**Top Women’s Team in Muhlenberg History**

**1989 Field Hockey**

Head Coach: Helene Hospodar  
Final Record: 14-2  
Middle Atlantic Conference Champions

The 1989 field hockey team won its first championship the old-fashioned way — by earning it. Muhlenberg won four playoff games in an eight-day span, without its head coach, to win the Middle Atlantic Conference title, and went on to earn a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

After opening the season with a 2-0 loss to East Stroudsburg, the Mules swept through the regular season with only two challenges. The first came at Drew, in the team’s first game on artificial turf. The game was tied 2-2 when it was halted by a downpour with 13 minutes left.

Two weeks later, Muhlenberg trailed FDU-Madison 2-0 before scoring two goals 20 seconds apart. A goal in overtime gave the Mules a 3-2 win, but after the game the team learned it would have to complete the season without veteran head coach Helene Hospodar, who was hospitalized.

At the end of the regular season, the Drew game (which does not count on the final record) had to be replayed. Playing at home under the direction of assistant coach Patty Fosselman, Muhlenberg beat the Rangers for the first time since 1981, 2-0, to claim the Northeast League crown.

In the MAC playoffs, the Mules advanced past the quarterfinals for the first time with a 4-0 shutout of Franklin & Marshall, then shut out Messiah, 2-0. In the championship game, Muhlenberg stunned Elizabethtown, which had won the MAC title two years earlier, 2-1.

The Mules received a surprise invitation to the NCAA playoffs, but lost to St. Lawrence in the first round, 1-0.

Linda Meiser, Elaine Gratrix and Liselle Bennett all earned all-conference honors for the Mules, who set school records that still stand for most shutouts (10) and fewest goals allowed (8 in 16 games).

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**2000 Soccer**

Head Coach: Leslie Benintend  
Final Record: 15-4-2  
Centennial Conference Champions

The Muhlenberg women’s soccer team rose to championship status step by step. In 1998, the Mules finished fourth in the Centennial Conference and won the ECAC Mid-Atlantic Tournament. In 1999, they tied for second in the CC and repeated as ECAC champs. In 2000, Muhlenberg won its first CC championship.

The Mules opened the season by playing 21st-ranked Rowan to a 1-1 tie. That draw gained the team its first national ranking (No. 17) ever, although Muhlenberg dropped out the next week after losing to Scranton.

Another tie represented a significant step for the program when the Mules played Gettysburg, a team they had never beaten, to a 1-1 draw on the road, snapping the Bullets’ record 22-game CC winning streak.

Muhlenberg also scored a landmark non-conference win when it defeated No. 9 Messiah, 1-0, for the first victory against a top-10 in program history.

The Mules clinched the CC title and an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament with a 1-0 win at Ursinus on a windy day in the regular-season finale. Muhlenberg was awarded a home game for its first NCAA game and defeated Johnson & Wales, 2-1. In the second round, the Mules were knocked out by top-ranked New Jersey, 3-0.

Muhlenberg outscored its opponents for the year, 42-15, setting a record for fewest goals allowed that still stands. The Mules tied school records (since broken) with 15 wins and 10 shutouts.

Senior midfielder Alissa Desiderio was named CC player of the year and became the first All-American in team history. Freshman Dawn Iberer led the team with 33 points.