

Women's Ice Hockey To Begin Inaugural Season In 2005-06

Colonials to join College Hockey America Women



In 2005-06, the Robert Morris University women's ice hockey team will take to the ice for its inaugural season. Under the tutelage of first-year head coach Kevin McGonagle, Robert Morris' 23rd intercollegiate sport will be in full swing.

Women's ice hockey is the fifth sport to be added to the RMU lineup in the last two years. It joins men's ice hockey, women's field hockey, and men's and women's lacrosse as additions that the late Dr. Susan Hofacre, former RMU director of athletics added.

The Colonials will be a member of College Hockey America Women. The CHAW includes Mercyhurst College, Niagara University, Quinnipiac University and Wayne State University.

McGonagle comes to Robert Morris after leading Bowdoin College to the 2003-04 New England Small College Athletic Conference Championship. He has seven years of head coaching experience and has put together a career record of 80-85-9. In his last season with Bowdoin, he led the Polar Bears to their second straight NESCAC Championship and the Division III NCAA Tournament with a 20-5-1 record.

Under McGonagle's guidance, the Bowdoin squad led the nation in scoring defense and finished fourth in the nation in scoring offense while setting the school record for fewest goals allowed in a season.

Prior to his time at Bowdoin, he was the head hockey coach at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts for two seasons. McGonagle was named the New England Hockey Writers Coach of the Year in 2002 when he led the Trailblazers to their first winning season in 17 years and the Eastern College Athletic Conference East Championship game for the first time in the school's history.

McGonagle's first head coaching stint came

at the University of Massachusetts-Boston from 1996 through 2000.

Joining McGonagle behind the bench will be Jody Katz. Katz played Division I women's hockey at Niagara University where she received the Varsity Academic Achievement Award in 2000. She was also a member of the 2002 team that made it to the women's NCAA Frozen Four. Katz was most recently an assistant coach with the Western Region women's ice hockey team in the Empire State Games during the summer of 2004.

McGonagle and Katz came on board prior to the 2004-05 academic year and have been hard at work recruiting all over the United States and Canada for some top women's ice hockey student-athletes. The duo signed Morgan Beikirch of Livonia, N.Y., Nov. 11, 2004 as the first recruit for the upcoming season. Joining Beikirch will be 16 other student-athletes from areas such as Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, along with local products from Moon and Pittsburgh and a student-athlete from Ontario.

The Colonials are set to host four Friday-Saturday homestands and one Saturday-Sunday homestand at the RMU Island Sports Center. RMU opens its season at Maine Oct. 8 and 9 before heading to Neville Island to host RPI Oct. 21 and 22 in the inaugural RMU women's ice hockey contest at the Island Sports Center.



Colonial women's hockey will join the RMU men's hockey team at the RMU Island Sports Center for all home contests. The men's team is also a member of College Hockey America and finished with an overall record of 8-21-4 in their inaugural season in 2004-05

2005 RMU Football . . . Welcome To Our House

Joe Walton Stadium also houses a 36,000 square foot administration building

The Robert Morris University Moon Township campus continues to grow, not only in student population, but in building population. On July 20, 2005, Robert Morris held its ribbon-cutting ceremony for Joe Walton Stadium - the newest football facility in the Northeast Conference - which will make its debut on Sept. 17th against Butler University. "Joe Walton Stadium is a clear signal to all student-athletes that there has been a commitment on the part of the University to athletics and that that commitment will continue to grow," said Robert Morris Director of Athletics, Craig Coleman, M.D.

The \$10 million facility has a seating capacity of 3,000 with a Field Turf playing surface. The turf consists of sand, rubber and film polyethylene grass-like fabric with secondary backing of high polyurethane. The field is lined for football and soccer. "Given the size of the facility, there is not a bad seat in the house," said Donald Smith, Director for the Center of Leadership which is in charge of the management and oversight of stadium operations. "The geography is fantastic being situated on the hill and treelined, it is a gorgeous spot to watch a game."

It also houses a 36,000 square-foot athletic administration building. The administration building features two locker rooms, three classrooms, athletic training room, office space for the football coaching staff, athletic administration and Olympic sport coaches, University box, press box, equipment room and a weight room.

An added feature that will aid in the continued success of RMU football is the Landro Play Analyzer, which is a presentation device used to study game videos. Up to 50,000 plays or 115 games can be

accessed without ever using video tapes or DVDs. Designed especially for coaches, it allows users to jump instantly to plays without ever using video tape.

Game day setup will include four separate kiosks, with one each for tickets, concessions, Barnes and Noble bookstore and alumni on the Joe Walton Stadium Plaza. Hollowood Music and Sound from McKees Rocks, Pa., will provide music and a public address system, while Institutional Specialities, a distributor of Daktronics, is the maker of the scoreboard that is located at the south end of the field. Along the Joe Walton Stadium Portal there will be 160 pavers to recognize donors to the campaign to raise funds for Joe Walton Stadium.

The new stadium will give the student body of Robert Morris a sense of excitement on game days with an on-campus stadium. "Having an on-campus facility will allow Robert Morris students to get a true college experience without ever having to leave campus," said Coleman. The students will no longer have to make the approximate one mile walk or shuttle up University Boulevard to Moon Stadium. Nearby parking lots will give students, fans, parents, and alumni a place to get together for tailgate parties before games and provide more of a "college football" atmosphere. "Owning a stadium and having a home football team on campus gives us another thing to be proud of," said Smith. "We did very well at Moon Stadium and the facility served us well, but we did not own it and it was off campus. It will benefit our football program and the University greatly to take ownership of our own stadium and it is something to be proud of."

Seating Capacity: 3,000
Where: RMU's Moon Township Campus
Built: 2005
Cost: \$10 million
Built By: Mosites Construction Company (Pittsburgh, Pa. - www.mosites.com)
Square Footage: 97,000 Square Feet (Field Turf); 36,000 Square Feet (Administration Building)



JOE WALTON STADIUM

2004-05 Year in Review

A look at some of what the Colonial Athletic Club did to support RMU Athletics

- * Hosted alumni reunions for women's soccer, men's soccer, softball and men's basketball
- * Awarded one \$750 Colonial Athletic Club scholarship to a deserving student-athlete
- * Paid for all of the following: softball and volleyball championship banners, football senior parent flowers, men's ice hockey video equipment, women's lacrosse/field hockey video equipment, and men's lacrosse video equipment
- * Donated money towards the new track high jump pit and flood repairs for the women's crew team
- * Committed an additional \$6,136.05 to three separate scholarships, including \$496.87 to the CAC Scholarship, \$2,668.78 to the Tim Hall Scholarship, and \$2,970.40 to the Craig Coleman Scholarship

Where Is She Now?

2005 Robert Morris Hall of Fame Inductee

Elise James



Former women's basketball standout Elise James was a four-year letterwinner for Robert Morris from 1996-2000. Over that span, James became the first Colonial men's or women's basketball player to record over 1,000 points and 1,000 rebounds for her career. To this day, James still stands as the only player to accomplish that feat and stands atop the career record books in both of the aforementioned categories with 1,563 points and 1,120 rebounds. She also owns the career records for field goals made (620) and field goal attempts (1,370) while standing second in blocks (114), third in free throw attempts (534) and fourth in free throws made (323). James was a four-time All-Northeast Conference honoree, including a two-time selection to the first team in her junior and senior campaigns. She graduated in May of 2000 with a bachelor's degree in communication. After a year break, James returned to RMU to earn a master's degree in instructional leadership. Following her playing career she worked in the marketing department at the Pittsburgh Business Times before working for Big Brothers, Big Sisters in recruitment and training and serving as an assistant basketball coach at Winchester Thurston High School in Pittsburgh. Once her master's was completed, James moved back to her home state of New Jersey. In October, she will join the late Susan Hofacre (athletic director), Gene Nabors (men's basketball), John Kuziel (men's basketball), Jim Baughman (track and field) and Mark Wallace (men's tennis) as RMU Hall of Fame inductees. James currently works for Thomson Financial in Manhattan as a technology trainer. On her own time, James does some consulting with sports teams to help teach student-athletes transitional skills once they are done playing. Her consulting work further emphasizes James' thesis that she wrote for her master's, which specifically dealt with leadership development and career development for student-athletes. James and fiance, George DeCruise, reside in Cliffside, N.J., and are expecting their first child, a boy, in early August and will be married on December 3.



Q & A with RMU Director of Athletics, Craig Coleman, M.D.

On May 1, 2005, Craig Coleman, M.D., switched from dealing with psychiatric patients during the day to dealing with the needs of intercollegiate coaches and student-athletes, and he would not have it any other way. The following is a quick insight into RMU's new Director of Athletics, Craig Coleman, M.D. :

Q: What plans do you have in mind to help RMU athletics grow or improve?

A: "There has been a 35 percent increase in the number of sports over the last three years, so I am not looking right away to add sports, but we will strive to make sure that every athlete has a positive experience and that all of the teams are taken care of. We have a new president this year and he is very supportive of athletics, so I am very excited to work along side him to help chart a new course in the athletic department."

Q: What was it that made you make your job change?

A: "I have always had a passion for sports and I have grown to love this campus after my 15 years of coaching here. Although the circumstances were tragic that I came into the position with Dr. Hofacre's untimely passing, I had the opportunity to do something different and it was a hard decision, but I was up for the change and the challenge."

Q: How long would you like to serve as both the athletic director and the head softball coach?

A: "I would like to continue doing both as long as I can. I used to work 50 hours a week and was 25 miles away and did them both successfully. Now that I am on campus full time, I can do them both better than before."

Q: What was it like making it to the NCAA tournament for the first time in 15 years of coaching?

A: "It was wonderful. We have won the conference before but there was never an automatic berth into the NCAA tournament, so winning the conference this season was extra special. It helped to put our program on the national map."

Q: What was it like playing in the NCAA tournament?

A: "From a coaching standpoint, we have played high-caliber teams before, but in different settings, like on our spring break trips to Florida, but doing it as part of the NCAA regionals made it special. In terms of the players, the first time they tend to be awe struck by the experience and not play like they are capable of playing and that was our case this year."

Q: What is the biggest difference from your previous job to now?

A: My primary focus now is getting to work with the student-athletes, as opposed to psychiatric patients, along with getting to be more involved in the administration of sports, which I love; and emergencies that I have to deal with now are fields not being playable as opposed to patients and their psychiatric care.



On May 15, 2005 the Colonial softball team won its sixth NEC title in the program's history and earned their first trip to the NCAA Tournament.

CAC Highlights

- * There is a record 165 members in the CAC, which is up 25% from 2003-04.
- * We brought in \$19,034 in dues, which is up 41% from 2003-04.
- * The annual CAC Scholarship amount doubled to \$1,500, which will accommodate three student-athletes in 2005-06 and four in 2006-07.
- * There will be CAC pregame tailgates at noon (11:00 a.m. on Sept. 17) in Joe Walton Stadium at all home games this season, which takes the place of the half-time tent that we have had in the past.

NCAA Rules Refresher ...

As athletic boosters, it never hurts to keep in mind the rules of our governing body.

You are a "representative of athletics interests" if you've ever been a member of any RMU sport support group or booster club, have made a donation to the athletic program, have ever helped arrange or provided summer employment for the enrolled student-athletes or been involved in the promotion of RMU athletics in any way. A "prospective student-athlete" is a person who has begun classes for the ninth grade. The fact that members of the Colonial Athletic Club are representatives of athletics interests means there are several do's and don'ts when it comes to contact with high school and junior college coaches, prospective student-athletes and currently enrolled student-athletes. Questions? contact the RMU Compliance office today at 412-262-8431.