

Oglethorpe University

Stormy Petrels

MENS BASKETBALL NEWSLETTER

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A Note From Coach Ponder

The season has unfortunately come to an end, and we finished with our second consecutive year with a record of 16-10. After a great start, we lost some close games the past month or so, and the injury bug hit us the last weekend of the regular season and the conference tournament. Despite the disappointing end to the season, it was still a good one. Our back to back 16-10 seasons gives us the best two year stretch since the 1993-94 and 1994-95 seasons. We are one of just four programs to make the SCAC tournament each of the last six years. We've been good and knocking on the door of great the past two years, and I feel like next year we bust that door down. With no seniors and just two juniors this year, I am very excited about the next couple of years, and I was already thinking about next season on the bus ride home from Arkansas. Thanks to everyone who supported us this year and we'll see you next year!



Overtime Loss Ends Petrels Season

Oglethorpe's season came to an end with an overtime loss to the host Hendrix College Warriors in the first round of the SCAC tournament. The Stormy Petrels stormed back from a 12-point deficit mid-way through the 2nd half to tie the score at 69-69 on a lay-up by sophomore Todd Ward with 1:20 remaining. After Hendrix nailed a three-pointer with 49 seconds remaining, sophomore Joe Kennedy followed up with a three of his own off an inbounds play with 36 seconds left to knot the score at 72-72. The Petrels were able to get a stop to force overtime, but ran out of gas in OT before falling 92-80. The Warriors only attempted 3 field goals in the overtime period, but made 15-17 FT's to secure the win. Ward led the Petrels with a game-high 26 points and 16 rebounds. Kennedy pitched in 18 points while junior Wade Weldon contributed 15 points and 8 rebounds. The Petrels faced some tough odds and bad luck, drawing the host school in the first round for the second consecutive year and fighting some injury problems with two starters missing the entire week of practice and playing at less than full strength in the game. The loss ended the Petrels season with a second consecutive 16-10 record. Six of the 10 losses were to teams that won at least 17 games, and five losses were in overtime or by five points or less. This year's team had to overcome the loss of three starters and five of the top eight players from last year's team. With no seniors this year, the Petrels look to potentially be the team to beat in the SCAC next season.

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Petrels Offense Leads SCAC Once Again

For the 3rd time in six years, the Stormy Petrels led the SCAC in scoring, putting up an average of 76.4 ppg. In the past six years, the Petrels have led the conference in scoring three times, finished 2nd twice, and 3rd once. This season, the Petrels finished the year 3rd in field goal percentage, 3rd in three-pointers made, and fifth in three-point percentage, assists, and assist to turnover ratio. Head coach Philip Ponder had this to say, "I felt like offensively, we could score with anyone and were the most explosive team in the conference. What we do is extremely hard for other teams to guard. There are definitely some areas we can improve in, though, and next year we should be even more explosive." The biggest weakness on offense was the Petrels proficiency from the charity stripe, as the Petrels finished the year 11th out of 12 teams in free throw percentage. Defensively, the Petrels struggled at times this year. They ended the season 10th in the conference in scoring defense, field goal percentage defense, and rebounding margin. They did, however, lead the conference in steals. Ponder commented, "I think our offense will take care of itself next year, but we definitely need to improve our half-court defense and rebounding next year if we want to achieve our goal of an SCAC Championship."



Several Players Pick Up Honors and Awards

Several Stormy Petrel Players have been honored with post-season awards in the last couple of days. Sophomore forward Todd Ward was named 1st Team All-Conference by the SCAC. Ward averaged 17.0 ppg, which was good for 3rd in the conference, while pulling down 10.2 rpg, which led the conference. He was also 2nd in the conference in field goal percentage by shooting at a 55.7% clip. Ward was also named the Div. III State Player of the Year and 1st team All-State by the Georgia Basketball Coaches Association. Sophomore guard Joe Kennedy was honored as a 3rd Team All-SCAC performer and was also named Honorable Mention for All-State. Kennedy averaged 14.1 ppg while pulling down 3.5 rpg and dishing out 3.0 apg. Junior guard David Allison was named Honorable Mention for All-SCAC, while being named 1st Team All-State. Allison averaged 14.7 ppg, and contributed 2.2 rpg and 2.8 apg. Allison and junior forward Wade Weldon were both honored as Academic All-State. Several players racked up in-season awards, as well. Ward picked up two SCAC Player of the Week Awards, as well as making the D3hoops Team of the Week on two occasions. Weldon picked up one SCAC Player of the Week award, made the D3hoops Team of the Week once, and was named to the Stormy Petrel Classic All-Tournament Team in December. Allison and Kennedy both made the Swarthmore/Haverford All-Tournament Team up in Philadelphia. Sophomore guard Alex Richey made the Stormy Petrel Classic All-Tournament Team.