

A History of Ashland College Women's Athletics

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Ashland College

In tracing the development of the women's athletic program at Ashland College, one centers on the Women's Athletic Association (WAA) and strong individuals who were able to strengthen the women's interests in athletics.

By using the student handbooks and the student publication, the *Purple and Gold*, one sees the early women's athletic teams as inter-class and intramural squads. The basic doings of the WAA centered on the college's May Day and the celebration which went with it. The WAA was the main cog in these events.

The college's yearbook, *Pine Whispers*, describes the inter-class meets which were held and focuses on tennis, field hockey and hiking of the WAA. Mrs. Helen Vanosdall, a former instructor in physical education at Ashland College, led the WAA in the development of field hockey and play days held by the college. She also promoted a tumbling squad which appeared at halftime of the men's basketball games. Another individual who was instrumental in promoting the women's athletic program was Harriet Geisinger. Under her leadership women were encouraged to learn athletic skills and strategies. Hjordes Johnson was yet another physical educator who led the way in the growth of a strong sports program through intramurals and extramurals. The handbook Miss Johnson evolved gave a solid base for the women's program.

Carol Mertler was the first Assistant Athletic Director for Women and made the transition from DGWS athletic guidelines to the Ohio Association for Intercollegiate Sports for

Women regulations. Ella Shannon gave the impetus to the growth of a women's varsity athletic program. Under her leadership women's athletics made great strides and achieved national recognition by conducting the first AIAW small college women's basketball tournament. Ashland College's team placed fourth in the nation. Gay Whieldon was the college's first Associate Athletic Director. She administered state and regional AIAW tournaments. Ashland's women's basketball team won the state championship.

The women's program went from an NCAA Division III level to Division II and stability by joining the Great Lakes Valley Conference.