

# THE CRUSADER

## FRESHMAN STAFF WRITERS' EDITION

### Highlights: Abbey History, Events, and Sports

#### The Abbey Church: A History

BY: ANNABELLE NUNN

We often say that Mary’s Basilica is the “Beating Heart” of Belmont Abbey. How did that come to be? In 1892, a small group of Benedictine Monks began the construction of Mary Help of Christians Basilica in Belmont, North Carolina. The Church became a magnificent place of worship for practicing students and monks.

The entire college and monastery were built on a previously disbanded plantation site. Father Jeremiah O’Connell, who purchased the land years later, donated the site to the Benedictines, hoping to bring it a new purpose. The building of our Abbey church began in 1892, with the help of dozens of hired workers, volunteers, and monks. The large cruciform structure was completed and dedicated on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1894.

This construction was no small feat. Funds for the Church relied solely on donations from local aristocrats and families. Kathrine Drexel, among other supporters, personally saw the completion of the Basilica.



Photographer Robin Wiley

While over the years Mary Help of Christians has been through numerous renovations and even caught fire, the original structure holds firm.

Mary Help of Christians Basilica has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1973.

#### Undergraduate Research Conference Proposal Due April 3

CONTACT ERINJENSEN@BAC.EDU WITH ANY QUESTIONS

### 2023 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH POSTER CONFERENCE



April 21st 2023  
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM



The Student Hub

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- APPLICATION DEADLINE  
April 3rd, 2023
- ALL STUDENTS ARE WELCOME
- PAPER OR DIGITAL POSTERS

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION  
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW





PAGE 1



# Kids in College: Dual Enrollment

BY: PETER GALLAGHER

High schoolers nationwide are beginning to see the benefits of dual enrollment. Students are completing high school and beginning college all at once! Many of these students have chosen Belmont Abbey College as their place of education. High schoolers can start expanding education to the college level as early as next semester.

Dual enrollment is the process in which high school students begin taking college-level classes. Most of these students come from homeschooling backgrounds. Dual enrollment, however, is not only for former homeschoolers but any high school student who wishes to advance in the educational process.

Belmont Abbey has more than just a beautiful campus. Their professors and staff members are incredibly welcoming to dual-enrolled students. Professor Erin Jensen said, “I really enjoy teaching dual-enrolled students. I find that many of my dual-enrolled students are excited to be in class and actively participate in class discussions and activities.”

The most attractive part of dual enrollment is receiving college credits! The idea that you can complete high school while grabbing college credits is a no-brainer. This allows some students to finish college well before their peers. Professor Erin went on to say, “I encourage all high school students to consider taking college classes as this is a great opportunity to complete high school requirements, gain college experience, and learn about a topic at a more specific level than is often provided at the high school level.”

Dual enrollment is an excellent way of completing high school and beginning college simultaneously. I encourage the students at Belmont Abbey to spread the word to their high school families and friends.



Photographer Robin Wiley

# One Fast Weekend

BY: BRYSON ROSE

Has a class ever taken you to the most historic speedway on the NASCAR schedule? Well that exactly is what I did for my Motorsports 390: Professional Development class. Taught by Professor Quinn Beekwilder and Professor Trey Cunningham, this class is a great opportunity to go out and get involved with different forms of motorsports and learn from some of the most influential people in the industry. Every opportunity we had was a chance to learn and grow as professional and get advice from people in the industry to help me become successful.

For this class we recently took a trip down to Daytona International Speedway for the historic Rolex 24. A 24-hour long race that test mind, body, and machine at one of the fastest tracks in the world. The trip started off with a visit and tour of the motorsport’s hall of fame, where we saw historic cars like the fabulous Hudson Hornet. The most interesting car I saw there was Mickey Thompson and the Challenger 1 car that hit speeds over 400 MPH doing 406.6 mph in the 1960s over at the salt flats in Utah. Our next event was a personal interview with alumni Mike Leheta, who is the senior director of national sales for NASCAR. This was personally my favorite experience of the weekend. It was fun getting a tour of the different suites and clubs they have available at Daytona. Then our Q&A session with him was fantastic. It was cool to hear his story of him coming to the Abbey and having a great experience like I’m having now, and then having so much success in the industry. It really made me confident about my choice to come here and be a part of this program where so many had great success. Mike also might of lead me to my future career path. Hearing him talk about his job in marketing and what his day to day is like really focused my attention on marketing as a future career possibility. Being able to ask him so many questions and getting answers that showed his passion and love for the job made me confident that I can love that job as well.

We had many other great experiences and meetings as well, like meeting with Tim Cindric, the president of team Penske, one of the most historic teams in motorsports. We also got to meet with some of the teams that competed in the race as well like Racers Edge Motorsports and Pfaff Motorsports. Both teams were amazing to talk to, my buddy Chris said “I loved hearing about how their team (Pfaff Motorsports) is basically a passion project put together by people who work at a Canadian car dealership. And how last year they overcame all odds and won their class!” Finally, we had a meeting with John Doonan, the president of IMSA. His meeting was fantastic and one of the main points he talked about was how IMSA is trying to become the leading innovators for making a motorsport that is completely eco-friendly by using renewable fuels for their cars and travel. My friend Bryan Caskey said about the meeting “It was amazing to hear about all the innovations in becoming eco-friendly IMSA was making to become the greenest motorsport in America. The environment is something I am really passionate about and hearing someone else in the industry with the same ideals and passion as me made me



really comfortable and proud to know I’m in the right place.”

Then the race itself was amazing. The Rolex 24 is an endurance race around the Daytona International Speedway Road Course. IMS is the International Motor Sports Association. It consists of 5 classes called Grand Touring Prototype (GTP), Le Mans Prototype 2 (LMP2), Le Mans Prototype 3 (LMP3), GT Daytona Pro (GTD Pro), and GT Daytona (GTD). And each class can have anywhere from 23 cars like the GTD class to 9 cars like the GTP class. This means that 61 cars are all racing at the same time going all at different speeds for 24 hours of nonstop action. This makes for exciting racing that includes crashes, spins, and even a fire! The race started at 1:40pm on Saturday and didn’t end until 1:40pm the next day. Meaning this race was long and truly put the drivers mind, body, and soul to the test, while also testing the engineers and mechanics to build a car that’ll last 24 hours going at such high speeds. This all was proven at the end of the LMP2 race where the car won by 0.012 seconds! 24 hours of hard racing came down to three inches. And I got to experience all with the friends I made in this class and during the trip. I couldn’t have asked for a better experience.



So, after meeting so many people in the industry and then so many alumni of the school that were willing to talk and share their express stories, it made me confident that I’m in the right spot and that this school wants me to succeed and will help me do that in any way possible. Then being able to watch a fantastic race with the friends I made along the way. It made me confident that I’m in the right spot and that this school wants me to succeed and will help me do that in any way possible. I think I accomplished what I set out to do. My goal heading into the weekend were to just learn as much as I can, not just about the sport of IMSA but also just to learn one thing from everyone we talked to. I felt like I accomplished that goal.

I learned so much from this trip, but if I had to summarize everything I learned in a sentence, it would be to have a dream, have a desire, and work the hardest you can until you reach that dream and desire. Those key ideas were something I felt like I heard from everyone we spoke to. That no one makes it in this industry without a dream and determination. I know that whatever I do won’t be perfect and I will make mistakes, but it’s my ability to pick myself back up and keep going that will make or break my success

in the industry. And that’s what I’ve been trying to apply in my life ever since we got back from the trip.

Come talk to us again after March 5<sup>th</sup> when we get back from Saint Petersburg for the INDYCAR season opener.

# Service Beyond Belmont Abbey

BY: MARGARET BRACH

Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, you should check out the Abbey’s Benedictine Volunteer Corps. BVC, run by Father Chris, is a program looking to help others. It is an opportunity for recent alumni to volunteer and install Benedictine values in various places in the US. This year is the tenth anniversary of the corps, and they will be serving in Ashland, Montana.

Alumni get the opportunity to spend nine months in various places around the country, helping out with things such as coaching sports, food distribution, teaching classes, and many more things. Usually, four people go a year to help out in underprivileged areas in any way they can. It is an incredible way to build character, gain life lasting experience, and give back. In doing so, they are living out many of the Benedictine Hallmarks.



Joe Brach is one of the many students who work alongside Father Chris, helping recruit and advertise the program. In his words, BVC is important because “Not only does it change the lives of the people that you're helping, it's life changing for the volunteers as well”. BVC believes that “where you begin in life, does not dictate where you end”.

BVC is looking for determined, selfless, generous, and loving people, willing to spend months helping others and creating healthy, thriving communities. You have to be a recent alumnus to qualify, I suggest becoming involved in the program sooner rather than later if this sounds like something you’re interested in. If you want to learn more about BVC you can visit their Instagram @bvc.abbey or reach out to Father Chris.



# Belmont Abbey Buildings Review

BY: ROBERT HALL

Do you find yourself curious about the history and design of Belmont Abbey? The roots of Belmont Abbey can be traced back over 150 years. Belmont Abbey’s numerous historic buildings have survived multiple fires and natural disasters. After asking around campus students had a lot to say about the buildings and their architecture. “They are beautiful, unique and historic” according to one student.



Photographer Robin Wiley

The basilica is one of the notable buildings on campus. It has a long history, being constructed in 1894 in a Gothic Revival style. Modernist renovations were made to the Abbey Church after the Second Vatican Council. Belmont Abbey lost its territorial status and cathedral rank in 1975 because of the creation of the Diocese of Charlotte.

The campus also features several other noteworthy buildings, such as the Haid, Maurus Hall, Robert Stowe Hall, and many others. The Hail, home of the abbey players, is the longest running community theater in North Carolina. Maurus Hall is where Holy Grounds coffee shop is. Lastly Robert Stowe Hall is where some classes and offices are located. Haid, Maurus Hall, Robert Stowe Hall, and other buildings are also built in a Gothic Revival style or an American Benedictine style of architecture.

Overall, the Belmont Abbey Buildings have contributed to the success of the Abbey. Belmont Abbey's campus stands out from those of nearby universities and colleges thanks to its unusual blend of Gothic Revival and American Benedictine architecture. The buildings, whether it be Stowe Hall for lectures or the Basilica for religious services, contribute to the unique character of the university.

# The Investment Club at Belmont Abbey College

BY: Lucca Gonzalez

The investment club at Belmont Abbey College is a dynamic community of students interested in exploring the world of finance and investing. For example: What are you going to do when you graduate college and have money? This club will help you to make the right decision and help you to know what to do with a certain amount of money in the future. With a focus on education and hands-on experience, members of the club have the opportunity to learn about market trends, investment strategies, and portfolio management. The club meets regularly to discuss current events, analyze financial data, and make investment decisions. With access to real-time market information and the guidance of experienced faculty advisors, the investment club provides a unique and valuable learning experience for students at Belmont Abbey College.

This club has helped students learn how to invest the right way with professional help, that have been investing and have a lot of experience. The students also have the opportunity to begin an investment career while the experienced advisor help them on making the right decisions.

The advisors also provide educational resources and opportunities for the members of the club, including guest speakers, seminars, and workshops. I asked Francisco Aran, a member of the club “what is so special about the investment club?” He tells that “The information he learned out of all the seminars, speakers, and workshops have help him to become a great investor with a lot of knowledge learned” He started his investing career one year ago and he is making good decisions with a lot of knowledge that he have gained over the past years that he have been on the club.

This is a valuable learning experience for students who are interested in pursuing a career in finance or investing. The club provides students with real-world experience in managing investments and making investment decisions. This experience can be very valuable when applying for internships or jobs in the finance industry.



Photographer Robin Wiley



# SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

## Rugby’s Journey to D1

BY: SARAH BLANKENSHIP

Being a division one athlete is a very exhilarating experience. At Belmont Abbey College the men's Rugby team program just became Division 1 in 2022. This team only began in 2019, starting off strong and getting many recruits each semester. Each year they exceeded their limits much higher than expected through a good coaching staff and sportsmanship.

Nick Whitrow was made as the first head coach on December 12, 2019 when the sport was first introduced to the school. Whitrow worked with the high school All-



American Boys Rugby team from 2010 to 2012. Alongside him is coach Genaro Fessia, who became assistant coach for Belmont Abbey's rugby team on March 9th, 2022. Fessia has a good deal of experience involving this sport. He played for multiple professional teams internationally like the Sale Sharks in Greater Manchester, England. Fessia also played in the Rugby World Cup representing Argentina in 2011.

One of the most important qualities to the team is their support from one another. The boys make a tremendous effort to keep good sportsmanship. I interviewed William Rimes from the rugby team and he said “when the team gets along we play better, so we tend to try and keep it that way.” Rimes was extremely passionate about the game of rugby. When the teammates are with each other on campus they always keep in touch and support one another. Even when doing little things like sitting with one another in the cafeteria or studying with the team. The coaches take everything very seriously, there's really no time to mess around. Coming to practice and lifts on time is mandatory for the team; it's not an option to miss, unless injured.

After a 27-12 win at Citadel University, the men are confirmed as Conference Champions. The men's rugby team just recently got invited to Rugby East, which is the biggest rugby conference in the USA. The Crusaders completed these achievements within their first year of being division one. The team wouldn't have been able to come forth with

these accomplishments without the support they have from one another. The men worked hard to reach their goals, and they have just gotten started with what they have achieved. It's very impressive since they are a newer program and the things they've overcome especially because most of the players are so young. Their varsity team only consists of freshmen and sophomores. The boys Belmont Abbey rugby team has excelled a huge amount the past seasons, and are promising to keep the title going.

## The Softball Team: From a Transfer Student’s Perspective

BY: ISABELA GALLARDO

Being a mid-semester transfer student is not all sunshine and rainbows. Addie Cox is an excellent example of that. Cox originally came from a school in Odessa, TX, and managed to find her way to Belmont, NC, to play a higher level of softball.

When asking Cox about her adjustments and her thoughts about leaving home and going to a new place, she said, “Obviously, the first couple of weeks were hard just because I had to settle with classes and practice times, but I had the upper hand to the situation, and I feel like I am making the most of it.” She said she had the upper hand because Cox was used to moving from school to school, so she already knew what to expect when coming to Belmont Abbey.



Having Cox as a new addition to the softball program has been worthwhile. Having another pitching arm on the staff has been one of the best decisions for the Abbey Softball Program. Currently, the softball program has two pitchers that are great starters, but once the opposing team can catch up to their pitching speed, you will need to switch it up. The main thing Cox takes pride in is the ability to go into the



game's final innings when it is a neck-to-neck inning where the win is on the line. Cox's job is to go into the pitching circle and strike out the final batters to claim a victory for the team.

The past couple of seasons has been rough for the softball program pitching-wise. They were always a couple of arms short, meaning they were known for having one or two pitchers for the team. In hindsight, you need an opener and a closing pitcher to keep the other team off-balance when going up to bat. But with Addie joining them, they allowed the ability to keep the other team guessing. She has let the team sigh of relief, knowing that if they have a pitcher go down, she can go in and close the game out.

The girls see Addie as a light to the team. (Jr.) Bailey Presley said, “Yes, I believe Cox had worked hard to prove herself as a valuable asset to our team, as well as work on her strengths and weaknesses to succeed for the team. I believe there are some nerves when any transfer player arrives and plays with a team for the first time. However, I see great success coming from her in the future.” The softball team is starting to open the season up, and when transferring, as Presley said, you need to have a good bond with your team. (Fr) Trinity Wall said, “Cox bonded great with the team. She has an awesome and fun personality that perfectly matches the team dynamic.”

If you want to learn more, watch Abbey softball play this season.

## It's More Than Just Volleyball

BY: JADA FOSTER

Have you ever wanted the inside scoop on volleyball? As a current member of the Abbey Women’s Volleyball team, I can tell you that it’s more than just volleyball. It’s a family, people I can count on and respect. The coach’s vision is the team’s vision, and as a program, it is OUR vision. I’ve come to realize, as a freshman, that my mistake is everyone’s mistake. We all take ownership of what we do, and as a team, we find ways to correct it. Volleyball is a privilege. For our program, I need to give 100% in everything I do, be honest, and be a team player. That standard isn’t just for me but for every teammate. We set the standard. What we post on social media and how we present ourselves in the classroom and on campus, should be the same way we present ourselves on the court. A big thing we focus on is legacy, we always ask ourselves, “What legacy do you want to leave and be a part of while you are here at Belmont Abbey?”

I interviewed both Toni Fox and Cassidy Bonito, coaches of the women's volleyball team. Cassidy Bonito is a respected former setter for Belmont Abbey, the all-time career assist leader, Conference Carolina setter of the year, and AVCA player of the week. She was also a Larry Reidy award winner for Belmont Abbey Athletics, which is given to one student per year for significant contributions to Belmont Abbey. Cassidy is going through her first-year transitioning from an esteemed player to an assistant coach.

The question I had in mind for Cassidy was: “How would you compare being a coach to being a player? And what influenced you to become one?”

“Going from coach to player was a bigger shift than I thought it would be. To see the outside perspective of every detail that goes into learning every individual position and skill compared to just mine as a player has been eye-opening. As a player, I only focused on my individual job to help lead the team to success, but as a coach, I have to think about everyone’s job and how they can improve upon themselves. My biggest influence on becoming a coach has been our program. Coach Toni and the Abbey have made my passion stronger for the sport as well as allowed me to continue to appreciate, teach, and learn from our female athletes. There is nothing greater than being around the sport you love and creating a future for you girls to thrive in.”

As I have asked Bonito to share her point of view, she shares the same vision for the team as head coach Toni Fox. Toni Fox enters her eighth season as head coach of the women's program. She has led the Crusaders to four consecutive 20+ win seasons, and Conference Carolinas Championship match appearances, including back-to-back division titles. In the process, she was named Coach of the Year in 2018 and 2019.



As a coach, having a vision for the team is always a good way to set goals. This led me into asking Fox: “What is your vision for the team?”

“The mission of the women’s volleyball program is to develop strong women who believe in themselves, who will then go out into the world after four years at the Abbey and make a positive and significant impact. We want to empower them to carry the bright light of Christ wherever they may go knowing they will encounter hard times in their adult lives, yet with the hope of what they have learned as a member of the program will have the grit to fight through and see the light in dark times.”

# Belmont Abbey Athletics: Inside the Wrestling Room

BY: SKYLAR BADESSA

Have you ever attended a wrestling match? Maybe the high school you went to had a team, or maybe you knew someone who wrestled for a club outside of school. Personally, I was not introduced to wrestling until coming down to Belmont. Just in case you’re like me and you’ve never heard anything about the team here at the Abbey. This week we are traveling over to Sacred Heart campus to have a look inside Belmont Abbey's Wrestling practice room. Saturday, February 11th the crusaders took on Limestone University in their last regular season match. Belmont dominated with a 36-6 victory over the Saints. But what’s next?

Proceeding this match is the NCAA Super Regional 2 being held in Pembroke, North Carolina. In just two short weeks from their last competition, the Crusaders will face some of the toughest challenges in the country. But just how does one prepare for such competition? Let’s ask someone on the team for their input.

Kyler Pickard (174) pictured on the right



Freshman Kyler Pickard was a three-time high school state qualifier, two-time state finalist, state champion, and earned the All American title. Going 12-10 this season for the Crusaders in the 174-pound weight class, Pickard shared “I started in 7th grade because it was a highly respected sport. The intensity of the sport drew me in.”

But physically, what does it take to become a National Champion? When we asked Pickard, what are you doing to prepare for regionals? Anything different compared to the regular season? He responded with “Workout twice a day and wrestle twice a day, focus on technique and cardio for the tournament to come. This is different than in the regular season because the goals are slightly different and your body is not meant to peak till the big tournament (nationals) so you will solely focus on technique and learning new things while using them on the mat.” With nationals right around the corner we also asked what he believes to be the national champion's mind.

He said “An open mind but yet solely focused on being the best wrestler you can be, not focused on anyone around you, only what you need to do to be the best and work until it's done. It's all about setting goals and deadlines which will help you make improvements and become the best wrestler you can be.” It is important to hold yourself accountable.

Pickard says “The competitiveness of this individual sport makes it so different from every other sport. The mental and physical difficulty of this sport makes it so much more difficult and grueling than any other sport.”

The Crusaders competed at UNC Pembroke on February 25th, 2023 for a run in the national tournament. Two of the team traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana with hopes of competing well. Although the match is not right here on campus, there is ample opportunity to live stream and support the team virtually.

# Chasing Greatness!!! Do the Belmont Abbey Men's Three- Peat?

BY: JOSH LINDSAY

The men’s basketball started off with a revamping with a new coaching staff. Also, getting new transfers from all over the country, they are looking to make a deep run in the playoffs. The returners and transfers have gelled and assembled a solid team that is a force to be reckoned with. They were undefeated at home for the majority of the season.

They take action on Wednesday against the Braves of UNC Pembroke. After their last regular season game, the division 2 playoff kicks off. Regardless of a win or lose the Crusaders will finish top 5 in their respective conference. These men are chasing greatness and have the tools to do it! It’s just up to them.

I had a chance to be a part of the basketball program and it's great to have a lot of brothers. My coaches keep it real and they always try to help us get better every day. The fans always make the experience great and a good environment.

As I said these men are chasing greatness and have the tools to do it! It’s just up to them.

Star point guard #1 KJ Garrett advances the ball up the court.





## Come Join the Intramural Sports and Clubs

BY: JAMES STEELE

In today's world mental health has been a big concern for a lot of students in college. I feel that intramural sports, clubs help mental health in all kinds of ways. Playing the sport you love on a club team is going to get your mind off of whatever is going on with your mental health. This is why intramural sports are a great way for students to get out of their dorm.

College is a stressful time for a lot of students, especially freshmen. Intramural sports are a great way to get involved in the community and make new friends! Intramural sports provide a great outlet to get away from the stress of academics and studying. How you ever need a break from studying come join an intramural sport. Why Being on a team with someone you have never met could be a great experience. You may even meet your new best friend. Belmont Abbey offers... What intramural sports are offered flag football, ultimate frisbee, debate team, motorsports,

There are many things that can come with being a part of a team. When playing in a competitive game you can lead your team. This is a great opportunity for you to be a leader for your team and try to win it all. "Memories last forever in sports." Can teach you a lesson and help you later in your life in a job. There are many ways intramural sports can be effective and more people should take advantage of these sporting activities. I played flag football for intramural sports this fall and I loved it and how we all had to work together to win the game.

Intramural sports at Belmont abbey should be a bigger topic in the coming years. I think with the new building going up more people will look into THE ABBEY. Belmont Abbey needs to improve their intramural sports with adding more for winter and spring so students can get out and see people they have never seen before. It could help the school bring in more students if their intramural sports are better. This is why intramural sports are so important in college today and the years to come.



## Experiences as a Belmont Abbey Basketball player: “We Gonna Go in as brothers, We Gonna leave as brothers”

BY: TAJ MCCLARY

At Belmont Abbey there are a slew of many different sports programs, may it be Track & field, volleyball, soccer, etc. None of them give the same Experience as being a basketball player at Belmont Abbey. Well obviously, there are similar experiences such as meeting new friends that's a given but the sure bond and many different emotions that are given differentiate basketball from other programs.

One of the experiences you will experience being a basketball player at Belmont Abbey is just the different playstyle and approach to the game people have. On the Basketball team there are people from all over may it be Florida, Utah, South Carolina and even Belgium. These differing places allow for multiple different styles of the game to be played and shown to other people who may have not seen anything like it before.

Another experience of being a basketball player at Belmont Abbey is the crazy friendships you will form. Now I cannot speak for other sports but what you will see from basketball here is two separate people arguing a lot. You may even think they are going to fight but the same night they end up being in each other's dorms eating food together. That is simply amazing how people's personalities can change to playing basketball but at the end of the day it is all love. That is the strong but intense friendship you will see in the Belmont Abbey basketball program.



Being a Belmont Abbey basketball player gives you a multitude of different experiences, may it be the different approach to the game of basketball based on the differing locations your teammates are from or even the love-hate relationships that you form.



# Flag Football Emerges at Belmont Abbey College

BY: JEREMY WEEKES

The Flag Football Club is gaining popularity at Belmont Abbey College. As the world of college athletics continues to evolve, so too does the range of sports that are played on campus. One of the latest club sports to emerge at Belmont Abbey is flag football, a non-contact version of the sport that has been gaining popularity in other colleges across the country as well.

Flag football has been around for decades, but it's only in recent years that it's started to gain traction on college campuses. Unlike traditional football, which can be dangerous and physically demanding, flag football is a safer alternative that is easy to learn and accessible to players of all skill levels.

More than 100 colleges and universities across the country now have flag football club programs, and Belmont Abbey happens to be one of them. The growth of the sport has been driven in part by a desire to provide more opportunities for women to participate in athletics, as flag football is often played as a co-ed sport.

At Belmont Abbey, flag football is now a recognized club sport or intramural activity, with regular practices depending on how serious you and your team take the sport. There are competitive competitions throughout the academic year, with a championship game at the end of the semester. While the sport may not yet be as high-profile as traditional football, It became very popular at Belmont Abbey because we don't have a football team. Now players who played football in high school have a chance to show off their skills.

According to Justin Anaemejeh, "flag football is 10 times more fun than regular football." Another reason for the sport's popularity is its fast-paced, high-scoring nature. With no tackling allowed, the game relies on quick footwork and agility, as players race up and down the field trying to score touchdowns. And with fewer players on the field than in traditional football, there's more opportunity for individual players to shine.

Another factor driving interest in flag football is the concern over head injuries in traditional football. With no hard hitting or tackling, flag football is a safer option for players who want to stay in the game without putting their health at risk.

As the popularity of flag football continues to grow, it's likely that more colleges and universities will embrace the sport and offer it as a viable alternative to traditional football. For students looking to get involved in athletics and stay active on campus while being safe, flag football club may be the perfect choice at Belmont Abbey.



# Friends on the Basketball Team

BY: SEVE LEONI

I am writing about my experience at Belmont Abbey. I came to Belmont Abbey to play on the basketball team. It was always my goal to play basketball in college, so I made a big effort during my junior and senior years of high school to meet coaches. That is how I found Belmont Abbey. Since coming to college, I have found a group of friends on the Basketball team that I always hang out with. We all met the first week of our season on the Basketball team, and we have really connected with each other and have become very close friends since then. We respect each other and that is why we have developed a close bond.

When I am with my friends, we always have a good time, whether it is playing basketball, going out to eat, just chilling, or even when we talk over the phone because we are all interesting and entertaining people. They bring out a different side of me that I've discovered since coming to Belmont Abbey. I am so comfortable around them now that I'm not afraid to do anything when I'm with them. This connection also helps our game on the basketball court. We are on the same page when it comes to strategy most of the time, so it gives us an advantage over the other teams.

Other than a great group of friends, being here at Belmont Abbey has helped me grow up as a person. When I first got here, I realized I have to live on my own and do things on my own. Before I came here, I wondered how I would make it through the first semester. I have always lived with my parents who were very supportive and took care of me, so I did not really have to do much. I can say I adjusted pretty well and better than I thought I would, and I definitely have grown mentally from being in college. Even though I was always mature, I feel I have become more aware of what it takes to be an adult. Things like getting my laundry done, managing my time, taking care of my health have all helped me grow. For example, I just got sick for the first time away from home and had to go pickup my own medicine and make sure I was not falling back on school work at the same time.



In the end, my time at Belmont Abbey so far has given me great friends, the opportunity to pursue my goal of playing college basketball, and many experiences that have taught me about adult life. If you asked me before I came to school if I thought I would have enjoyed college this much, I probably would have told you no because I did not know what to expect. But now that I have finished my first semester here and almost halfway through my second semester, I am happy I came to Belmont Abbey and look forward to what the future holds.



# 15 Straight Wins! How Did our Women’s Basketball Team Do it?

BY: GARY WILLIAMS

Have you ever heard of a sports team that's won at least ten games in a row, let alone 15? Only some of the best constructed in their respective sports have accomplished such a thing. Doesn't it feel good to know that there's one among us here at the Abbey? Our Lady Crusaders basketball team has won 15 games in a row and 21 of their last 22 games to finish off the 2022-2023 regular season.

In Sunday’s latest updated news, our no.1 seed Crusaders defeated no. 5 seed Chowan but came up short of no. 3 seed UNC Pembroke in the Atlantic Casualty Insurance Company Conference Carolinas Tournament. Concluding the game, Abigail Crain, a member of the First-Team All-Conference, and Taylor Stelley, a member of the Second-Team All-Conference, were announced as members of the All-Tournament Team. Our Lady Crusaders finished 23-5 overall & 19-1 in the conference this season. It was exciting, to say the least, to watch them, and they deserve more fans at their games.

In a post-game interview that took place after their final game, head coach Kim Lusk expressed her thoughts about her team’s success throughout the season: “When we thought about the beginning of the season and how we all came together, I don’t think we predicted that we would be here in this moment... just being grateful for all of what they’ve overcome throughout the course of the season and just how hard they worked and just how incredibly proud I am of them.”

Day in and day out, they worked hard to give their families and fans quite the show and themselves a good name. With a relatively young roster, we hope to see most of these athletes return to the Abbey next year to demand control of the conference again, along with your support. Plan on watching these ladies live with your friends at the Wheeler Center next winter!





# Meet The Staff Writers

Student Editor: Regina Vehige

- Sarah Blankenship
- Skyler Badessa
- Margaret Brach
- Lucca Gonzalez
- Isabela Gallardo
- Peter Gallagher
- Jada Foster
- Robert Hall
- Josh Lindsay
- Seve Leoni
- Taj Mcclary
- Annabelle Nunn
- Bryson Rose
- James Steele
- Jeremy Weekes
- Gary Williams

Photography

Robin Wiley

Faculty Advisor and Copy Editor, Erin Jensen,  
PhD

