Women's Basketball celebrates their history

By Dillon Flanigan
Sports Editor



PHOTO | LILY RAND

Guard Jillian Martin, a graduate, passes the ball under pressure.

Prior to the Women's Basketball game on Saturday Feb. 22, the university celebrated Girls & Women in sports day at James Moore Field House capping the special day with a 75–72 win over the Franklin Pierce University Ravens.

After holding a double-digit lead that dwindled in the second half, it became a one possession game with minutes to go that merely irked a scene a month ago in Rindge, New Hampshire however, this time, it was in the Owls favor.

"We talked about trusting the process from start to finish, and sometimes it gets difficult in games when you know teams are going on the runs it's certainly hard to focus and concentrate on what got you there," Head Coach Kate Lynch said. "But I think the team did a really, really nice job today of trusting the process is just continuing to be able to have confidence and respond when they were making the runs."

The Ravens inched closer in the second half as the shots fell. With that, the Owls opted to utilize their bench leaning on guard Lyzi Litwinko and forward Marisa Lee, graduates. While Litwinko has carved out playing time over the course of the season in a bench role, her counterpart Lee has not.

Reshuffling the lineup has not been uncommon to Lynch, even though starting forward Katie Williamson, a graduate, fouled out for the third time this season; she was available when the veteran coach turned to Lee who was 3–6 from the free throw line in 15 minutes.

"We kind of defer to the fact that Marisa is strong and she's really long. She's 6–2, but we knew that she could match number 44 pretty well," Lynch said. "You're not going to not necessarily stop her from scoring, but you want to make it more difficult. You want to disrupt her turnaround jumper, and I thought Marisa did a really good job of stepping up into the role."

After a slow start for the Ravens, they mounted a second-half comeback, but it was made difficult with the Owls adjustments. With Lee slowing down the scoring in the paint, the Owls had one block and nine steals.

Part of slowing the Ravens offense was guard Jillian Martin, a graduate, finishing with three of the nine steals on the day.

"Defense is a really big part of my game so whenever I can just get a steal or bring the energy, it transfers onto the offensive side of the game, and it just brings a good vibe to the rest of the team," Martin said.

In transition, the Ravens tried to keep the ball away from guard Delaney Haines, a senior, who seems to never miss a shot even when under pressure. Finishing with 25 points, including five three pointers, Lynch voiced how Haines rises to the challenge and is not shy about putting the ball in her hands at the end of a game.

"I think it just all comes down to confidence, and just my teammates and my coaches really instilled in me, just keep shooting, even if one doesn't go in and once I see one go in, I know the next one's gonna go in as well," Haines said.

With 32 rebounds for the Owls, Haines is not surprised, but believes they came in with a different attitude that propelled them. Now tied for third place with the University of New Haven Chargers for a coveted first-round bye in the NE10 tournament, the Owls will need to beat Saint Anselm College on Tuesday Feb. 25 and hope the Chargers lose to Adelphi University.

The home court advantage helps but Lynch believes her team needs to do their job.

"We just have to focus ourselves honestly. At the end of the day, we got to get the job done here," Lynch said. "We can't focus on what anybody else does. We can only focus on what we can do."

Though this victory was gratifying and much needed, the overarching theme was celebrating the history of Women's Basketball at the university.

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Men's Basketball blows out Franklin Pierce

By Dillon Flanigan
Sports Editor



PHOTO | WADE BARILLARO

Guard Albert Vargas, a junior, attempts to score.

With the end of the season near, the Men's Basketball team put on a show as they defeated Franklin Pierce University Ravens 107–65.

"We just came out aggressive. We made shots early, when you make shots, obviously teams feed off that," Head Coach Scott Burrell said. "We played great defense early and we were able to jump on, sustain the lead and we sustained it the whole game."

The Owls were missing a few guys as guards Isaac Hester, a sophomore and Elijah Wood, a senior, were not available. In their absence, Burrell turned to guards Sean James, a senior and Makai Coleman, a freshman, who made his first career start.

Coleman displayed his growth so far in just one season, adjusting to the college level as he was joined by freshman guard, in Christian McClease who have been a staple in the starting five as of late.

The Owls controlled the game from the tip with no lead changes and even stretching the point differential to 56 midway through the second half.

Out of the gate, James, who was demoted to the bench early in the season, made the start and was 3–3 from three scoring the first nine of 11 points in the first two minutes of the game.

"He shot the ball well last few games, and just got to keep shooting good ones, making good ones, his confidence is building," Burrell said. "He's feeling good about himself. You've seen the ball go through hoop and hope it continues the rest of the season."

The scorching hot Owls took a 41-point lead into halftime with no signs of slowing down. As both benches emptied early, the Owls lead stretched with neither team calling a timeout.

"He coaches his team the way he does, I coach mine. We were in a situation where we didn't need to call timeout, so that's why I avoided calling timeouts," Burrell said. "You can only mess things up with the timeout in that situation, so I wasn't gonna do that."

For the first time this season, guard Albert Vargas, a junior, was not in the starting lineup but playing 19 minutes off the bench. He scored with 21, with one block, one steal, five assists and six of the 42 rebounds.

"That's a kind of team that we are right now. It don't matter who they think is going to score. It can be anybody," Vargas said. "It can be Sean, it can be Tony, can be Cherif, it can be me. That's the hard thing about our team. It's hard to read, but you don't know who's going to kill in that game."

Burrell has noted all season of the young, athletic shooting team on the court and that may come with a hole defensively.

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LAX turns the page to 2025 with gaps to fill

By Dillon Flanigan
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After a rough 2024 lacrosse season, the Women's Lacrosse team now has their sights set on being a top team in the NE10 conference. A year ago, the Owls got off to a rough start with an overall record of 8–9 and a conference record of 3–8.

Coming into this spring, the Owls graduated nine starters from their lineup and now look to rebuild. A key factor in having a successful year will be leadership. The Owls have adopted the next-man mentality and strive for the younger athletes to fall right into place.

"We've got to rebuild. I'm so proud of what the seniors last year accomplished. They made us competitive," Head Coach Kevin Siedlecki said. "We lost crucial games at the end, but they made it competitive."

As mentioned, leadership will be key for this team. Midfielder Bailey McDermott, a junior, who was named captain and came off the bench last season, looks to take everything she learned from last year's seniors.

"I plan on translating my playing time from last year into this year by being a bigger leader. Last year and my freshman year really helped me get comfortable on the field. This year, I plan on making a bigger impact statistically and leadership-wise," McDermott said.

The team is facing a learning curve, with several players returning from injury or limited playtime. Key juniors like goalkeeper Caelen Connors and midfielder Abigail Nolan are expected to have major impacts.

However, the team faces a tough schedule and Siedlecki deliberately schedules difficult competitions in the fall to avoid complacency. There's hope that the Owls will improve as the season progresses, with the goal of achieving a better record than last year, despite the tough non-conference schedule.

"Heading into this season, the approach to our mentality has shifted completely. I've noticed mentally, culturally and physically that our team has turned a corner for the better," McDermott said. We have set standards and goals that are followed every day, making us work harder. I have very high hopes for this season."

Siedlecki emphasizes that while winning is important, the primary goal early in the season is to assess player performance and give younger players valuable experience. Non-conference games are used to help the team get comfortable and shake off nerves, specially since players are still adjusting to the game plan. While some of these games might not always result in wins, they provide crucial learning opportunities.

They are focused on making the playoffs and improving within the league, with strong upperclassman leadership helping guide the younger players, including sophomores and freshmen, who will play significant roles this season.

"We've got two high school All-Americans now in the freshman class, Ray Montague from Vermont and Cailean Roy," Siedlecki said. "Those are two high school All-Americans coming in, we also have two returning players who were on the All-Rookie Team last year, and both are looking even better this year."

The Owls are looking to build on what they started last year, combining leaders with young players and with the tough schedule at the beginning of the year, the Owls hope to jump out to a hot start.

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