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## 'Cat Tracks

Linfield Magazine Staff

Travis McGuire  
*Linfield University*

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# 'Cat Tracks

## Hooping it up

It was a season for the ages for the Linfield men's basketball team.

Whitman dealt the Wildcats a 85-70 loss in the Northwest Conference Tournament semifinals at Ted Wilson Gymnasium in late February, but it hardly dampened all that the team accomplished.

Linfield finished with a 20-6 record, the most successful season in almost two decades. The Wildcats earned a share of the NWC regular season championship, their first since 2001 and the 25th in program history.

On an individual basis, guard Dempsey Roggenbuck '21 earned All-Northwest Conference first team honors after averaging a team-high 18 points per game.

He was also a D3hoops.com All-West Region third-team honoree, the first Linfield player to reap such recognition since 2011-12.

Forward Tanner Autencio '20 (league-high 4.6 assists per game) and center Austin Hilton '20 (team-high 6.9 rebounds per game) were selected to the All-Northwest Conference second team. Those two, as well as Grant Gibb '20 and Aidan Phizackerley '20, helped the Wildcats improve their record during each year of their time on campus.

"There are so many things to be grateful for with this team, but for our seniors, it was an amazing way for them to finish their careers here — setting records and creating historical heights for our program," coach Shanan Rosenberg said. "I will always remember this team and all they have meant to me and Linfield College. I couldn't be more proud."

**Aaron Baune '22 and the Wildcats notched their best men's basketball season in almost two decades.**



## Two new faces join Linfield's coaching community

In January, Haley Doerfler was tapped to lead the women's volleyball program, becoming the first woman to guide the Wildcats since Robin Vealey led Linfield to a 30-7 record and the Northwest Conference championship in 1979.

Doerfler comes to McMinnville following a season as an assistant coach at Seattle Pacific University and another at the University of North Alabama. The majority of her experience is at the club level, where she spent six years directing indoor and sand volleyball programs.

Born in Ohio but raised in Battle Ground, Washington, Doerfler was a middle blocker at Hawaii Pacific University. Prior to graduating in 2015, she totaled 765 kills and 394 blocks in four seasons.

She replaces Josh Davis, who left after two seasons.

"Haley is really well-thought-of by all who know her and we believe she will be an excellent positive role model for our young women to emulate," Athletic Director Garry Killgore said. "We are very excited to have her join our Linfield athletic department and our family."

In April, former Concordia player and assistant coach Andrew Duvall was named Linfield men's head soccer coach, filling the spot vacated by Adam Howard after four seasons.

At Concordia, where Duvall spent the previous eight years handling responsibilities ranging from recruiting to team scheduling, the men's soccer team was 90-60-14 during his time on the sideline. He lettered four seasons from 1999 to 2002, playing in 73 matches.

"I plan to continue to push the program to reach the point where we are competing again for conference championships," Duvall said. "We all want very much to see Linfield get back in the championship conversation."

## A great football game, even in defeat

According to ESPN.com, Linfield was involved in one of college football's greatest games of the 2019 season.

It was No. 83 on ESPN's list, to be exact, and it was the Wildcats' final game of the year — the 68-65 triple-overtime loss at Chapman in the first round of the NCAA Division III playoffs. Need a refresher? The teams combined for 1,107 yards of offense, Linfield trailed by one at halftime and

a 26-yard field goal by Andrew Starkel '21 in the third overtime proved to be the (untimely) difference.

Here's ESPN.com's Bill Connelly's take: *"With a spot in the second round of the Division III playoffs on the line, Chapman and Linfield threw haymakers for 60-plus minutes. Chapman led 21-7 early, Linfield responded with a 27-7 run to take the lead, and then Chapman went on another 21-7 run to take the lead back with a minute remaining. But Artie Johnson '21's 12-yard run with 4 seconds left for the Wildcats sent the game to overtime, and after the teams traded scores, Linfield had to settle for a field goal in the fourth OT period. That opened the door for Tanner Mendoza's 13-yard winner for the Panthers."*

The Wildcats finished with an 8-2 record, extending "The Streak" to 64 years.



**Volleyball coach Haley Doerfler had hoped to use the spring semester to implement a new team culture and work on volleyball technique with returning players. After the pandemic sent student-athletes home, she adapted by doing YouTube "chalk talks" with the team and issuing weekly workout challenges to the athletes.**

# Informal focus group

## *Students share Gen Z insights with Major League Baseball executives*

By Travis McGuire

**E**ngaging with younger audiences is a whole new ball game for professional sports leagues and franchises, and Generation Z is a key demographic for Major League Baseball.

To continue MLB's goal of connecting with young people, league marketing executives invited Linfield students to participate in a panel discussion during the winter 2019 MLB Club Marketing Meetings in Portland.

Molly Danielson '20, Elazar Konsker '20, Brooke Snyder '20, Amanda Reser '21, Keaton Wood '20 and Jacob Calo '20 discussed their social media habits, how and if they watch sports broadcasts, where they read news, their video game use, their opinions about the stadium experience, and more during a 45-minute conversation moderated by Barbara McHugh, MLB's senior vice president of marketing.

"Our marketing executives across the league gained honest, candid, genuine feedback from the students on how they consume content, what makes them interested in following a player or team or sport, and what they enjoy about a live sports experience," McHugh said.

The six panelists are all student-athletes who study sport management. MLB wanted insights from a diverse set of sports fans, not just die-hard baseball fans, so the students fit the bill.

"I thought it was refreshing that they want to change and that they want to have us impact that change," said Snyder, who plays softball.

The opportunity to speak to more than 100 league and team representatives came from an inquiry to MLB by Natalie Welch, assistant professor of business, who offered the students as volunteers to help out at the meetings.

McHugh instead suggested the students attend the event and share their perspective through a panel discussion



**Linfield students show off swag from the winter 2019 MLB Club Marketing Meeting in Portland.**

during the final day of a three-day meeting at The Nines Hotel in Portland.

The audience asked students about their involvement in content creation at Linfield and how they purchase tickets.

"I loved seeing them share on stage and network afterwards," said Welch, who was hired in August to teach sport management. "They have thoughtful insights on customization and the experience of attending games."

McHugh also appreciated the students' unfiltered opinions: "Any time you can get first-hand feedback from your target audience, it's a win."