Lady Flames achieve perfection

In the Lady Flames season finale, the Radford Highlanders gave them all they could handle in the DeVaca Center on Saturday night. The Flames, however, once again found a way to win and completed a perfect conference season for only the second time in LU history.

The Flames jumped out to an early lead as they so often do against conference opponents. Katie Fennstra was able to get low-post position and get an easy four points on two short jump shots as the Flames led 7-3. For the Highlanders, pitch shot by pitch, hit Radford’s first two three-pointers and was unable to get much help from the first seven minutes of the game.

The Flames looked unstoppable as Kristal Tharp was able to score on a lay-up underneath as she corralled a rebound and put it back for an easy two points. Tharp and Fennstra together had 13 early points and each had 10 points by halftime. However, Radford refused to go down quietly as they stretched LU’s defense and shut down the Flames offense. The Flames only scored two points over a six minute span as Radford came alive. Rattling behind over 1,000 fans in attendance, the Highlanders went on a 12-2 run to shock the Flames and crush the lead to two points. Amanda Neby and Sherri Rickman had six of those 13 points as they were able to hit on short jump shots and stay away from Fennstra on the low block.

After a media timeout and some regrouping, the Flames were able to go on a 7-0 run of their own to push the lead back out to nine and lead 30-21 at the half.

In the second half the Flames went right back to their bread and butter as Fennstra scored a quick two, to send the lead back to double digits. However, the Flames started to get a little rattled as the shots stopped falling. Fennstra had to guard Hana Statt Tenken (6-foot-5, center) who hit back to back-three pointers directly in front of her bench.

FROM WAY DOWNTOWN — Kristal Tharp prepares to launch a three-pointer against Radford.

Lady Flames finish up the conference with a perfect 14 and 0

Untouchable!

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Katie Feenstra: The past, the present, and her future beyond Liberty

By Robbie Adams, sports editor

From the first time she picked up a basketball in the sixth grade, Katie Feenstra has almost always been the tallest player on the court. At 6-foot-8 inches tall, most female athletes are very intimidated by her size and are in awe of her athletic ability. What most don’t know, however, is how this girl from Michigan ended up at Liberty University and what she sees for herself in the past, the present, and the future.

Feenstra didn’t pick up a ball in an organized fashion until she was in the seventh grade and even then she stood 6-feet tall. Her friend invited her to attend a clinic at Cornerstone University where she first learned the basics of the game. “I learned a lot of skills at Cornerstone,” Feenstra said. “At first though Feenstra was not inspired to play because she just could excel the way she wanted. ‘At first, to tell the truth, I didn’t really like it (basketball) because I wasn’t very good, although lay-ups did come easy to me. I would get so many phone calls, and I didn’t know how to work them because I was so close to the basket.’ Feenstra continued to practice, however, and when asked how she came to learn so much so fast about the game she responded, ‘I went to all my brother’s games, so I guess I kind of learned from him.’

No matter who she learned from, Feenstra was growing in her knowledge of the game, as well as, physically reaching 6-foot-5 inches by the eighth grade. However, it wouldn’t be until her junior and senior years in high school that she would really stand out in a crowd on a national level. As a senior, Feenstra had stats that made LeBron James look ordinary. She averaged 35.4 points per game, 18.5 rebounds and 8.5 blocked shots. After this performance she was named Western Michigan Player of the Year. “I look at these high school stats now, and it’s just a little high school team, Division 1 is much harder,” Feenstra said.

College招,s Feenstra’s phone off the hook and the letters poured into her mailbox at an extraordinary rate. “Everyday I would get so many phone calls, and I didn’t even know who those schools were. I would also get 30 letters a day, which I still have in my attic, half of which are not open.”

When it came down to her decision Feenstra just left it all up to God. “I just talked to the Lord and prayed about it, I knew he would put me where he wanted me,” Feenstra said. It isn’t often that Liberty University can beat out Notre Dame and Michigan State in a recruiting war, but on this occasion LU was victorious. “I knew I wanted to go to a Christian university, and I had a peace about this school, it was Him (God) who put me here,” Feenstra added.

Upon coming to Liberty, Feenstra hurt her knee in a preseason workout and was forced to miss almost half of her freshman year. She did return however to play in the games and help lead the Lady Flames to a sixth straight Big South Conference title. This year though, Katie has been almost injury free, and it has had a great affect on how aggressively she is playing. “My knees were still bothering me last year, they are not giving me any problems this year though. I am a lot more confident because I don’t have to wear knee braces, and I have a whole reason to gain confidence,” Feenstra said.

Feenstra has also been working with former WSNA player and now assistant coach Karyn Karlin, who is helping her with her post moves. “She is incredible, every time I come back to the bench she tells me how I am doing,” Feenstra said. Whatever Karlin and the rest of the staff is saying, it must be working as Feenstra is averaging 17.2 ppg as well as 9.2 rebounds in conference play, not too shabby for a sophomore. These stats however do come with a price according to Feenstra. “I never knew how to work until I came here. If you don’t work hard, you won’t play on this team,” Feenstra said.

With two years left, the sky is the limit for Feenstra’s improvement, but she has a few thoughts on what she might want to do when she does finish her career at LU.

Whatever the Lord has for Feenstra, she seems ready and able to take on the challenges. With the success and drive she has shown in basketball, who would doubt that this Lady Flame won’t shock the world in the future.
Agne Jasinskaite: Hard work pays off

By Ben Cates, reporter

Agne Jasinskaite appears to have been playing basketball for a lifetime. She has proven to be an excellent shooter, a scrappy defender, and has always possessed a first-rate attitude while in a Liberty uniform. Go beyond those facts, and you will find a 22-year-old woman who has a caring attitude towards the things of the Lord and others as well. Surprisingly, she has only been playing basketball since the sixth grade.

She calls Vilnius, Lithuania her home. It was there, in that competitive culture, that Jasinskaite learned the important skills that now dominate her game. Once her interest in basketball was sparked, she never looked back.

“I’ve always been a competitive person,” Jasinskaite said. “I started playing and I really enjoyed it. I only had to go to practice once to realize that I liked it.”

In 2001, Jasinskaite made her first journey to the United States and ultimately, to Liberty University. While she possesses a deep patriotism for her country, the 5-10 junior said that there were many reasons that factored into her decision to come to the States.

“Basically, the level of basketball play is much better, and I wanted to improve on my skills,” she said. “I also wanted to experience a new culture.”

Jasinskaite’s play was definitely good enough for her to get recognized from overseas. Besides her high school experiences, she took part in the Junior Nationals for three years, helped Lithuania to win the All-Baltic Tournament and led her team to victory in the Polish Tournament in 1998. She has also previously been part of the three-time Baltic Tournament Champions, and has taken part in the women’s A-league for the last four of those years, her teams finished in first place.

In 2001, Jasinskaite is limited to 11 games, missing the majority of the season with a fractured right foot. During this time, she averaged 2.2 minutes per game.

After an off-season filled with uncertainty, Jasinskaite came back to the Liberty squad and instantly proved her worth to the team. During the 2002-2003 season, she has averaged 9.5 points per game.

“All smiles — Agne Jasinskaite has been a significant force on offense for the Lady Flames.”

By John Fisher

JOHN FISHER

Radford becomes LU’s latest victim

Frenzied finisher

By John Fisher

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On the offensive end, she had three straight shots rattle out and began to show some fatigue. The Flames gave up some early points on some great passes by the Highlanders and at the 11:12 mark the lead was all but gone at 49-39.

The Flames were able to battle and claw to get a 4-5 advantage with just under eight minutes to go and that is when Jasinskaite became a big part. On two possessions late in the game, Susan Forrill and Monique Leonard were able to drive out of bounds for loose balls. Leonard saved the day for Jasinskaite as the Flames were able to work the clock and Forrill tipped her to Tharp for an easy bucket under the hoop.

The final dagger came with just two minutes to go and the shot clock winding down as Kristal Tharp found herself wide open for a three with one second left on the shot clock as she buried the shot and the game. It was there, in that competitive culture, that Jasinskaite learned the important skills that now dominate her game.
The Pride of the Furnace

AUNDREA DAWSON
AGNE JASINSKAITE
KRISTAL THARP
KATIE FEENSTRA
GINGER COOPER, CHRIS CARROLL, COACH CAREY GREEN, LEAH BIRD AND KARYN KARLIN
SUSAN FOREID
DAINA STAGAITIENE
STEPHANIE WALKER

LY
What better place than here...
What better time than now...
Vince Okotie: Senior warrior leads the way

By Wes Rickards, managing editor

The team has since won by following Okotie. He has shown his determination and dedication to this program. "I don't see myself as a leader. We are all fighting for a common goal," Vince Okotie, the lone senior said. "I just like to be the catalyst for the team."

Catalyst is usually a term used for chemistry, where it is defined as a substance, used in small amounts, that causes a reaction. In this case, the catalyst that causes or speeds up the reaction of winning is definitely Okotie. "I just had a good start to the year," Okotie said of his second place heading into Senior night. "I like the challenges in this game. You have to work hard to rise up to them. When people constantly say you can't do something, you want to prove them wrong."

Talk about proving people wrong, how about to the tune of second place heading into the Big South conference tournament, when all the so-called experts picked the Flames dead last out of eight? Now that’s proving people wrong. Okotie’s points per game average has dropped off since the early season highs, mainly because of an ankle injury halfway through the season, but one thing the ankle injury couldn’t affect was the attitude and leadership skills he possesses. This provides greater success for a team than sheer scoring, though Okotie still does this well.

Power Play — Vince Okotie has been second in scoring over the past two seasons for LLU. One thing that goes hand in hand with talent is hard work, being able to get the most out of your talent. This is the attitude of Okotie. In the summer, if anyone came into the Vines Center on any given afternoon, they can be guaranteed he is on the floor shooting shot, after shot, after shot. "I like the challenges in this game. You have to work hard to rise up to them. When people constantly say you can’t do something, you want to prove them wrong."

Secondly, the 6-foot-3 Okotie’s points per game average has dropped off since the early season highs, mainly because of an ankle injury halfway through the season, but one thing the ankle injury couldn’t affect was the attitude and leadership skills he possesses. This provides greater success for a team than sheer scoring, though Okotie still does this well.

Freddy Williams: Liberty’s champion underdog deserves respect

By Wes Rickards, managing editor

How can someone not feel sorry for Freddy Williams? Off the court, he’s spiritual, well-spoken and a genuine, stand-up guy. On the court, he’s a player harder; with more tenacity, and with more heart, than anyone else on the floor. During his brief playing career, he’s faced so many hardships that he’s become the ultimate underdog. Yet his goals and priorities are always in focus. Basically, you can think of him as an athletic version of Rudy with mutton chops. First off, Freddy’s from Buffalo, and any sports fan can tell you that that automatically deserves to invoke sympathy. With his home-town Bills and Sabres producing three of the most shockingly memorable moments in sports over the last 15 years, Leon Scott Norwood’s missed field goal, to the Music City Miracle, to Brett Hull’s infamous ”No Goal,” Buffalo is pretty much the sports world’s equivalent to the guy who gets stood up on Prom night.

Secondly, the 6-foot-3 Williams is engaged, not just to anyone but a girl who survived the Columbine High School tragedy. "She was a senior when it happened," Freddy said of his fiance. "She’s got scars from the school, and had to be pulled out by a teacher."

"She’s got a great testimony, an incredible testimony," he said after a brief pause. "Thirdly, the youth minister major joined the team as a walk-on a few years ago, and not only has stayed with the team, but has earned a scholarship and been named captain. It takes a certain kind of person to be able to do that. After all, he played in only eight games during last season’s 5-25 debacle. But still, winning basketball games and looking at the box scores to check his minutes is not what he’s all about. "I’m not a big stat man," he said. ”My goal, when I’m on the floor, is to make sure that I’m the hardest worker out there. When the game’s finished and all is said and done, that’s what I want to hear known.”

Fourthly, his career really started to take off during the end of this past December. At the beginning of the season, he started getting more and more minutes, and managed to work his way into the starting lineup against UConn and Virginia. Just when he was getting his big break, he did just that — he broke his right hand while fighting through a double-team against UVA. While the initial diagnosis was that he needed surgery, which would’ve ended the season, Williams recovered miraculously in time to start a game later on in the season. And, it wasn’t just any game but instead it was on Senior night, when the team, and the fans applauded him for his contributions to the program. "Honestly?” Freddy said when asked about his recovery. "It was just God. He was kept in a cast for three weeks, with surgery seeming to be inevitable. But when the doctors removed the cast (with the intentions of putting on another one), everything had set well enough for him to be allowed to practice and play normally. Fifthly, and finally, he realises that the intentions of the athletic programs at Liberty are not primarily to entertain, or to generate money, but instead used as a unique ministry opportunity. To this end, he has established the Imagine prayer team, an enterprise that he says God placed on his heart. Freddy, the turnaround the team has accomplished, and his expectations that they’ve met and surpassed, must give credit to providential intervention.

With that, the prayer team that Freddy helped establish is a significant part to the Flames’ revival. Because of all he’s done, I say he’s of it. So, try to remember to chase just a little harder when he checks into a game sometime this week.

He’s earned it.

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The big blow of the inning

scored four runs off of

inning when the Catamounts

the bottom of the sixth

Andrew Van Slyke had a pair

ers Phillip Laurent and

for the Flames.

the seventh.

Catamounts then added their

Saturday's doubleheader, the

the Catamounts swept both

Western Carolina for a dou-

Liberty would rally scoring

Liberty traveled to

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"Good for Two Free Gun Rentals and Field Fee"


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Track and Field ready for nationals

By Evan Field, reporter

Running at the VPI Last Chance Invitational on Saturday, the Liberty men’s distance medley relay (DMR) knew this would likely be their last chance to qualify for the ICAEs Championships.

With the games being held in Boston next weekend, Saturday’s meet was the first and only time this year Liberty run in top DMR squad in hopes of obtaining a qualifying time for the ICAEs.

With the pressure on, the team was able to rise to the occasion and beat their qualifying time by seven seconds, running a time of 10:22.00.

The men’s DMR team of Evan Field, Jon DeBorgory, Jason Brown and Jonathan Melly will be joining 30 of their fellow Liberty team-

mates who also qualified for Boston at previous indoor track meets this season.

Qualifying for the women’s EAC Championships, the women’s equivalent to the ICAEs, were Kiera Batts in the high jump, Josadia Saunders in the triple jump, and Davi McNaney, in the pentathlon.

McNaney will be competing for the second straight year at the ICAEs Championships.

I feel that by competing last year at EACs the experience will help me a lot, McNaney said. “The competition was tough but it helped me to gain confidence in myself."

The men’s 4x400 relay team, which took first place and set a new record at the Big South qualified for Boston with a time of 3:38.45.

The women’s DMR team, as well as the 4x400 meter relay team, and six other individuals qualified.

Jeremy Wagner qualified in the 200 meter sprint with a time of 21.99. Also qualifying last weekend was Jon DeBorgory who ran a time of 48.80. Joelle McMillin will be com-

peting in the pentathlon at ICAEs thanks to his time of 9:38.68, which qualified her for Boston.

Tyrone Biggins will be taking

the shot put to the ICAEs back in December of last year at VRI with a throw of 15.6 meters.

Hockey finishes second in regionals

By Bence Smith, reporter

The road to the ACHA Nationals came to an end this past week as 16 teams traveled to Anaheim to play for the right to be called champion. Liberty, along with Indiana, Miami of Ohio and Indiana University of Pennsylvania, represented the Southeast region.

LU was seeded in a pool with Michigan, Penn State and Weber State, with the top team moving on to play in the semi-finals.

The Flames opened up their play on Wednesday night against the Wolverines, and the team would come out on fire.

After both teams exchanged early scores, Liberty had one of its best periods of hockey as the freshmen on the team played above their

years. Tom Cosner, Paul McDonald and Jonathan Zeiger all scored for the Flames a 3-1 lead. After a late UM, goal it seemed that the teams would go into the first intermission at 3-2, Joe Bellew scored a power play goal, and McDonald beat the goalie with 44 seconds left, and Liberty took a 5-2 lead into the break.

While it looked like Michigan was going to fold, last year’s national runners-up, would make adjustments for the middle period.

Seven minutes in, Derek Schlosky scored the third of four goals against LU and made the score 3-2. Another Wolverines goal at the 6:30 mark suddenly made the game a one-goal game. With Liberty scrambling, Michigan was able to finish their comeback to tie the score at five, and all the momentum from the first period for LU was gone.

The Flames were able to recover enough to get the lead back with a power play shut off of Jeff Smale’s stick and were able to limp into the second intermission with a 5-6 lead. The third period saw Liberty go into a defensive mode and close down and frustrate the Wolverines offense.

The game was able to be put away for LU when Jim Bellsie hit the back of the net for the insurance goal, which would be needed.

Michigan scored their sixth goal with 4:07 left and had a face-off in the Liberty zone with 12:36 which resulted in three shots which were turned away by Kevin Rainey.

The final score was 7-6, LU, which played at 4:45, the previous day, led to do the quick turn around as they played at 9:45 a.m. against Penn State.

The game started out similarly to the previous day as the Liberty score from Josh Pearce was quickly sealed by a pass goal by PSI, and the score was tied at 20 minutes at 1-1. The tie was finally broken with under five minutes left in regulation as Pearce scored his second goal of the night on a pass from Jordan Davies to give the Flames the lead, one which would not relinquish. Pearce was able to complete a hat trick with an empty net goal and eliminated Penn State from the possi-

bility of winning the pool.

Later that night, the final day of the pool was set up as Weber State knocked Michigan out of the competition with a 4-2 win. So, it would be a winner-take-all game with the Wildcats and the Flames.

The game, which was played on an Olympic size rink, was settled by a simple 3-2 win, with two of LU’s goals coming early in the game as a pass made it through to Smale in front of the net that he couldn’t knock over the goalie’s shoulder and into the back of the net for a 2-0 lead after six minutes.

The momentum began to turn, unfortunately an empty net pass turned into a short handed goal for Weber State, and the last of the Flames hopes left.

While they battled to the end, the fatigue and frustration began to sink in by the time the last buzzer sounded and ended Liberty’s run for the National Championship.

While disappointed, they understand the fact that the future is still ahead. Head coach Kirk Hardy was very happy with the past year. "I am very excited about how we performed here and I think we took a big step forward in the growth of the program."
Flames suffer set back but still get second seed for tourney

By By Sean Berard, reporter

The men’s basketball team finished its regular season Friday evening riding on a high. Saturday 56-54 win over rival Radford. The Flames hold the second seed of the week and fourth consecutive for the Flames, who lose to an under manned High Point upset as well, 72-68 on Wednesday evening. Liberty will enter the Big South Tournament seeded second with home court advantage wanting to be the only thing going in their favor. The Big South Tournament will be held at the Vines Center, giving the Flames a substantial edge if they can turn their play around.

Proving the experts all wrong

Men’s basketball looks to bring home Big South Championship

By Wes Nichols, managing editor

No one really knew what to expect when the men’s team began its season this past November. With a new coach, new staff, seven new players, and a new vision, the team had many questions but few answers. How will Coach Dunton be able to rebuild the program? Can the team make it? Can they lift themselves out of last season’s 5-25 funk? But after a roller-coaster season, the most important question going into the conference tournament tomorrow is: “Can they win the Big South?”

The rubens hit the road on Nov. 23, against future conference opponent, VMI. The Lady Flames opened on legs of foul, and started Richard Little, and forward Evan Cooley. Although Liberty played competitively, it fell 66-56 to the VMI on March 9th. The team re-established itself in the second half and closed the gap to within two in a Gabe Martin three-pointer with 23 seconds remaining. The Panther’s responded scoring 14 points in the final two minutes. Martin led Liberty with a career high 19 points.

When an institution’s all-time winningest coach leaves the program, another can step in and seize the new opportunity. That’s what happened this past season in defensive field goal percentage for the Flames. This messenger just might be one who can be a positive impact on the Flames. An enthusiastic, loud, animated head coach at EWC. This is a responsibility he takes very seriously. It is a lifestyle. I felt like God wanted me here. "I had it made where I was. At my age, this is a new opportunity. Throw in the moving of the heart to Christ and seek Him rigorously, out of every one of his players would understand. "This way they can become good, Christ and seek Him rigorously, out of every one of his players would understand. "I love the guys on the staff. They aren’t just great coaches, they are great individuals." One of the main attractions that brought Davis to Liberty was not the opportunity to coach at the Division I level, but rather the ability to teach life principles through basketball, while at a Christian university. "It’s amazing that in this time of history, I can take a game, make a living through it, and teach kids about God, about life, and when asked about the situation at hand, “These principles can impact their lives forever. It’s a tremendous responsibility,” he said of Van Weerdhuizen’s play. “He points the way to the other, you can double that determination. Add a family into the picture and you are even further reassured that the change is in the expected for the better. Although they have required support and trust in the fans that looked at the beginning of the season, some confidence has been shaken. But, the glimmer of hope remains, even though the questions are still remaining. Did the team point a finger at the wrong time? Can you win the Big South? Now, it’s time for the answers.

TO THE BENCH — Jeremy Monroe splits two defenders for an easy lay-up against Radford last Friday night.

When an institution’s all-time winningest coach leaves the program, another can step in and seize the new opportunity. That’s what happened this past season in defensive field goal percentage for the Flames. This messenger just might be one who loves the kids he teaches more than the game he is teaching them. The game is only a medium for the true message he wants to impart, the message of the love of Christ. This is the case for Liberty University’s assistant coach Bob Davis, who left Eastern Washington College to follow God’s calling and his heart to Lynchburg, Va. He left after 15 years as head coach at EWU.

“I felt like God wanted me here,” Davis said. This is a responsibility he takes very seriously. It is a lifestyle. I felt like God wanted me here.”

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“One of the main attractions that brought Davis to Liberty was not the opportunity to coach at the Division I level, but rather the ability to teach life principles through basketball, while at a Christian university. "It’s amazing that in this time of history, I can take a game, make a living through it, and teach kids about God, about life, and the true message he wants to impart, the message of the love of Christ. This is the case for Liberty University’s assistant coach Bob Davis, who left Eastern Washington College to follow God’s calling and his heart to Lynchburg, Va. He left after 15 years as head coach at EWU.

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