



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



Program Highlights

- * The Lady Royals have achieved national prominence through their NCAA Division III championship in 1985 and seven other Final Four appearances (1987, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006). Scranton has played in 22 NCAA tournaments in its proud history and holds a record of 50-26 (.658) in those games. Prior to the NCAA offering a championship in women's basketball, the Lady Royals also advanced to the semifinals of the then Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) in 1980
- * Since 1976, the Lady Royals have posted 33 consecutive winning seasons and have an overall record of 790-168 (.825), including four seasons with at least 30 victories and 22 others with at least 20 wins
- * The University of Scranton joined the newly formed Landmark Conference in the fall of 2007. The conference is made up of the following institutions: **The Catholic University of America** (Washington, D.C.), **Drew University** (Madison, N.J.), **Goucher College** (Baltimore, Md.), **Juniata College** (Huntingdon, Pa.), **Moravian College** (Bethlehem, Pa.), **Susquehanna University** (Selinsgrove, Pa.), and the **United States Merchant Marine Academy** (Kings Point, N.Y.)
- * The Lady Royals won the inaugural Landmark Conference championship to go along with their 19 titles in their previous affiliation with the Middle Atlantic States Collegiate Athletic Corporation
- * Veteran head coach Mike Strong is second all-time in NCAA Division III women's basketball history with 687 victories in 28 seasons. He was selected the NCAA Division I Coach of the Year in 1985 and was twice named the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) District IV Coach of the Year (2000, 2006)
- * Among the program's 17 all-Americans are NCAA Player of the Year selections Deanna (Kyle) Klingman and Shelley (Parks) Banta in 1985 and 1987 respectively
- * Academic all-American Una Espenkotter (1987) and three-time first-team all-American Taryn Mellody (2007) were awarded prestigious NCAA postgraduate scholarships
- * The Lady Royals practice and play their home games at the John J. Long, S.J., Center, an on-campus facility with a seating capacity for 2800 fans



Team Highlights

NCAA Champions (1)
1985

NCAA Final Four Appearances (8)
1985 (1st), 1987 (3rd), 1993 (3rd), 1997 (4th), 1999 (4th), 2000 (4th), 2005 (4th), 2006 (3rd)

NCAA Tournament Appearances (22)
1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

Landmark Conference Championships (1)
2008

Middle Atlantic/Freedom Conf. Titles (19)
1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

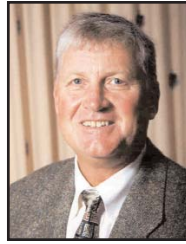
30-or-more Win Seasons (4)
1985 (31-1), 1987 (31-2), 1993 (30-2)
2006 (31-2)

20-or-more Win Seasons (26)
1977 (21-2), 1979 (25-7), 1980 (26-7), 1981 (27-5)
1985 (31-1), 1986 (23-6), 1987 (31-2), 1989 (20-7)
1990 (26-5), 1992 (22-5), 1993 (30-2), 1994 (27-3)
1995 (24-2), 1996 (26-4), 1997 (28-5), 1998 (21-6)
1999 (28-4), 2000 (26-5), 2001 (20-5), 2002 (25-5)
2003 (23-5), 2004 (27-3), 2005 (29-3), 2006 (31-2)
2007 (27-3), 2008 (21-6)

Individual Accomplishments

All-Americans (17)
Melanie Bibak (1984)
Denise Capoocia (1980)
Kathleen Daly (2008)
Jackie Dougherty (1994)
Katie Dougherty (2004)
Una Espenkotter (1986)
Fran Gabriel (1982)
Kelly Halpin (1998, 1999, 2000)
Fran Harkins (1981, 1983)
Lynne Kempfski (1993)
*Deanne Kyle (1985)
Jennifer Nish (1995, 1996, 1997)
*Shelley Parks (1987)
Laura Pikulski (1992)
Kate Pierangeli (2003, 2004)
Allison Matt (2006, 2007)
Taryn Melody (2005, 2006, 2007)

*Division III Player of the Year



Head Coach Mike Strong

Mike Strong has built the Lady Royals into a national powerhouse during his 28-year tenure as head coach. His overall record of 687-141 (.830) includes an NCAA Division III championship (1985), seven other NCAA Final Four appearances and 16 Middle Atlantic/Freedom Conference and one Landmark Conference title.

Upon graduation from Concord College (West Va.) in 1967, Strong began his career at the University as an assistant men's basketball coach in 1972 after a three-year stint as head basketball and head soccer coach at then Keystone Junior College. In 1976, he was an assistant under former men's head coach Bob Bessoir as the Royals won the NCAA Division III championship.

Strong gave Scranton fans a glimpse of things to come in his first season as head coach in 1979. He guided the Lady Royals to a 26-7 overall record, a Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) championship and a Final Four berth in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, (AIAW) the precursor of the NCAA tournament. Five years later, Strong led the Lady Royals to a 31-1 record and its first-ever NCAA title in women's basketball, thanks, in part, to the play of Deanna Kyle, the national player of the year, and a supporting cast that included three future Scranton Wall of Fame inductees.

Shelley Parks would be the spark to a 31-2 season in 1987. Like Kyle, Parks was named the national player of the year after Scranton advanced to the Final Four and finished third. In 1993, the Lady Royals would once again reach the 30-win plateau and place third nationally.

Strong's eye for talent continued in the 1990s. His 1993 team, featuring Lynne Kempfski, Anne Gooley, Katie Geiger, Ann Turlip and Regan McGorry, capped off a 30-2 season by finishing third in the NCAA tournament.

His next recruiting gem turned out to be Jennifer Nish from nearby Pocono Mountain High School. Strong watched her develop into the University's first three-time all-American after leading the Lady Royals to a four-year record of 105-14 (.882), including a Final Four berth in 1997. Kelly Halpin took over for Nish by leading Scranton to a four-year record of 103-20 (.837) from 1996-2000, including Final Four appearances in 1997, 1999 and 2000. All told, 17 players have earned all-America honors during Strong's tenure, including Taryn Melody (2003-2007) who joined Nish and Halpin as three-time recipients and was, along with two-time honorable mention all-American Allison Matt, instrumental in leading the Lady Royals to Final Four appearances in 2005 and 2006. This past winter, Kathleen Daly became the 17th player to garner all-America honors under Strong's tutelage.

Mike and his wife, Linda, have two children, Scott and Chris, and three grandchildren.

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