



Top Women's Team in Muhlenberg History

**Contest 21:
2000 Softball vs.
1990 Softball**

2000 Softball

Head Coach: Ruth Gibbs

Final Record: 18-18

Centennial Conference Champions



The Muhlenberg softball team came close to its first Centennial Conference championship in 1999, finishing a game out of first place. The Mules accepted a bid to the ECAC South Tournament, losing to King's in the championship game. That taste whetted the team's appetite, so much so that they got "See You in the Postseason" printed on their 2000 t-shirts.

For the first month of the 2000 season, however, postseason play looked like a far-fetched notion. Playing in tournaments in Florida, Maryland and New Jersey, Muhlenberg struggled to a 4-12 start, although it was against some tough competition that left the team well-prepared for CC competition.

After splitting their opening CC twinbill against defending champion Gettysburg, the Mules won nine of their next 10 games. They took command of a tight race by sweeping Ursinus, at the time ranked 16th in Division III, and clinched their first CC championship with a sweep of Washington.

With the conference title came an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament, so everyone could indeed see Muhlenberg in the postseason. Sent to Salem, Va., for the Atlantic Regional, the Mules were eliminated in two games, both decided in the final inning.

Muhlenberg found ways to win in spite of some odd offensive statistics. The Mules' No. 3 batter scored almost twice as many runs as their leadoff hitter, and their No. 9 hitter drove in more runs than their cleanup batter.

Senior Heather Dreby was named CC pitcher of the year, and classmates Cristina Genna and Melissa Nardi also earned first-team All-CC honors. The team's fourth senior, Christine Biechy, was a third-team all-region pick.

1990 Softball

Head Coach: Brian Bodine

Final Record: 25-8

MAC South Champions



After becoming the first Muhlenberg team to reach the NCAA Division III Championships in 1989, softball became the first team to make the national tournament in back-to-back years in 1990.

The Mules earned a No. 5 national ranking and the top seed for the Central Regional, which was held at Allegheny for the second straight year. Just like in 1989, Muhlenberg went 2-2 at the regional, falling twice to the host school.

The Mules dropped their season-opening doubleheader with Kutztown, then went on an incredible roll that saw them win 22 of their next 23 games. A 17-game winning streak ended with a doubleheader loss to Trenton State, ranked No. 2 in Division III and the eventual national runner-up. Muhlenberg won its second consecutive MAC South crown with a 4-2 win against Franklin & Marshall, but lost to Scranton in the MAC title game.

At the regional, the Mules showed a flair for the dramatic. They scored one in the seventh and one in the eighth to beat Mt. Union, 2-1, then tied their first game against Allegheny with a run in the seventh before losing in nine innings. Three outs from elimination, Muhlenberg scored three runs in the top of the seventh for a 3-2 win against Mt. Union. But the team ran out of miracles in the rematch with Allegheny, giving up four runs in the first and losing, 4-1.

Four players – OF Chris Churetta, P Elaine Gratrix, 3B Shenon Hottenstein and SS Desiree Johansen – were first-team all-conference and all-region, while Brian Bodine was named Central Regional coach of the year.