



February 2010

## *A Moment for Grove City College*

This edition of Moment will concentrate on a single area – sports. The term refers to the competitive and recreational activities that revolve around the many teams at all different levels we have on our campus. It is a great learning experience (team building), a great discipline (striving for your personal best in timed sports and striving to be the best fit/support in team sports) plus it's a great way to let off steam and relax from the rigorous academics we have at the College.

Today our students have numerous opportunities to get involved at all levels, i.e., intercollegiate varsity NCAA Division III competition, club sports, intramural sports and, finally, the opportunity to just plain engage in recreational activities. Athletic Director Dr. Don Lyle, who oversees our varsity activities plus the Department of Physical Education, and Andy Tonicic '77, who oversees club sports and intramurals, are pictured above.

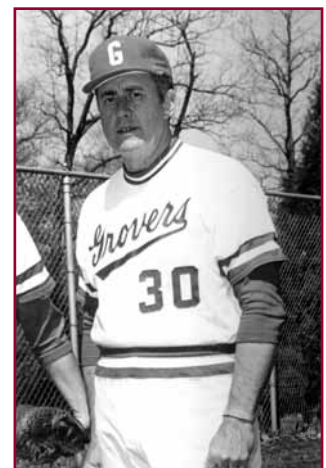


*Andy Tonicic '77 and Dr. Don Lyle*

I will write about each of these areas shortly, but first some historical context.

As to our “older” competitive sports, in the intercollegiate area we have played football since 1892 and basketball since 1898. Men's track & field began in 1906, men's tennis in 1914 and soccer and swimming in 1937-38. We have used the same football field (now called “Thorn Field”) for all those years. However, we first played basketball from 1900 to 1912 in the basement of what is now the beautifully expanded and restored Carnegie Alumni Center. The boys played in the basement – shots couldn't go too high in the air because there was a ceiling in the way. When we tore up all the floors in the reconstruction process at Carnegie (taking out all the false ceilings and partitions added in over the years) we discovered the original court. It was like an archeological dig. So we brought today's basketball squad and Coach Steve Lamie '85 down to see where it all began.

You will notice the above-mentioned intercollegiate sports were all men's activities. What is the history of women's intercollegiate competition? In the mid '50s to early '70s a few women competed either as an extramural team or on an existing men's varsity team. The first female competitors were on the men's rifle team in 1959. In the early '60s, women's tennis began as an extramural program and was highly successful among local teams. From 1966 until 1971 there was also a women's field hockey team that competed under the same status with other local schools as did women's tennis. In the 1970s a woman was a diver for the men's swimming and diving team and another woman practiced with the men's cross country team. By the early 1970s it was apparent that women's athletics was on the near horizon. Accordingly, Athletic Director Jack Behringer and women's Phys. Ed. director Cindy Walters developed the format for beginning women's athletics at the College. For example, in 1973 volleyball became the first women's varsity sport followed the next year by tennis. Women's basketball debuted in 1977. Many women's varsity sports were added thereafter with the most recent addition being women's water polo.



*Jack Behringer*

Today we have 19 NCAA Division III competition teams. Ten are women's and 9 are men's. More than 450 of our students participate. We play in the 10-member school Presidents' Athletic Conference, and during the last few years have won numerous championships. We have also produced 98 NCAA All Americans over the last 50 years plus many, many Academic All Americans on both the men's and women's sides. Athletics and academics coexist

wonderfully at Grove City College. In fact, at our school the term “student-athlete” is not an oxymoron. Our student-athletes, being part of the NCAA’s Division III, do not receive athletic scholarships. They play for the love of the sport and from the heart. And they do it very well. It’s a great philosophy and one we’ll continue to live out, and **that’s a promise.**

The next level of competition that engages almost 300 of our students is club sports. These teams have volunteer coaches and play in leagues made up of other college club programs. We have such diverse programs as men’s and women’s rugby, lacrosse and women’s field hockey, plus men’s water polo, men’s volleyball, co-ed fencing and Tae Kwon Do. The games and matches are very competitive and those that play devote almost as much time to their sports as do our varsity players. And, like the varsity players, they have a lot of fun. Many of our club sport competitions have good-sized crowds of cheering fans just like the varsity programs.

The next level is intramurals. And WOW, has this taken off. In the “old days” (that would be my era in the 1960s), there were just a few teams that played in the fraternity and independent (nonfraternity) league. Today under the leadership of Toncic, who directs our intramural programs, (he also oversees club sports) over 35 sports are featured such as football, soccer, badminton, dodge ball, bowling, Frisbee, ping pong, even Bocce and Euchre, etc. (I am still trying to understand how the card game Euchre is a sport – but we will leave that to another day).

Last year we had about 2,500 students at the College – but we had 6,362 involved in intramurals! That means that the average student is on three different teams. All of this tremendous activity caused the “Princeton Review” to rank Grove City College #2 in the nation (behind #1 Notre Dame and ahead of West Point and Annapolis) for intramural programs/participation. We weren’t expecting that, but it certainly validates the time, planning and effort put into the program.

To explain how the College can accommodate all this sports activity, a brief word is necessary about our sports venues on campus. In the last four years much has occurred in this area. In the summer of 2006, we replaced the grass on Thorn Field (the football field) with all-weather Pro Turf. We also put in lights, redid the track and put the track & field events over on the old football practice field. Making that investment has had a tremendous effect on all our sports programs. For example, for the 102 years that we had grass on the football field we could only use that field for 20-30 hours a year (for home football games). Now, with the all-weather turf and lights, we use the field 1,500 hours a year for varsity practice and games plus club sports and intramurals. In fact, it is not unusual to see 200 students on the field at one time at 9 p.m. playing intramurals. We also secured an additional eight acres behind the school and along Pinchalong Road and over the past year have built three new intramural/club sports fields. The fields (while they can have multiple uses) are regulation rugby, soccer and lacrosse field venues.

As you can see, we have made the necessary investments in programs, facilities and leadership (we have also greatly upgraded our women’s softball, men’s baseball and men’s and women’s soccer varsity venues) to support a thriving athletic program. We did this because it greatly supports student needs and interests. And that is a philosophy we like, as it advances our program on all fronts – mind, body and spirit. We’ll continue along that path, and **that is a promise.**

Sincerely,



Dick Jewell '67, J.D.  
President