

“THE SKIP SHOT”

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BISON WATER POLO PROGRAM



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A NOTE FROM HEAD COACH JOHN McBRIDE



Greetings from Lewisburg and the Bucknell Polo program!

Snow, dig out, repeat. Snow, dig out, repeat. When you think of water polo you think of outdoor pools, 80 degree weather, and shorts. What you don't think of is a "Polar Vortex" camping out over Pennsylvania for two months bringing snow every day with sub-zero temps. The funniest part of this weather is that the worst occurred when we had all of our recruits from California and South Florida arrive on campus for their official visits with a fleece jacket, no boots, hats, or gloves. I must have repeated the phrase, "it's never this bad" about 100 times to these athletes. Fortunately

it didn't affect recruiting and most thought that the snow and cold was "really cool"! The great thing, however, is that we are not an outdoor sport and Kinney Natatorium is always 83 degrees.

The women's team has embarked upon their 2014 season with high expectations and has started the season off very well. At this point we have a 5-3 record and our wins have come against teams that we lost to last year. This season has an entirely new pressure to it because we have to qualify for Eastern Championships where in years past it was an automatic bid. The women know what they have to do to qualify and they are highly motivated. Our practices have been very intense and the women have adopted a very serious attitude towards being successful. Soon we will be making our annual trip to California to get ready for league play upon our return. April will be the most important month for us. That is when our season really begins. How we finish in league and Southern Championships will determine whether or not we qualify for Eastern's. Eastern Championships are being held at Bucknell this year which is very exciting.

I would like to thank all of you for the continued financial support of both the men's and women's programs. In order to do all that we'd like to do this year and balance our budget, we need to raise \$85,000, and at this point we are half way to our goal. It is important for me to remind you how crucial outside financial support is to the success of both programs. It is only through that support that we can continue to successfully compete and beat top-20 programs, and keep Bucknell Water Polo as one of the premier programs in the country.

All of our student-athletes continue to be successful in the classroom as well. Several of our athletes have been named Academic All-Americans as well as Athletic All-Americans. Each year they have elevated themselves to be more successful than the past year. The Bucknell Water Polo Family is the primary reason for their success. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you on deck.

GO BISON!

John McBride
Head Water Polo Coach

WOMEN'S SCHEDULE

Bison Invitational -- Lewisburg, Pa.

Feb. 15	vs. Villanova	W, 10-7
	vs. Hartwick	L, 13-6
Feb. 16	vs. Princeton	L, 10-3
	vs. Marist	W, 7-5

CWPA/MAAC Crossover Cambridge, Mass.

Feb. 22	vs. Villanova	W, 8-6
	vs. Iona	W, 9-6
Feb. 23	vs. Wagner	L, 13-5
	vs. Siena	W, 9-5

Mar. 11	at Cal Baptist	8:00 p.m.
Mar. 12	at Pomona-Pitzer	10:00 p.m.
Mar. 13	at Long Beach State	10:00 p.m.

Aztec Invitational -- San Diego, Calif.

Mar. 15	vs. TBA	TBA
Mar. 16	vs. TBA	TBA
Mar. 29	vs. Princeton* (Erie, Pa.)	3:00 p.m.
	at Mercyhurst*	7:00 p.m.
April 5	vs. Harvard*	10:00 a.m.
	vs. George Washington*	5:30 p.m.
April 6	vs. Brown*	11:30 a.m.

Southern Championships -- Cambridge, Mass.

April 12	vs. TBA	TBA
April 13	vs. TBA	TBA

CWPA Championship -- Lewisburg, Pa.

April 25	vs. TBA	TBA
April 26	vs. TBA	TBA
April 27	vs. TBA	TBA

* - Conference opponent
All times Eastern

Water Polo Office Contact Information

Head Coach: John McBride
Phone: 570-577-1777
E-Mail: jwm035@bucknell.edu
Asst. Coach: Kyle Gorham
Phone: 570-577-1833
E-Mail: kwg006@bucknell.edu

Water Polo Fax: 570-577-1660
Web Site: www.BucknellBison.com

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT WITH MATT NAPLETON '13

A two-time First Team All-Collegiate Water Polo Association (CWPA) Southern Division selection while at Bucknell, Matt Napleton helped the Bison to their first-ever Southern Championships title in 2012. Napleton was a Second Team All-Eastern Championship selection in 2012, helping the Bison advance to the Eastern Championship title game for the first time since 1993. Napleton posted 28 saves during the Eastern Championship, including 10 against the Terriers in the finale. A two-year starter, Napleton finished his stellar senior season with 330 saves to rank third on Bucknell's single-season ledger. A four-year member of the Association of Collegiate Water Polo Coaches All-Academic Team and a four-time CWPA Scholar-Athlete, Napleton was a team co-captain in 2012. He graduated with an impressive 3.73 grade-point average while majoring in economics. In July Napleton signed a professional contract with Rari Nantes Savona, a team that plays in the highest division of the Italian League.



How did Bucknell prepare you for playing polo at the highest European level?

The game in Italy is quite a bit different than it was at Bucknell, and any time you play at a higher level than you ever have before, you're going to take some time to adjust and get up to speed. Bucknell prepared me to take the next step by fostering my commitment to water polo and giving me all the tools necessary to improve, whether it was coaching, facilities, support from alumni, etc. This commitment to my game and my team is something that transfers between all levels of play. I would say the main advantage I gained from Bucknell is that by my last two years at BU, I was treating water polo like a job, one that I cared deeply about. That kind of mentality has made the transition much easier for me.

What is it like playing against Pro Recco whose current roster has six Italian Olympic Silver Medalists?

Playing against Recco is always a challenge, but also an incredible opportunity. The accomplishments of the players speak for themselves: Olympic gold medalists, world champions, world players of the year, etc. So I feel very lucky to be able to get in the pool with those players. You can go on Youtube and find highlight reels of most of them. You always try to learn everything you can from games like those with Recco, or AN Brescia, who are also among the best handful of teams in the world. I learn the most from watching and observing Recco's goalkeeper, Stefano Tempesti, considered by many to be the best in the world.

What is life like being a professional athlete in Italy?

Life is pretty simple over here playing professional water polo. Just like at Bucknell, you spend so much time with your team they become your best friends and when you're a foreigner, like your family while you're over here. I live with a teammate, and eat almost every meal with anyone from one other teammate to the whole team. Aside from that, training, games, and travelling for games take up most of your time. The training is difficult, but nothing too much harder than some of the things we did with McBride. Mentally it can be more stressful, as the 3-month college season goes by in a flash compared to the 9-month season here, and every game carries a lot of importance. Apart from water polo, the biggest adjustment was the language, as there are no native English speakers on the team, so 99% of my interactions are in Italian. Thankfully, my Italian has improved and I have felt fairly comfortable with the language for a while now, but day to day life becomes easier and easier as you get better.

How long do you see yourself as a professional water polo player?

My plan is to finish this season and evaluate what my options are and go from there. I still love the game and want to continue playing at the highest level possible, but there are a lot of things to consider, so for now I'm playing it by ear.

What are your goals in the sport?

As far as goals, I feel very lucky to be playing in Serie A1 in Italy, as it was a goal to play at a level like this before, and now that I am, it puts me in a great position to improve. I want to do close out this year strong in Savona and I want to pursue the possibility of playing for the U.S. national team in the future.

What are some of the most difficult things about being a goalie in Water Polo at the collegiate and professional level?

The position of goalie can be one of the worst, if not the worst, in sports. It can also be one of the best, but it requires a special mentality to be a goalie. There's a lot of pressure on you to perform, and while we play a team sport, and it can be easy to put fault on the goalie rather than the defense, as he is the last line of defense. If you don't play well, you can feel responsible for your team losing. On the other hand, one of my favorite parts of being a goalie at any level is that you have the power to decide the outcome of the game with your play more than any other player in the pool. A strong goalie can be the backbone of a team, the most essential piece of the puzzle.

CAPTAINS CORNER



MACKENZIE FERRY, Sr., UTL
Enola, Pa./Cumberland Valley



Overall, my experience as a member of the Bucknell Women's Water Polo Team has been absolutely wonderful, but it certainly had a bumpy start. Over my four-year career I have had three different head coaches and four different assistants, something I never expected when I decided to attend Bucknell. With this being said, being coached by both McBride and Kyle over the last two years has provided me with stability and made my experience very positive. My role as a member of this team has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my time at Bucknell. There is nothing better than getting the opportunity to play the sport you love with your best friends everyday. Additionally, I am fortunate to be a part of such a supportive group of Seniors. As a unit, we have stuck together through all the program changes and improved steadily to become a highly com-

petitive group of athletes. When I leave Bucknell, I will miss most my teammates and experiences I have shared with them over the last four years.

As we begin our competition for the 2014 season, it is clear that our team has limitless potential. We have had several strong wins in our first two weekends of play, as well as a few tough losses that highlighted what we still need to work on. Julianne and I have stressed the importance of attitude as one of the keys to our success this year. Kyle and McBride have provided us with the technical skills we need to be successful in the pool, but it is up to us as a team to show up to the pool with the relentless desire to win, as well as the drive to work hard each day. Our main goal for this season is simple: qualify for Easterns. If we work hard everyday at practice and show up to games with the right attitude, the rest of our season will fall into place. GO BISON!



JULIANNE VALDES, Sr., UTL
Miami, Florida/Gulliver Prep



As my collegiate water polo career comes to a close, I could not be any more excited for the season. It seems as though it was just yesterday that the senior class and I had our first practice, first game, and first win. Now, the senior class and I are counting down the lasts of our lasts to conclude a great four years of Bucknell Water Polo. For our final season, we have set the bar high for ourselves, and are determined to have our best season yet. With the help of an extremely talented underclassmen squad, the team is focused to fight and improve each and every game. We have a full and challenging schedule ahead of us, and I am confident that the team will have a great season. We have the talent, the heart, and the dedication that will undoubtedly make us successful this year.

What can't be put into words is how much I will miss Bucknell Water Polo once I graduate. From the friendships I have forged, to the chronic smell of chlorine, and seemingly everlasting bus rides to tournaments, my experience playing for Bucknell is one that will never be forgotten. I am proud to be a member of this team, and even more humbled to be a captain this year. Although the "real world" awaits post graduation, I am in no hurry for my last season with Bucknell Women's Water Polo to end.

SUPPORT YOUR POLO PROGRAM

The student-athletes in our water polo program benefit from a top-notch, highly competitive, Division I experience. In addition to competing at the highest level in one of the finest facilities in the nation, our student-athletes will graduate from a prestigious academic institution with all the tools they will need to be successful in life. ***None of this is possible without your continued annual support.***

While endowments such as the Russell Endowment and the Canonica Family Water Polo Endowment provide resources to allow Bucknell to maintain the polo programs, it is the annual support that provides on average 40% of our yearly operating budget each year. Those funds provide for many of the essentials of the daily operations for both the men's and women's teams, and if we do not meet our fundraising goal each year our student-athletes will not have the quality experience that has come to be expected from the Bucknell program. In our case, our California trips become jeopardized which hurts our recruiting and prevents an opportunity for many of our student-athletes to compete in their home state in front of family and friends.

Our fundraising goal this year, as set by the administration, is \$85,000. As of the end of January we sat at just under \$50,000, or 58.7% of goal. If you are able, now is the time to support YOUR BISON WATER POLO program. Our student-athletes appreciate what you do for them, and your support makes the entire program one we can all be very proud of. Thanks in advance for your support.

Methods of Giving

Check or Cash

By Credit Card

Gifts of Stock/Securities

Pledges

Corporate matching gifts

You can give on-line:

www.BucknellBison.com

BUCKNELL ALUMNI WIN USA WATER POLO COLLEGE ALUMNI TOURNAMENT



USA WATER POLO ALUMNI CHAMPIONS: (from left to right): Tony Paxton '81, Chris Judge, Kyle Gorham (Bucknell asst. men's & women's polo coach), Garrin Kapecki '89, John Zeigler '91 (former Bucknell coach), Scott Schulte '81, Mark Gensheimer '81 (kneeling), Roger Schwanhausser '75 (holding trophy), Jeff Hilk '86 (kneeling), Chad Jendsen, Mike Hoffmann '83, Jason Rechel '08 and Richie Hyden '12.

(Recap comments at left from Assistant Coach Kyle Gorham)

There are worse places to be in after a snowstorm in the northeast than Clearwater, Florida. I put my snow shovel away and found myself in Florida for the USA Water Polo College Alumni Tournament. I joined a contingent of Bucknell alumni that spanned five decades of graduates all there to compete against other current and former varsity water polo programs. When all was said and done the Bison of Bucknell finished 4-0 and captured the tournament title.

The defacto-championship game ended up being the second of the tournament (round robin style tournament) against St. Francis Brooklyn. The Bison raced out to a 7-2 lead dominating the first quarter, and by the final buzzer the work done in the first quarter ended up being the difference maker. St. Francis made a goalie change for the second quarter to recent Bucknell nemesis Igor Mladenovic. Goals, needless to say, were difficult to come by and we managed to only score three goals the rest of the way. The final buzzer saw a Bucknell victory by the score of 10-8, the closest game of the weekend.

Weekend Awards:

MVP- Goalie Tom Paxton

Defensive MVP- Jeff Hilk

Offensive MVP – Garrin Kapecki

Coaches Award – Scott Shulte (only because he was the coach)