



## Top Women's Team in Muhlenberg History

**Contest 5:  
2002 Basketball vs.  
2000 Soccer**

**2002 Basketball**  
**Head Coach: Ron Rohn**  
**Final Record: 21-4**



One game was all it took for the Muhlenberg women's basketball team to win a spot on the national "map." That game was played in January 2002.

The Mules had built a very successful program in the 1990s, winning two Centennial Conference championships and making two trips to the NCAA Tournament. But the team never got widespread national recognition, and in 2000-01 had its string of five straight CC East Division titles snapped.

The 2001-02 squad rolled to an 8-0 start and ended the first half of its season ranked 25th in Division III. After a 28-day layoff, Muhlenberg showed that it had lost none of its magic, returning to action with a 79-66 upset of No. 9 Scranton. The Mules shot up to No. 10 in the next national poll, the program's first appearance in the top 10.

Muhlenberg eventually won its first 13 games and climbed to No. 8 in the poll before losing at Swarthmore. The 13-0 start was the second-best for any team in College athletic history. The Mules were one of seven remaining undefeated teams in Division III at the time of their first loss.

Fittingly, Muhlenberg reached the 20-win mark for the first time with a 70-45 home win against Swarthmore, a victory that clinched the CC East title.

The Mules' only other losses were to No. 4 King's and two one-point setbacks to Western Maryland. Despite a 21-4 record and No. 22 national ranking, the team did not receive a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Leading scorer and rebounder Susan Marchiano was named to the All-CC first team, while Jenn Risley and Randi Baran also earned conference honors.

**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.