

(Left to right) Jonyce Hollins, Courtney Gomez, and MaryLynne Schaeffer leap for joy after the Hawks beat Syracuse University.

Now They Know Our Name

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ENJOY RECORD SEASONS



America East commissioner Patrick Nero (far left) presents the runner-up trophy to Hawks Brian Glowiak '08 (center) and Rich Baker '08.

The Boston tavern made famous in the 1980s television sitcom *Cheers* was a place “where everybody knows your name.” Maybe not everybody across the country knows the University of Hartford’s name, after record-breaking seasons put both Hartford basketball teams on the national map, but the numbers are growing.

Men’s head coach Dan Leibovitz, in his second season, led Hartford to its first conference title game in 23 years of Division I basketball and its best regular-season conference finish during that span (second place). The Hawks finished 18-16 overall and 12-7 in America East, dropping the league championship game 82-65 at the University of Maryland–Baltimore County on March 15.

The championship was televised nationally on ESPN2, and the day before, sophomore All-Conference First Team honoree Joe Zeglinski’s photo appeared on the front page of *USA Today*.

“I think it is fair to say that we have never been on national television before and never appeared on the front page of an international newspaper,” President Walter Harrison said in a letter to University regents. Harrison went on to note that these athletes are also good students. Eight team members had grade point averages of 3.0 or better in the fall semester.

Besides Zeglinski, junior Michael Turner (all-defensive team), freshman Morgan Sabia (all-rookie team), and junior Jaret Von Rosenberg (all-academic team) were also honored by America East.

Another America East crown, another NCAA win

The women’s basketball team, accustomed to 20-win seasons and postseason appearances over the past half-decade, outdid itself this season, winning a school-record 28 games. Included were victories over three teams that were among the nation’s Top 25 this season—Virginia (70-53), Michigan State (54-51), and Marist (49-32).

In addition, Hartford ended the season owning the country’s longest home-court winning streak, with 26 consecutive victories in Chase Arena, Reich Family Pavilion.

The Hawks blasted their way through the America East tournament, defeating Stony Brook (72-41), Albany (60-40), and Boston University (61-45) to gain their fourth America East crown in program history. Guard Lisa Etienne '09 was named Most Outstanding Player of the tournament after three of her teammates had been named America East All-Conference selections days earlier: senior Danielle Hood and junior Erica Beverly (first team) and sophomore Diana Delva (second team).

The Hawks were awarded a number-10 seed, the best in school history, in the NCAA Tournament and traveled to Baton Rouge, La., to face seventh-seeded Syracuse University. In a thriller that saw 12 ties and 16 lead changes, the Hawks beat the Orange, 59-55. Hartford’s storybook season ended with a 63-39 second-round loss to second-seeded Texas A&M.

Head coach Jennifer Rizzotti praised her team and made a promise to all.

“We played great. We did what we wanted to do. We’re getting there. One of these years we’ll be coming back, and people will be celebrating our first Sweet Sixteen appearance.” ■



“Hoodie” Goes Pro

It was the cherry on top of the sundae. After Hartford’s incredible season and postseason play, what else could happen? In a year of firsts, here was yet another.

Wednesday, April 9, 2008, is a day that Hartford women’s basketball standout Danielle Hood will never forget.

“I was listening on the computer [to the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) draft], and I heard them say my name,” Hood told *The Hartford Courant*. “I was, like, ‘No way.’ Then they said it again. I started screaming, but nobody was in the room, so I sprinted to the gym.”

Senior forward Hood was chosen in the third-round draft, the 32nd pick overall, by the Atlanta Dream, an expansion team. That makes her the first-ever Hawk to be drafted by the WNBA. ■