



## Top Women's Team in Muhlenberg History

**Contest 8:  
2000 Softball vs.  
1998 Basketball**

### **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.

### **1998 Basketball**

**Head Coach: Tammy Smith**

**Final Record: 18-10**

**Centennial Conference Champions**



The 1998 women's basketball team overcame the Caribbean Curse to become the first team in Centennial Conference history to win back-to-back basketball championships.

After a 5-1 start and a month layoff, Muhlenberg lost three games to NAIA teams at the Great Bahamas Goombay Shootout, then had its luggage lost on the flight back. Within four days of returning, the Mules lost to Widener on a three-point buzzer-beater. A subsequent 14-point loss at Moravian dropped the team's record to 5-6.

But defensive stinginess and offensive balance became guiding principles as the team won 10 of its final 13 regular-season games. Muhlenberg set a CC record for fewest points allowed in a 52-27 win against Swarthmore that clinched its third straight CC East Division title. Eleven different players (out of 13 on the team) scored in double figures in at least one game, and five hit 20.

For the third straight year, the Mules faced Johns Hopkins in the CC championship game. The Blue Jays had a 21-game home winning streak and were ranked in the top 10 in Division III, but Muhlenberg overcame an early 18-7 deficit to pull off the stunning upset, 71-61.

The Mules also fell behind early in their first NCAA Tournament game, 9-0 to Allentown College, but came back to win, 53-45. Muhlenberg's season ended with a second-round loss at Johns Hopkins.

Sarah Clarke became the first player in team history to earn All-CC first-team honors after tying her own school record with 106 assists. Jill Roth made the All-CC second team.