

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021-2022

# ALMA COLLEGE ATHLETICS



# A LETTER TO OUR ALMA FAMILY

Hello Scots! I am excited to share with you the annual Alma College Athletics Newsletter. Our student-athletes, coaches, and staff are very proud of the accomplishments of our teams and individuals throughout the 2021-2022 academic year in the classroom, in their competitive venue, and in service.

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee was led by a strong executive board, and the events that they ran were some of the best we have done during my time at Alma College. They have a lot to be proud of and I am looking forward to the programming, speakers, alumni connections, and student engagement that they bring this upcoming year.

We saw a ton of support and excitement from alumni, family, and friends on “I Love Alma Day” this past March. The dollars raised that day have had and will continue to have a direct impact on the student-athlete experience at Alma College.

During NCAA Division III Week, Student-athletes showed their pride in Alma College by wearing their uniforms and team apparel to their class and around campus. They proved their knowledge of Alma College athletics and NCAA Division III history through a trivia competition. Other activities took place throughout the week, allowing us to celebrate who we are as an NCAA Division III institution. We also took a day to announce and promote our new athletics core values.



**Director of Athletics Sarah Dehring**

During the winter 2020 semester, Michigan Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson and members of the Michigan Task Force on Women in Sports, visited Alma College to observe the work that we are doing to elevate and empower women in sports. During a press conference in June, she mentions Alma College, stating “colleges like Alma College and professional sports teams like the Detroit Pistons are already national leaders in advancement opportunities for women within their organizations.” What an honor to be recognized for our work especially this year, the 50th Anniversary of Title IX.

I look forward to the fall when our students move back to campus and we begin our 2022-2023 competitive season! I hope to see you on campus for a contest, an event, or simply swing by to say, “Go Scots”!



# ALMA COLLEGE ATHLETICS NEWS



## WOMEN'S WRESTLING COMING FALL 2022

Alma College's athletics department will add women's wrestling as the 28th varsity sport at the start of the 2022-23 academic year. The women's wrestling program will begin as a club sport in 2022-23 and transition to a varsity sponsored sport in 2023-24. A nationwide search for Alma's head women's wrestling coach will begin early 2022.

"We are thrilled to announce the addition of women's wrestling," Athletics Director Sarah Dehring said. "The support of the president's cabinet, Board of Trustees, alumni, and campus has been outstanding and truly demonstrates how Alma College supports women in athletics. We are excited to join others that have added women's wrestling nationally and to see how the NCAA Emerging Sport continues to grow, support equity and offer opportunities for women."

## ALMA LEADS THE NATION

The Alma College football team finished their season leading all divisions of college football with 40 turnovers and 27 interceptions. The Scots also finished fifth in the nation with 13 forced fumbles.

In September, junior Devon Frenchko was recognized as the RET athlete on the D3football.com Team of the Week. After a stellar performance against Manchester University, Frenchko averaged 70 yards on three returns. Frenchko is the first ever RET D3football.com player of the week for the Scots.

Two Scotsmen were named to the 2021 MIAA All-Conference Defensive First Team, Junior Jack Kretschmar and Junior Odin Soffredine. Soffredine led the MIAA with an average of 9.3 tackles per game and totalled 54 on the season. Kretschmar added six interceptions and led the Scots with 137 yards on defense.

### PRESIDENT ABERNATHY JOINS NCAA DIII PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

President Jeff Abernathy has been appointed to the NCAA Division III Presidents Council, for a four-year term that began at the close of the 2022 NCAA Convention.

The Presidents Council is the highest governing body in Division III. The council establishes and directs the general policy of Division III, while also establishing its strategic plan.

# NASH WINS MIAA DR. MARVIN A. ZUIDEMA AWARD

Alma College Men's Soccer senior Hunter Nash won the 2021 Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) Dr. Marvin A. Zuidema Award. This award is presented to a senior who contributes to team play, displays leadership qualities and excels in athletics and academics. Nash is the second Alma Scot ever to win this award, following Jon Cullen in 1999.

"I am extremely proud of Hunter," said head coach John Greer. "So much of what he does is centered around the concept of bringing people together. Hunter has been a great servant-leader for the Alma Men's Soccer program and has helped show others how to lead in a selfless way. His great work ethic has already brought him much success and he only has more great things ahead."



## VICTORY DAY

Alma Victory Day, organized by Alma College's Partners of Special Education Students (POSES), was held in October of 2021 where special education students in the Gratiot-Isabella Regional Educational Service District (RES D) were given the opportunity to play football and get cheered on.

Each student was partnered with an Alma football player or cheerleader, who served as their mentor for the day. Students were given jerseys and pom-poms, and lined up on the 50-yard line with their mentor. A public-address announcer introduced each student as they ran through a tunnel formed by other students and mentors into the end zone, and students were given medals at the end of the day.

"Our cheer team is very active on the sidelines during sporting events, which is great. But what events like this offer is the opportunity to get to know our audience in a different, more personal way," Assistant Coach Brehanna Ramos said. "It's about building a system of caring."

## YATES NAMED TO MIAA FIRST TEAM

Morgan Yates was named to the 2021 Women's Golf All-MIAA First Team. The junior from Shepherd finished with a total score of 480 on the season and individually tied for fifth place in the conference.

"Morgan played extremely well this year for us. She has led us for the past three years and I couldn't be prouder to see her jump into the First Team after making Second Team the past two seasons. Morgan is one of the hardest workers I have seen on the course and to see the time and dedication pay off for her is something special," said Coach Trefil.

## KLEIVER AND SAS EARN ALL-MIAA HONORS

Men's basketball, senior Cole Kleiver, was named to the All-MIAA First Team and women's basketball, sophomore Taylor Sas was named to the All-MIAA Second Team.

Kleiver finished the season third in the MIAA for points per game with an average of 18.5. He posted 352 points with a field goal percentage of 45.8. Men's basketball finished 5-19 overall and 4-10 in conference play.

Sas finished her season second in the MIAA for points per game with an average of 16. She scored 368 points on the season and found a field goal percentage of 40.8.

# HOFFMAN AND BIGHAM COMPETE AT NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Two members of the Alma College women's track and field team competed at the NCAA Division III National Championships on Friday, March 11 at the JDL Fast Track.

Senior Bailey Hoffman finished 15th in the weight throw with a toss of 15.82 meters, improving on her 18th seed. She concludes her indoor track and field career with the school record in the weight throw (16.78 meters). The native of Olivet, Mich., broke the school record four different times throughout the season.

In the 400-meter dash, Ericka Bigham placed 19th with a time of 58.74 seconds in just her fifth time running the event. The junior concluded the indoor season by winning the 400-meter dash title at the MIAA Championships and finishing runner-up in the 200-meter dash. She was also named All-MIAA after her performance at the championship meet. Her personal-best this indoor season was 58.09 seconds.

## KUEHNLEIN NAMED MIAA SENIOR SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

Alma College wrestling's Jayce Kuehnlein received the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) wrestling's first-ever Senior Sportsman of the Year Award and named an Academic All-American by the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA).

Kuehnlein was also crowned first-team MIAA for a second time. He was champion at the Muskegon Community College Ben McMullen Open and runner-up at the Waynesburg Invitational.

## NATIONAL GIRLS AND WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY

Alma College Athletics celebrated the 36th annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day and the 50th anniversary of Title IX with a student-planned virtual panel discussion on Thursday, Feb. 3.

Current and former Alma College student-athletes, coaches and administrators came together to discuss their experiences and achievements as girls and women in sports, and to celebrate the enactment of Title IX, which helps to protect against sex-based discrimination. While on the panel, they discussed everything from gym time to equipment, transportation to respect.

Current student-athlete and SAAC President, Stasha Warchock, organized this group of women to shed light on the trailblazers that helped establish women in athletics at Alma College.

"The stories that our panelists shared and the experiences that were told were aspiring to hear. Many of these women advocated for Women's Sports in collegiate athletics and equality in athletics. I was amazed with everything that was shared and it was truly life changing to be a part of," explained Warchock.

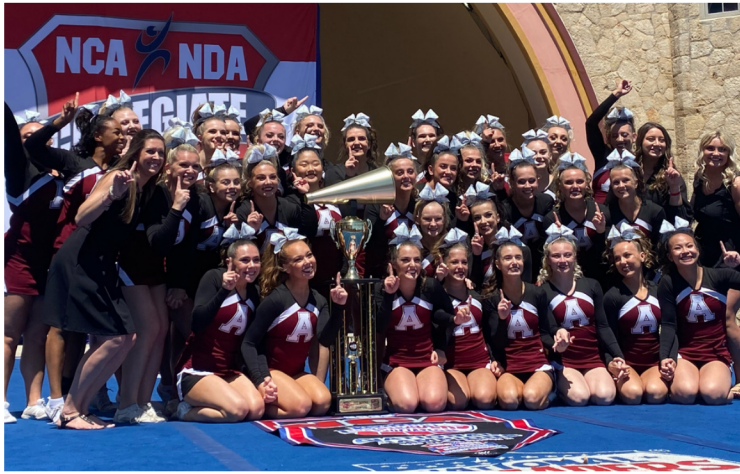
## OSTROWSKI RECEIVES SENIOR IMPACT AWARD

Alma College's swimming and diving Jennifer Ostrowski was the first-ever Senior Impact Award recipient. Ostrowski is a Nursing Major, with a minor in Integrative Physiology & Health Science (IPHS) at Alma. Ostrowski is a captain for the Scots, where she is an incredibly hard working and self-disciplined individual, along with taking athletes under her wing and guiding them. Around campus Ostrowski is a Dean's List student and is a member of the Student Nurses Association. She takes part in the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, and is Vice President of the Alpha Xi Delta. Ostrowski is also an SI Leader, where she tutors other students on campus.

## AMERICAN HEARTLAND PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Senior Rachel Kuczajda was named the 2022 American Heartland Bowling Association Player of the Year for her performance throughout conference play. She was also named to the AHBA Varsity All-Tournament team and All-Conference team.

Kuczajda received honors at the Collegiate Club Championships as the Club Team Player of the Year after a 84% finish.



## CHEER AND DANCE BRING HOME NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Alma College cheer team and dance team traveled to Daytona Beach for the 2022 NCA Nationals and NDA Nationals, followed by the Dance National Invitational in Orlando, FL.

The cheer team brought home a back-to-back national championship trophy for the 2022 NCA Advanced All-Girl DIII Division with a final score of 95.5695.

The dance team grabbed four national championships with the a first place finish in the 2022 NDA Team Performance, NDA Jazz, DTU Team Performance, and DTU Jazz. The Scots also received the NDA Innovative Choreography award and were the DTU All-Division Battle winners.

## BAHLKE FIELD RENOVATION

Alma College is preparing to begin a \$1.5 million upgrade of Bahlke Field that will include complete replacement of the artificial surface and track. Work is scheduled to start in May and be finished by July 15, weather permitting, according to Director of Athletics Sarah Dehring.

This will be the first major improvement to Bahlke Field since 2011, when the artificial turf was replaced, Dehring said. "The turf updates were a necessary step after we had an outside group do a safety evaluation," she explained. "Our turf rated low and in need of immediate repair and replacement in several categories. We feel this alone would justify the cost of the project."

"The turf will also have an added pad for protection and safety. We will also extend the turf (beyond the endzones) and remove the cement that is currently at the back of the end zones. This will increase surface space, which will allow for more practice space for teams as well as increase safety."

## ALMA DAY

Alumni, parents, friends, faculty, staff, and students joined together to celebrate and advance Alma College on our annual day of giving. I Love Alma Day took place on Wednesday, March 16, 2022. More than 500 donors joined together to raise nearly \$200,000 for Alma College, doubling donor participation from 2021. This includes the contributions of over 300 student athletes and teams who received donations from their entire rosters.

## NEW SCOTS

Alma graduate, JT Cleveland has been named the new head coach of the Alma College men's and women's golf programs.

Katlyn Pizzo named the first head coach of the new Alma College women's wrestling program, which is set to kick off as a club team in fall 2022.

Mike Fitzpatrick joins the Scots as the new head men's basketball coach. This is his first head coaching position.

Kate Dylag was named Alma's newest head women's soccer coach.

## **SOFTBALL COMPETES IN NCAA TOURNAMENT**

The Alma College softball team earned an at-large bid to the NCAA III Tournament after an offensive season, scoring an average of seven runs per game. The Scots fell to Millikin University in the sixth round of the 2022 NCAA Division III softball tournament to close out their season. Alma ended 27-15 overall and 12-4 in conference play.

Five athletes from the Alma College softball team received 2022 All-MIAA honors. Junior Emma Fraser and senior Haley Ullrich were named to the 2022 All-MIAA First Team while senior Hannah Falejczyk, junior Taylor Griffith, and junior Daniella Little were named to the 2022 All-MIAA Second Team.

Senior shortstop Hadyn Terwilliger was named to the 2021-22 CoSIDA Academic All-District Team. The 2021-22 Academic All-District Softball Team, selected by CoSIDA, recognizes the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances on the field and in the classroom.

Ullrich and Fraser were named to the 2022 NFCA DIII All-Region First Team and senior Falejczyk was named to the 2022 NFCA DIII All-Region Second Team. The NFCA All-Region teams honor student-athletes from the Association's 10 regions with selection to one of three teams. NFCA member head coaches nominate and then vote for the winners in their respective region.

Ullrich advanced to be named an All-American for her stellar performance this season. Ullrich finished her college career leading the MIAA in six categories with a batting average of .446, 45 runs batted in, 13 home runs, 167 strikeouts, 15 wins, and three saves. She also tallied 54 hits and 55 runs to earn a spot on the 2022 NFCA DIII Top 25 Pitchers list.

## **STUNT WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP**

The Scots STUNT team traveled to the University of Toledo for the 2022 DIII STUNT Nationals on Saturday, April 30 through Sunday, May 1. The Scots came home with a first-place finish and the DIII National title in College STUNT.

Alma went undefeated this year, to defeat Olivet College, 20-0, in the first round. They beat Hiram College, 21-0, in their second game of the tournament for their second scoreless matchup. In the championship game, they came out on top to beat Concordia Chicago, 20-1.

This was the second year the Scots were able to compete in a DIII National Championship due to DII and DIII being combined in previous years. They now currently hold two DIII National Championships and three runner-up titles (DII/DIII).

The Scots had five 2022 All-Americans for the 2022 season. Senior Mary Wolfe, senior Kasey Conn, and junior Carlie Scott were named to the All-American First Team. Senior Kaitlyn Verbrugge, Freshman Shayla Hengesbach were named to the All-American Second Team while sophomore Claire Williams received an All-American honorable mention.

## **MCDONALD RECEIVES SUE LITTLE AWARD**

Senior Emily McDonald of Alma women's tennis received the Sue Little Award, which is given in memory of Sue Little, a 1954 graduate of Albion College and conference singles champion. The winner of this award is selected by the tennis players as best exemplifying courtesy and sportsmanship both on and off the courts.

## **BIGHAM FINISHES FIRST IN MIAA**

Junior Ericka Bigham was the MIAA champion in the 400-meter dash with a time of 57.63 seconds. Her best 400-meter time of the 2022 outdoor track season was a 57.56 while her best 200-meter time was 25.83 seconds.

## **ROBINSON AND TUTTLE NAMED ALL-MIAA**

Junior Joshua Robinson and junior Kevin Tuttle were named to the 2022 All-MIAA Second Team.

Robinson finished fourth in the conference with nine homeruns. Robinson also added 42 hits, 40 runs, and posted 35 RBI's with a batting average of .316. In the outfield Robinson had 79 putouts, one assist, and a fielding percentage of 1.000.

Tuttle added 44 hits, 33 runs, brought 10 runs in, and posted a batting average of .272. Tuttle finished the season with 73 putouts, 97 assists, and posted a fielding percentage of .929.

## 120 SCOTS NAMED TO MIAA HONOR ROLL

The Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association awarded 120 Alma College student-athletes All-Academic status in 2021-22. To be recognized, student-athletes must reach a 3.5 grade-point average for the academic year and earn a varsity letter in an MIAA-sponsored sport.

Five Alma College athletic programs had double-digit honorees. This included baseball, football, women's soccer, softball, and women's swimming & diving. Softball led the way with 14 honorees, the most of any Alma program.

Nine student-athletes from Alma College grabbed the honor for the fourth time in their collegiate careers. The exclusive group included Sean Pauley of men's cross country, Madison Chapin of women's lacrosse, Haley Willman of women's lacrosse, Hadyn Terwilliger of softball, Michaela Collins of women's swimming & diving, Jennifer Ostrowski of women's swimming & diving, Brendan Murdie of men's tennis, Emily McDonald of women's tennis, and Kylie Sicken of volleyball.

Alma also had 9 athletic programs earn MIAA Team GPA Awards. To qualify, a team must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.300 or better for an academic year.

The Alma College teams that were recognized include men's tennis, women's tennis, women's soccer, women's outdoor track and field, men's cross country, women's cross country, softball, women's lacrosse, and women's indoor track and field.

The tennis teams guided by Head Coach Jared Guy carried the highest team GPAs for the 2020-21 academic year of the Alma College athletic programs with the women earning a 3.72 and the men posting a 3.68.

## EVANS WINS MIAA RENNER AWARD

Senior Hannah Evans was named the winner of the 2021-22 Tom Renner Associate SID Award. The award is given annually to a student assistant at an MIAA member college sports information office for outstanding service as an undergraduate. It is named in honor to Tom Renner who served as MIAA publicist from 1967-2008.

Evans worked for the Alma sports information office during all 4 years of their time at Alma and held a variety of responsibilities and roles. These included, but were not limited to game day management, statistician, primary sport contact, and more.

With the absence of a Sports Information Director, Hannah stepped up to not only assist with sports information but to lead and train other student-workers. Hannah's leadership and dedication to the sports information department was apparent when she took the initiative to be the primary contact for baseball and softball. She met regularly with the coaches to ensure that their statistics were correct, the stories were getting released, and recruited students to replace her after she graduated. She also oversaw statistics and game management for volleyball for the past two seasons. It was critical to have her experience on staff when all previous student stat team members had graduated.

## ULLRICH NOMINATED FOR NCAA WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Senior Hailey Ullrich was Alma College's nominee for the NCAA Woman of the Year.

Established in 1991, the award recognizes female student-athletes who have exhausted their eligibility and distinguished themselves in their community, in athletics and in academics throughout their college careers.

## ULLRICH LEADS NCAA IN WALKS PER GAME

Senior Hailey Ullrich was named a statistical champion by the NCAA in the sport of softball. Ullrich led all NCAA Division III Softball players in Walks per Game.

## TERWILLIGER NOMINATED FOR WALLACE-KAVOLCHIK AWARD

Senior Hadyn Terwilliger was nominated for the Sheila Wallace-Kovalichik Scholart Athlete of the Year Award

This award is the highest individual distinction that a female athlete can receive from the MIAA.





