

athletics

UPDATE FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

HCAC Player-of-the-Week honors, young volleyball squad finds success, new head coaches, and tennis on a tear

by Seth Mikel, Sports Information Director

As the fall athletic season hits the final stretch, several Yellow Jacket teams and individuals are eying strong finishes to their 2007 campaigns. Few student athletes across the nation are having a season like that of senior wide receiver Luke Dillon. Despite DC having only played five games, Dillon has already surpassed his previous career highs in catches and receiving yards in a single season. The Temperance, Mich., native has already amassed 53 catches for 773 yards and is ranked first among all NCAA D-III players with his eye-popping averages of 11.6 catches and 154.6 receiving yards per game.

Along with the gaudy national rankings, Dillon has also broken or tied multiple school and Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference single-game records and is rapidly closing in on a few single-season marks as well. In DC's second game of the season, Dillon waited through a three-hour delay due to lightning at the start of the

game before making his own fireworks by catching 17 passes for 258 yards to lead the Jackets past Otterbein. The 258 yards shattered the previous school record of 228 set by Sam Williams in 1993 and also edged the top HCAC mark of 251 set during the 2000 season. His 17 receptions also tied the Defiance and HCAC single-game records, as the latest Yellow Jacket to accomplish that feat was Mike Groll in 1999.

The record-setting performance against Otterbein thrust Dillon into the national spotlight where he has thrived ever since. Dillon was named as the HCAC Offensive Player of the Week as well taking a spot on *Don Hansen's Football Gazette National Players-of-the-Week* list for his efforts. Since the breakout performance at Otterbein, Dillon has continued a season-long assault on opposing defenses and set a single-game record for the Jackets by catching four touchdowns, including the eventual game-winning score, in DC's thrilling 33-31 homecoming victory against Rose-Hulman.

Dillon caught 11 passes for 151 yards and those four touchdowns against the Engineers to earn his second Player-of-the-Week honor from the HCAC in the season's first five weeks. Dillon also earned a spot on the *www.D3football.com* National Team of the Week as the accolades continue to roll in for the standout receiver. With five games remaining on the schedule, the HCAC Male Athlete of the Month for September has topped the 100-yard plateau in every game so far and would set the DC single-season records for catches and receiving yards by totaling 27 more catches and 437 more yards.

Along with Dillon, several other individuals have been excelling on their respective fields of play for the Yellow Jackets early into the 2007-08 athletic calendar. A few of Dillon's teammates have been making headlines, as Chris Tietje, Alex Bonilla and Tom Foos have all garnered HCAC Player-of-the-Week honors for their efforts on the gridiron. Tietje took the HCAC award as well as a spot on *Don Hansen's*



Luke Dillon



Alex Bonilla



Chris Tietje



Tom Foos



Sara Porter



Danyel Lipps



Amanda Auzins



Emily Meyer

Football Gazette National Player-of-the-Week list after piling up 11 tackles and 2.5 sacks in DC's game at Tri-State. Each of the 2.5 sacks came in the fourth quarter as the Jackets tried to hold off a late rally from the TSU squad. Bonilla and Foos were each honored as HCAC Special Teams Players of the Week. Bonilla took the award for his three field goal effort in DC's two-point victory at Otterbein. The Glenville High product hit the eventual game-winning kick from 36 yards out and tied a DC record with three successful boots in a single game. Foos claimed the award for his performances against Rose-Hulman. The freshman punter averaged 41.3 yards per kick, including a career-high punt of 51 yards, and pinned the Engineers inside their own 20 twice.

Youth has been a theme this season on the volleyball courts as the Lady Jackets have no seniors and just one junior on the roster. The youngsters have wasted little time making an impact and bolstered a 3-0 start in conference play, as DC vaulted to the top of the standings. Freshman Sara Porter has backed up her preseason selection to the HCAC Watch List by being named to the Gargoyle Classic All-Tournament Team and later in the season was named as the HCAC Player of the Week. Sophomore Danyel Lipps has improved on an impressive freshman season and is currently leading DC with 3.46 kills per game. The West Alexandria, Ohio, native paced Defiance at the DC Invitational and was named All-Tournament.

The season has been a challenging one for the DC soccer programs as each team has had to adjust to playing on unfamiliar fields while a drainage system was put in at

Winsper-Knobel Memorial Field. On top of that, a multitude of injuries has taken a toll on the men's roster as the season has progressed. Despite the adverse conditions, the Jackets have scored wins over Mount St. Joseph and Bluffton on the men's side to remain in the race for a spot in the HCAC Tournament. The Lady Jackets struggled early into the season before finding their stride and getting stronger as the season moved into October.

A trio of new head coaches has also made an impact this fall, as Steve Oberlin (tennis) and John Hartpence (cross country) made their debuts with the Yellow Jackets, while Craig Rutter returned to the coaching staff by taking over the reins of the women's golf program. All three face the challenges of trying to lead their programs toward success in the HCAC. Rutter and Hartpence will have that chance when their teams compete in the upcoming HCAC Championships, while Oberlin has already tasted a bit of success with the women's tennis program thanks to the play of Emily Meyer.

Meyer led the way on the courts for the Yellow Jackets and was one of the league's hottest players

over the final month of the regular season. The senior ended the season on a five-match win streak and was 11-5 overall at the top singles position. Meyer also teamed with Amanda Auzins to lead the Jackets with a 10-6 mark at No. 1 doubles. The pair went 5-3 in eight conference matches and won 10 of their last 13 overall. ♦

