

Brown Makes History

Corey Brown made Thiel wrestling history this season by becoming the program's first three-time All-American. His eighth-place finish at the national tournament makes him a perfect three-for-three on Division III wrestling's biggest stage, giving him the rare opportunity to shoot for a fourth award next season.

Some of Thiel's best wrestlers weren't able to accomplish this feat. The list includes high school state champions, wrestlers who earned All-American status early on in their career but weren't able to do it consistently, and others with talent that couldn't put it all together when the pressure was on.

It takes more than skill to succeed at the national tournament. Gifted talent combined with extra workouts and going the extra mile in and out of the practice room certainly helps, but even that doesn't guarantee a spot on the podium.

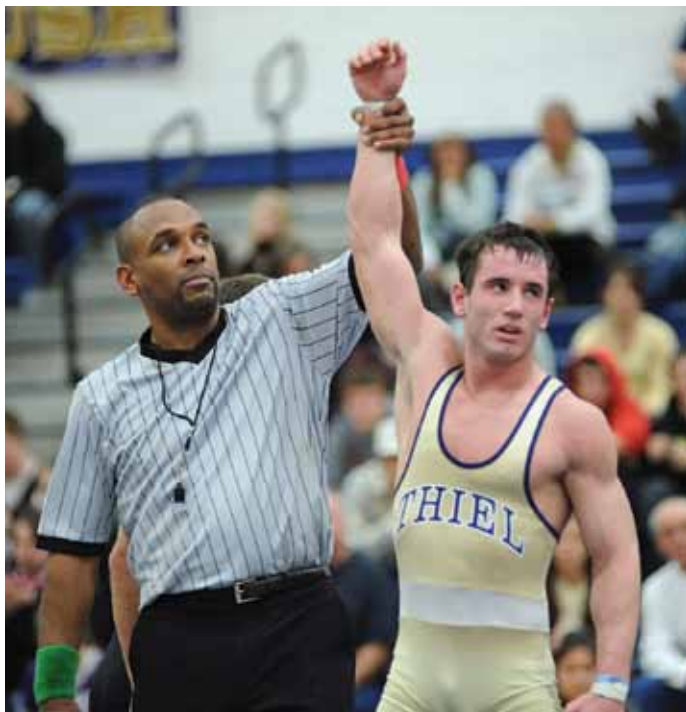
"It seems like you work so hard all year and it comes down to two days. You have to be ready for that weekend," Brown said.

His weekend in LaCrosse, Wis., started off well. Wrestling as the sixth seed in the 133-pound bracket, Brown opened the tournament with a 4-2 win over Cornell College's Tigue Snider. His hopes of becoming Thiel wrestling's first national champion ended in the next round when he was pinned—something that has happened very few times in his career with the Tomcats—by third-seeded Seth Ecker of Ithaca College.

The loss in the quarterfinals put Brown into the consolation bracket and to the most pressure-packed round of the tournament, with the exception of the championship finals. The second round of the wrestlebacks is a must-win as it's the difference between All-American status or being an also-ran. It's a round he had yet to lose in and still hasn't after holding on to beat Matt Holmes of Loras College 5-3.

He would lose both of his next two matches to finish eighth, hardly a poor performance considering the competition. Most wrestlers would be ecstatic to finish off a season as the eighth best in Division III. But for someone like Brown, who had already accomplished so much in a short period of time, the result was short of his ultimate goal.

"Being an All-American again eases the disappointment," Brown said. "I think being a three-time All-American is something I'll be happy about 10 to 15 years down the road, but right now I'm still a little upset with my performance."



He says he is trying not to let that disappointment take anything away from what he considers his best season yet. He posted a record of 26-5, won his first Midwest Regional title and was ranked as high as second in the nation. If anything, not meeting his goal will probably just drive him to push himself to the limit this offseason in preparation for his senior year, the same way it did after last year's eighth-place showing and the way it did after a sixth-place finish as a freshman made him realize a national title was a possibility.

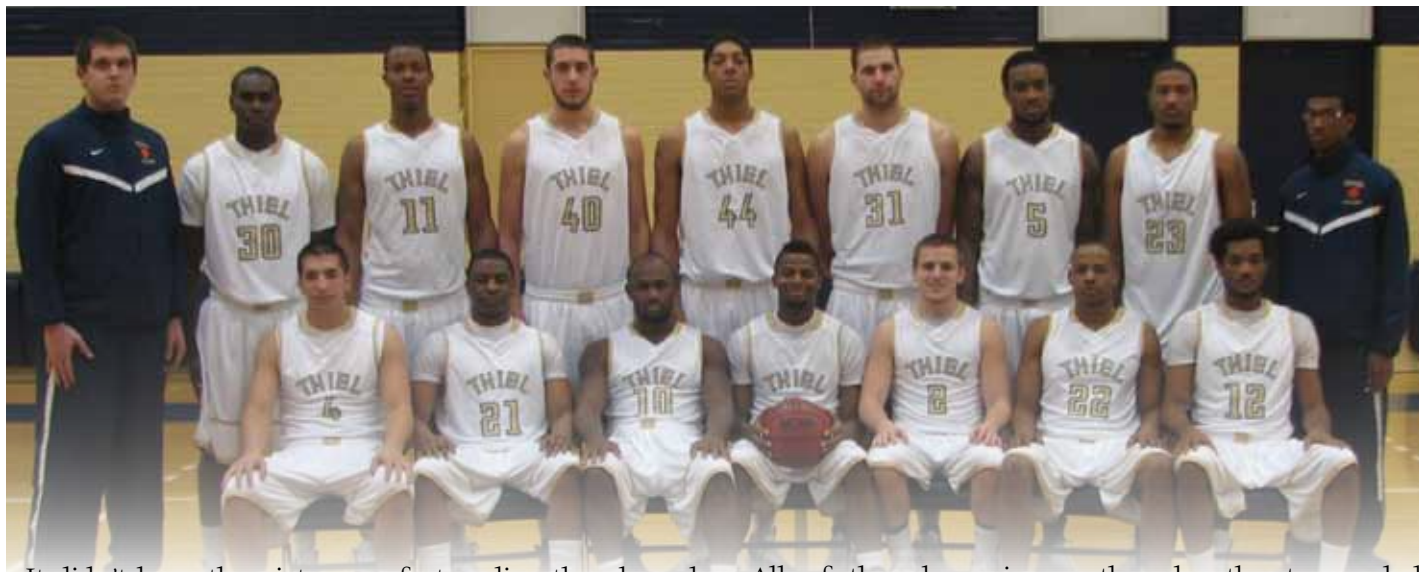
Brown has few weaknesses on the mat. He is rarely outmatched on his feet and is usually able to escape from the bottom with ease. Physically, he has all the tools to beat anyone put in front of him at the Division III level.

"We've talked about being more confident, having a little more swagger. Wrestling is a sport where you have to be mentally prepared for every match," Brown said. "I think if I would have wrestled to my top potential I could have placed in the top four."

As it turns out, he ran into the eventual national champion in that second match. Ecker went on to beat fourth-seeded Mike McNally of Rochester Institute of Technology in the finals, which just goes to show seeds can be deceiving in the postseason. If all goes well, it will be Brown making the run toward a national title next season.

—Matt Jackson

A Season for the Record Books



It didn't have the picture-perfect ending they hoped for once the postseason started, but the 2010-2011 Thiel's men's basketball season was still one to remember. The team finished 20-7 to set a program record for wins in a season, racking up statistics and accolades along the way.

In his fifth season at Thiel, head coach Tim Loomis led the Tomcats to a 12-1 mark at home. They finished a perfect 10-0 at Beeghly Gymnasium during the regular season and didn't lose at home until the Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) championship game. The Tomcats won the conference regular season title and were ranked as high as fifth in the Great Lakes Region. For his efforts Loomis was tabbed by his fellow PAC peers as the Coach of the Year.

Sophomore Blair Rozenblad was selected as the PAC Player of the Year and was named first team all-region by the National Association of Basketball Coaches. Joining him on the PAC first team was senior point guard Devon Adams. Rozenblad led the conference in rebounding, pulling down 9.6 per game as a guard. He also finished third in the PAC in scoring (15.4) and fifth in steals (1.85). Adams finished first in the conference in assists per game (5.85), eighth in free throw percentage (.727) and ninth in steals (1.56). He also became the College's eighth 1,000-point scorer on Feb. 16 with a 10 point, 12 rebound effort in an 86-85 win over Thomas More. Adams is the first Thiel player to reach 1,000 points since Joe Herrmann '08, who scored 1,520 points between 2004 and 2008.

The Tomcats had winning streaks of eight and six games during the season. They had great success against Division III opponents as three of their losses came to Division II foes, giving them a 20-4 mark against teams in Division III.

The Tomcats finished as the conference's top rebounding team and were second in scoring defense.

All of the above is exactly why the top-seeded Tomcats had to be the heavy favorite heading into the conference tournament, shooting for the team's first ever automatic bid to the NCAA Championships.

After beating Waynesburg by double-digits in the quarterfinals and doing the same to Thomas More in the semifinals, Thiel was right where everyone expected it to be, playing for the conference title. But, poor free throw shooting by the Tomcats and some clutch shots down the stretch by Bethany College gave the Bison the win and the automatic bid.

The news got even worse for the Tomcats just days later when they found out they didn't receive an at-large bid to the national tournament, putting an abrupt end to a great season.

An early loss to Allegheny in the season may have cost Thiel an at-large bid, but the case still could have been made for the Tomcats to make the tournament. In addition to almost half of their losses coming to Division II opponents, they dominated conference play all season and had a big road win over La Roche, which ended up as a conference champion and a No. 1 ranking in its region.

The Tomcats will return all but one player from one of the most exciting teams to watch in the region. The crowd was always treated with a show, ranging from dunks by Aundra Jones, Rozenblad always finding his way to the hoop or Adams' threading the needle with passes inside. Only one starter, senior Lance Randall, will be lost. He was one of the most consistent players on the team, averaging 9.8 points and 4.3 rebounds. Randall started 26 of 27 games this season.

Look for the Tomcats to pick up right where they left off last year, hopefully with a happier ending.

—Matt Jackson

A Tomcat Looks Back

During this school year, I had to make one of the hardest decisions of my life. The opportunity to graduate early came knocking on my door. With overloading my credits every semester and taking summer courses last year, I put myself an entire semester ahead. After talking with faculty and administrators, I decided to intern in Washington, D.C. for fall 2011 and then head out to the real world instead of returning to Thiel for spring semester.

This decision could change my life forever. Receiving a job offer after D.C. is highly possible, but I wasn't sure if it was worth risking everything for my senior year. When pondering this decision it wasn't the major events I was going to miss—Homecoming, basketball season, Greek week, concerts, the Black & White Affair and the Fairwell Festival; it was the little things. It brings tears to my eyes knowing that I may never be walking up the Academic Center stairs or through the HMSC again. It's heartbreaking to think about the life that I'm leaving behind. It's the comfort of having my best friend live across the hall and a teammate right next to me. It's the miracle of being friends with people you never would have expected. It's a senior basketball season that will never happen and a family who will never come to Saturday games. Tears fill my eyes when I think of all I'm giving up.

Many have questioned my decision. Why leave a place you love so much? Thiel doesn't last forever; for anyone. Some may be running from the future, taking minimum credits so they can be here forever. Others may just be here for the ride, staying here for four years and doing what they should. I want to give myself the opportunity to succeed in a struggling economy. It's not about the money, cars,

houses or being a city girl. What I have at Thiel will never go away. I may not be on campus, but I have learned who my friends are and who I am during this three-year journey. The journey has not been easy by any means, but it has been well worth it.

My last weeks were filled with an array of different emotions. I sometimes find myself wondering where I'll be in 10 years, what city I'll be living in and what friends are still going to be around. I even find myself wondering if I'll ever miss the 10-minute hike up Brother Martin's Walk in five-degree weather with boots that aren't waterproof. Sadly, I will miss the time spent in the locker room, the two-hour practices that so often went to three and the long bus rides. In my years as a student-athlete at Thiel College, I've learned a lesson that will stick with me forever—there is always a bigger picture.

Intercollegiate athletic careers never go according to plan and are nothing like those in high school. I may not have been the leading rebounder or scorer and I never broke 1,000 points, but I learned that it's okay. My team needed me in other areas than statistics. To be named captain of the Thiel women's basketball team was one of the greatest accomplishments I've ever experienced. To be able to lead my team on and off the court, silently and vocally, by showing rationality and patience was something I dreamed of doing. What I have learned over time by being a student-athlete will be seen in every facet of my



Top: Gabrelcik on the court in her final season. Right: Gabrelcik as a first-year student-athlete.



life. The blood, sweat and tears over the past three years are what I will remember most about my intercollegiate athletic career.

I'll never have my name in the record book, or be inducted into the Hall of Fame; in fact, I've only started one game out of 56, but I learned that's not everything. The lessons and memories that have helped me grow as person will finally be put to the test. One thing I know for sure—Thiel College has taught me what I need to succeed and I will carry that with me everywhere I go.

—Nina Gabrelcik '11

Editor's Note: Gabrelcik wrote an article, "Thoughts from a First-Year Athlete," in the fall 2008 issue of The Bell about her first year at Thiel. She graduated in May 2011 with a degree in media communications/communication studies.

Tomcat Post-Season Round Up

This year, Thiel had numerous quality post-season performances by both teams and individuals:

MEN'S GOLF

Matt Fiore (Irwin, Pa./Penn-Trafford) finished in a four-way tie for fourth at the Presidents' Athletic Conference Men's Golf Championships, earning the Tomcats' first all-conference honor since Lucas Munson '06 made the first team in 2006.

Fiore entered the second day in second place after carding an opening-round 74. His second round score of 79 gave him a two-day total of 153, good enough for first team all-PAC honors.

Thomas More's Brandon Dulle won conference MVP honors with a 148, topping second-place Tyler Fewell of Grove City by one stroke. Waynesburg's Colin Wilson was third with a 152 while Thomas More's Jake Bowman, Saint Vincent's Steve Fiori and Washington & Jefferson's Colin Izzo tied with Fiore in fourth.

As a team Thiel continued its solid play from round one, tallying a second-round total of 317 to go along with a 312 in the first round. Combining that with the team's fall scores, the Tomcats finished sixth in the event at 1,299.

The final standings don't quite indicate how well the Tomcats played in the spring portion of the event. Their scores on the final 36 holes were third best overall and a 41-stroke improvement over their performance in the fall.

Matt Christian (Glenshaw, Pa./Shaler Area) finished just outside of the top 10, taking 11th with a 158. Finishing in the top 20 for the Tomcats in the 41-golfer field were Bryan Smith (Franklin, Pa./Franklin) (15th), Matt Graham (Clymer, N.Y./Sherman Central) (18th) and Mike Deems (New Brighton, Pa./New Brighton) (20th).

TRACK & FIELD

Bobby Hritz (Parma Heights, Ohio/North Royalton) captured the individual title in the men's high jump, highlighting the efforts of the Thiel College track and field squad at the 2011 Presidents' Athletic Conference Track & Field Championship at Bethany College's Bison Stadium.

The Thiel men finished seventh with 36 points while the women placed sixth with three. The Tomcats finished with four all-PAC performers (finished in top three).

Hritz's winning jump of 6-2 was two inches better than second-place finishers Ken Barrows of Bethany and Shane Peterson of Westminster. He also added to a terrific day by finishing third in the 110-meter high hurdles (16.61).

Ethan Rowe (Fairmont City, Pa./Redbank Valley) notched a second-place finish in the 400-meter dash with a time of 50.27. Richard Peterson (Meadville, Pa./Meadville) also claimed a second-place finish, finishing with a time of 15:15.69 in the 5,000-meter run.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

The Thiel College men's volleyball finished second in the Midwest-III Championships held at Beeghly Gymnasium.

Fourth-ranked Carthage defeated the Tomcats by scores of 25-19, 25-20, and 25-21 respectively.

Offensively, the Tomcats were led by sophomore Dante McCoy (Reading, Pa., Holy Name) who registered 12 kills on the day. Freshman Corey Hamilton (Meadville, Pa., Maplewood) also played well as he added 29 assists for Thiel.

Defensively, the Tomcats (10-20) were led by Jacob Schultz (Cochran, Pa., Cochran) who registered 15 digs for the game.

In only their first season, the Tomcats advanced to the finals with a big upset over Milwaukee School of Engineering in the semifinals. MSOE was the returning conference champion.

MEN'S TENNIS

Brad Schell (Linesville, Pa./Conneaut) went 1-2 at sixth singles at the Presidents' Athletic Conference Men's Tennis Championships, becoming the team's first placewinner after the College reinstated the program this season.

Schell, the fourth seed, advanced to the semifinals with a 7-5, 6-1 win over fifth-seeded Brian Felker of Washington & Jefferson. He was defeated 6-1, 6-4 by Grove City's top-seeded Stephen Harrison, dropping him into the consolation final match, where he took on second-seeded Brad Thomas of Westminster.

Schell played well in his final match of the tournament, but fell in a nail biter, losing to Thomas in three sets, 6-1, 4-6, 7-5, and placing fourth in the competition.

