also contributed to the squads' point total. On the boys' side, Mark Carlucci's time of 9:55.72 in the 3200m run earned him a trip to states and a spot on the Region 5 second team in that same event. Suzanna Kearns was a Region 5 first team selection in the 3200m run as well.

With only one returning player, the boys' tennis team went through a youth movement during the 2008 season. Senior captain Brian Badders helped guide the inexperienced squad through the season to a 1-9 overall record and a 1-4 region mark. Their lone victory was over Girard by a score of 3-2. The team will lose Brian to graduation but the youth movement of 2008 should start to pay dividends in the spring of 2009.

Bill Bengel began teaching at Mercyhurst Prep in 1979 after spending five years at Sacred Heart School in Erie. During his years at MPS, Bill has taught World Cultures and American Culture and served as the school's athletic director. His coaching career at MPS includes time as head cross country coach and head coach of the girls' basketball program. He is currently the assistant principal for grades nine and ten and the school's activities director.