

# Thiel Announces Addition of Two New Head Coaches

## Track & Field

**Steve Carr** was named head track & field coach at Thiel College in August.



A coaching veteran of 13 years, Carr inherits a program that returns many key performers from a team which produced nine All-America selections a season ago.

Carr will also serve as an assistant for the Tomcat cross country program.

"We are very pleased and excited to announce Steve Carr as our new men's and women's track & field coach," said Athletic Director Jack Leipheimer. "Steve's knowledge and experience on the Division III level, his understanding and belief in the Division III philosophy, and his western Pennsylvania background made him a perfect fit for us. I am confident he will be a very positive role model for our student-athletes, and a key contributor to the athletic department and Thiel College."

Carr arrives in Greenville after three seasons at Wheaton (Mass.) College where he served as an assistant coach for the Lyons' track & field and cross country programs. During his tenure at Wheaton, Carr was responsible for the design and administration of training regimens for the school's pole vaulters, throwers and cross country athletes in addition to recruiting responsibilities.

"This is an exciting time for Thiel College athletics with the arrival of our new President, Dr. Troy VanAken, and with Coach Leipheimer as our AD," said Carr. "I'm looking forward to working with them to build a program that is second to none and I'm just raring to go. I'm very excited to join the Thiel College family."

Prior to his time at Wheaton, Carr was an assistant cross country and track & field coach at Williams (Mass.) College from 2002-04, when he worked primarily with jumpers and pole vaulters. During the 1999-2000 academic year, he served as an assistant at Columbia University in New York. From 1996-99, Carr was an administrative assistant at the University of Tennessee for the men's cross country and track & field teams. In 1995-96, he assisted the field athletes at Lehigh University.

A USA Track & Field (USATF) Level I and II certified coach in jumps and throws, Carr was also a pole vault instructor at Tennessee's camp in 1997.

Carr is a four-time North Coast Athletic Conference pole vault champion and earned his bachelor's degree from Allegheny College in 1995. He received a master's degree from Tennessee in 1998.

## Women's Basketball

Following a nationwide search, **Angela "Angie" Zeuch** was named to the position of head women's basketball coach at Thiel College in September.



"Angie is a very detail-oriented person, has a solid knowledge of the game and possesses a very strong commitment to the Division III philosophy. She will be a great role model and will positively impact

the Athletic Department here at Thiel," said Leipheimer.

Zeuch takes over the women's basketball program at Thiel after spending two seasons as an assistant at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. During her time with the Cardinals, Zeuch was responsible for recruiting and scouting while assisting with administrative and on-court duties.

She also served as an assistant director at the school's collegiate basketball camp.

"I am so thrilled to be a part of Thiel College," said Zeuch. "It is an exciting time at Thiel with great leadership in place and a shared vision of tradition and success. I am looking forward to building relationships on and off the court and throughout the community."

Prior to her stint at Wesleyan, Zeuch spent three years (2004-07) as an assistant at Division I Colgate University. In addition to assisting with player development, practice and game planning, she coordinated the team's conditioning program and handled aspects of recruiting and scouting activities.

A graduate of Case Western Reserve University, Zeuch was a four-year starter and two-year captain for the Spartans and was named All-University Athletic Conference (UAA) as well as Academic All-UAA on three occasions. A 1000-point scorer during her career, she was named the college's female athlete of the year as a senior and served as chairperson of the Athletic Captains' Council.

# Kiger Prepares to Leave Thiel with “No Regrets”

When stepping onto the Thiel volleyball court for her first college game, then 18-year-old freshman Abbey Kiger was experiencing many different emotions.

“Am I ready for college volleyball? Did I choose the right school?” she recalls asking herself.

The next four years answered those questions without a doubt. Since her first game in a Tomcat uniform, she has surpassed every expectation set by her and by others. In fact, Kiger has broken almost every team offensive record.

Just 26 miles down the road sits the college Kiger was supposed to attend. Instead of wearing Thiel blue and gold, Kiger was to be in navy and white, representing the Titans of Westminster College. She was so set on Westminster, she had already sent in a room deposit and was making friends with her soon-to-be teammates. In the spring before her first year, Abbey’s mother asked her to attend a campus visit day at Thiel. After meeting a few professors and sitting down with first-year head coach Steve Brewer, things changed.

Just a few months later, Kiger showed up to Thiel’s first practice with her hopes set high. The Tomcats started the season 4-0 after going undefeated at a tournament in New York. The team expected every game to go as smoothly as the first four.

They didn’t.

Over the course of the season they only won two more games. Kiger began wondering if she chose the right school, and even thought about transferring to Westminster for her sophomore season.

“The team chemistry just wasn’t there,” says Kiger.

She stayed and things began to improve. Her sophomore year was much better than her first, but she felt that something very important was still missing.

During her junior season, Kiger earned first team All-Presidents’ Athletic Conference honors and became the leader her team had desperately needed. For the first time in recent memory, the women hosted a PAC tournament match and also had the program’s most conference wins since 1986.

Going into her senior year, Kiger remembered three promises Brewer made on her first day of practice as a freshman.

“I promise you I will stay at Thiel for four years, we will beat Westminster and we will win the PAC,” Brewer told Kiger just three years ago.

Two down...

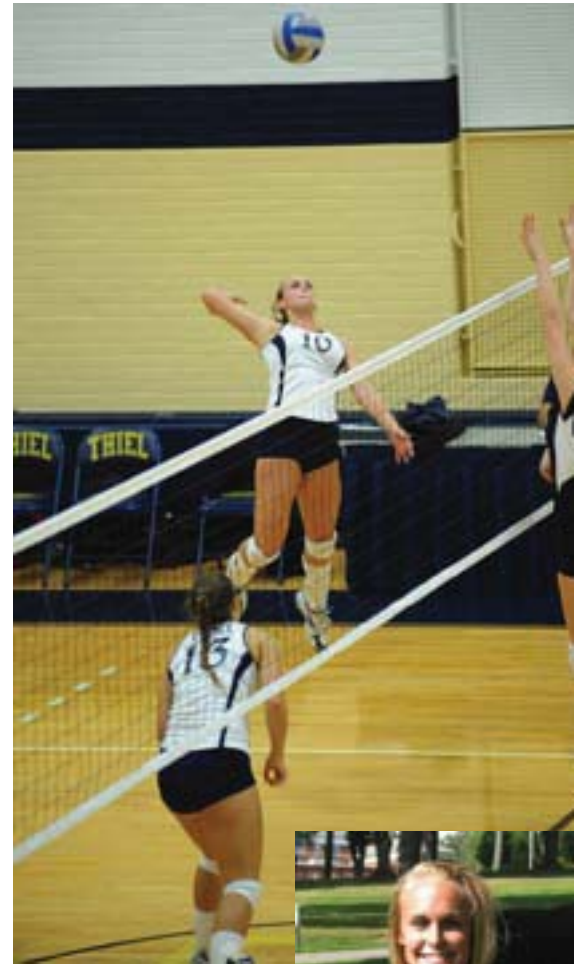
To say the least, Brewer and his team have come down to the wire. This year began Brewer’s fourth season as head coach. Then, on October 10, Thiel defeated Westminster for the first time in more than 20 years.

One to go.

Reality hit Kiger during the first home game of the 2009 season. The Tomcats were facing a ranked opponent in Hiram College—their first big test of the season. Kiger and her teammates were in their huddle, getting excited for the game. Just seconds before their entrance, teammate Madison Chylik turned to Kiger and said, “This is your last first home game.”

For Kiger, reality was finally setting in. Life after college was approaching much quicker than she had ever imagined. Since then, she has soaked up every second, leaving with no regrets.

Kiger insists the team’s success is mainly because of their unity. They work as one unit, not as individuals, she says. They do this because they realize an individual effort or standout performance will not guarantee them a win. The only guarantee is if they rely on each other and trust their own abilities,



the wins will come naturally.

“I know these girls will be my friends for life,” says Kiger.

The team recently won their 10th consecutive match and has no intentions of slowing down. The stands have been packed for every home game and the gym echoes with the sound of student chants. Everyone wants the team to succeed, and truly enjoys watching them play.

In 10 years, Kiger says she will look back on her playing career with no regrets, having enjoyed every moment spent with teammates, on and off the court. She will still be receiving calls from past teammates, but most importantly she won’t “remember the Titans”—she’ll remember the Tomcats.

— Nina Gabrelcik '12

## Players of the Week

At the final stretch of the fall season, Thiel College saw its fair share of outstanding team and individual performances. Only the most remarkable efforts, however, are honored with Presidents' Athletic Conference player-of-the-week accolades. As of Oct. 31, seven such citations were bestowed upon Thiel student-athletes.

### Willie Bova - Football (2)

Bova (Port Allegany, Pa./Port Allegany) earned the second and third PAC Offensive player of week citations of his career this season.



In Thiel's, 38-14, win over Saint Vincent on Oct. 31, Bova threw for 373 yards, coming within one yard of breaking his own program record for passing yardage in a game. In all, Bova completed 27-of-42 passes, threw for four

touchdowns and ran for a fifth, to earn his second PAC weekly nod of the season.

Bova earned his first award with a key performance in Oct. 3's thrilling, 24-21 win over Westminster College. Bova completed 22-of-33 passes for 304 yards and two touchdowns in the win to earn his second career offensive player-of-the-week honor. He completed the second-longest pass play in Thiel history with an 86-yard TD strike to Brendan Taylor with 1:27 to play, breaking a 14-14 tie. He also completed two passes for 39 yards in the final 18 seconds to set the stage for a winning field goal.

### John Madeline - Football

Madeline (Hubbard, Ohio/Hubbard) sealed Thiel's Homecoming win over Westminster when he booted a career-long 46-yard field goal as time expired to lift the Tomcats to their walk-off victory in front of 1,700 at Alumni Stadium. He also chipped in three extra points in the win. An All-PAC performer a season ago, this is Madeline's second Special Teams Player of the Week award.



### Bryan Villegas - Football

A junior safety, Villegas (Spring Hill, Fla./Springstead) was named the Presidents' Athletic Conference Defensive Player of the Week for his standout performance in the Tomcats' 20-10 victory over Albion College on September 12. Villegas made 10 total tackles, including nine solo stops, while adding an interception, a fumble recovery and two pass breakups



for Thiel as the Tomcats' earned a "W" in their home opener.

### Chad Swisher - Men's Soccer

Junior forward Chad Swisher (Alliance, Ohio/Alliance) was named the Presidents' Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Week on September 29. Swisher scored three goals and notched an assist during the week of September 20 in the Tomcats' wins against the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and Hilbert College.



### Madison Chylik - Volleyball

After helping her team to a three-win week, Thiel setter Madison Chylik (Valley View, Ohio/Cuyahoga Heights) was named the league's volleyball Player of the Week on October 12. Chylik notched 113 assists (9.42 assist/set) and 46 digs (3.83 digs/set) for the Tomcats during the week, as Thiel went 3-0 in PAC action, including wins over Westminster and Thomas More College who were both previously unbeaten in league play. She posted a high of 41 assists in the five-set win over the Saints.



### Alyssa Chine - Volleyball

Freshman outside hitter Alyssa Chine (North Jackson, Ohio/Jackson-Milton) was named the Presidents' Athletic Conference Player of the Week, on September 21. Chine led the Tomcats to a 3-1 week, including a 3-0 mark with three consecutive three-set sweeps at the Otterbein Cardinal Classic in Westerville, Ohio. For the week, she posted 42 kills (3.23 kps) and 43 digs (3.3 dps) in 13 sets, recording a .264 attack percentage to go along with two set assists and four total blocks.



# When a Frog Met the Tomcats

Greenville, Pa., is not usually known as a renowned international destination. However, Rainer Kuepper chose this rural Mercer County community as the primary destination for his first trip to the states. And the reason is as American as apple pie—football.

Kuepper is the head coach of Germany's Neuss Frogs, an American football club, and an assistant with a German youth team, nicknamed the Mavericks. He ended up in Greenville in order to spend time at Thiel and observe the game as it is taught and coached in the United States.

Kuepper came in contact with the Thiel football program and head coach Kurt Reiser through John Falk, an Allegheny College graduate who played for then-Allegheny College defensive coach and current Thiel Athletic Director Jack Leipheimer. Faulk now teaches math in Germany and serves as the Frogs' defensive coordinator.

The goals of Kuepper's visit were to "learn more about organization of practices, game tactics and the fundamentals." In America, "the fundamentals taught here are more detailed" than those administered in Europe, he said, mainly because most of his roster is learning about the sport for the first time.

The Mavericks, which has a roster of boys ages 14 to 18, is an established team, with an undefeated season last year. The Frogs, which began play last May, are comprised of 20 to 30 women who range in age from 16 to 28. Both are club teams, which mean its players are there for the fun of it.

German teams train all season long while American college football teams confine the bulk of their training regimens to a few weeks prior to the start of the season. The teams' season spans from April to September and concludes with bowl games.

Club teams are divided into six divisions. With a strong season, teams can advance to a higher division.



Coach Kurt Reiser with Coach Rainer Kuepper of the Neuss Frogs.

The ultimate goal for each team is to rise to the first division to play for the championship.

Despite the differences in how the game is played and coached in Germany and at Thiel, there are also many similarities, starting with a shared appreciation between Kuepper and Reiser.

"It was really good to have Rainer in camp," said Reiser. "It was a great experience for our guys to interact with him and it was a great learning experience for Rainer."

"I like Thiel very much," Kuepper said. "I was very comfortable there and I learned a lot. I had a chance to have a lot of my questions answered."

It's easy to see that two football programs, thousands of miles apart, have benefited from a simple visit to the small Pennsylvania town of Greenville.

## Athletic News from Around Campus

- The Thiel College football team earned its first win of the season—and the first career win for head coach Kurt Reiser—in its home-opening, 20-10, victory over Albion College at Alumni Stadium on September 12.
- Thiel fans can sign up for free text alerts and scoring updates on [www.ThielAthletics.com](http://www.ThielAthletics.com).
- Senior volleyball player Abbey Kiger fired 17 kills to break the College record for career kills with 1,195 against Thomas More on October 10. The previous record was set by Chrissy Toth, who played from 1997–2000.
- The Beeghly Gymnasium floor was resurfaced over the summer to feature the College's new Tomcat logo.

Other off-season improvements to the facility include new championship banners and a newly designed scorers' table emblazoned with the College's athletic logos.

- Former Tomcat quarterback Bill Blankenship '07 has returned to Thiel to coach his old position with the football program.
- Women's basketball alumna Elysa Farrell '08 also returned to campus to serve as an assistant for her former team. Farrell also is employed as an AmeriCorps teacher at Jamestown Elementary School.