



Top Women's Team in Muhlenberg History

**Contest 23:
2000 Softball vs.
1991 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.

1991 Softball

Head Coach: Tom Doddy

Final Record: 26-9

Middle Atlantic Conference Champions

Coming off two 25-win seasons, and with five seniors in the starting lineup, the Mule softball team was



expected to have a great year in 1991. And it did.

Ranked fifth in the Division III preseason poll, Muhlenberg set school records for wins (26) and consecutive wins (20), won its second MAC championship and earned the top seed for the Central Regional of the NCAA Championships.

The team got off to a slow start, winning just two of its first seven games. But starting with a comeback win in the second game of a doubleheader against Montclair State, the Mules were unstoppable. They reeled off 20 straight wins, setting a still-standing College record for consecutive victories in a season.

Included in the run were 10 wins against MAC Southeast opponents, clinching Muhlenberg's fifth straight division crown and extending its division winning streak to 30.

Although the streak was ended with a doubleheader loss to top-ranked Trenton State, the Mules rebounded to capture the MAC title by defeating Franklin & Marshall and Scranton in a pair of one-run games.

For the third year in a row, Muhlenberg was sent to Ohio for the NAAs, this time to Mt. Union. The Mules defeated the host school twice, but lost twice to Capital.

Senior Elaine Gratrix capped off her brilliant career by leading Division III in strikeouts (202 in 150 innings) and ranking second in ERA (0.65). Also earning MAC Southeast all-star honors were twin sister Karen Gratrix, Shenon Hottenstein, Kim Lapple and Karen Brown.