

FIGHTING BEES Soccer

For the Fighting Bees soccer team, there is no such thing as a “rebuilding year.” Since Father Robert “Bud” Grant took over as head coach of the St. Ambrose University men’s soccer team in 2000, steady improvement is becoming a tradition.

“Every year we’ll be better than the year before,” Grant says. “That’s something I can absolutely attest to.”

In 2005, the Bees advanced to the Region VII Tournament semi-finals and toppled NAIA-ranked Judson, 4-2. In 2003, the Fighting Bees (no. 25) were nationally ranked (No. 25) for the first time in history. In 2007, Coach Grant’s Bees won the Midwest Collegiate Conference title and advanced to the Region VII Championship game, which is further than any team in Bees history. For Grant, success is tied to the character of the players he’s searching for.

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“We have three criteria that we look for in our players: and there is no hierarchy to the criteria: We want people of integrity, people who want to excel academically, and people who are talented athletes,” Grant says. “I’d like to think the way we do soccer at St. Ambrose makes a contribution to the refinement of a young man’s character.”

Athletic success

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Since 2000, six Fighting Bee soccer players have earned eight, first-team All-Region VII honors. Those same five also earned NAIA All-American Honorable Mention awards.

The conference

St. Ambrose became in 2007 a member of the highly competitive Midwest Collegiate Conference, in 2007, which was formerly the Midwest Classic Conference. The conference contains nine colleges scattered across the state of Iowa with one Wisconsin member. Each school in the conference is a four-year institution with enrollment between 500–3,900 students.

Midwest Collegiate Conference

St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa
Ashford University, Clinton, Iowa
Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa
Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa
Iowa Wesleyan College, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Viterbo University, LaCrosse, Wis.
Waldorf College, Forest City, Iowa
William Penn University, Oskaloosa, Iowa

Recent records

	OVERALL	CONFERENCE
2003	16-6	5-2 (2nd, 1st round regionals)
2004	15-9	6-1 (2nd, 1st round regionals)
2005	13-8-2	5-1-1 (2nd, regional semi-finals)
2006	7-11-4	5-2 (2nd, 1st round regionals)
2007	15-6-2	7-1 (1st, Championship in regionals)

2007 MCC regular season

vs. Mount Mercy	W	2-0
at William Penn	L	3-4
at Ashford	W	2-0
at Waldorf	W	9-0
vs. Grand View	W	2-1
at Iowa Wesleyan	W	7-1
vs. Clarke	W	2-1
vs. Viterbo	W	3-0

2007 MCC Tournament

vs. Waldorf	W	9-0
vs. Grand View	W	2-1
at Iowa Wesleyan	W	7-1
Region VII Tournament		
vs. Olivet Nazarene	W	5-0
vs. Judson	L	4-1

The coaching staff

Father Robert “Bud” Grant has coached soccer at high school and college levels. He began his soccer coaching career at St. Albert High School in 1989 and made the move to St. Ambrose in 1994. He was head of the SAU junior varsity squad for six years and was named SAU head coach in 2000.

While at St. Ambrose, Grant has posted an 85-63-9 record. His 16-6 squad of 2003 was ranked 25th in the NAIA, marking the first time in St. Ambrose history the men’s soccer team was nationally ranked. For his ’03 efforts in 2003, Grant was named the Midwest Classic Conference Coach of the Year.

In his ninth year as leader of the Fighting Bees, Grant has assembled another competitive schedule for his 2007 players. SAU played a record of five ranked teams this season after meeting four ranked teams this past year. The team achieved a national ranking of 21st in the NAIA. Five players were named to the All-Conference First Team, including the Player of the Year and Best Newcomer. Two were All-Region and All-American Honorable Mentions, including the Region VII Player of the Year. Grant was regional coach of the year.

Fr. Grant makes certain his squad plays other highly competitive teams. For his recruits, he has one simple challenge: “If you think you can compete at this level, welcome aboard.,” Grant says. “We’ll play the best players.”

Graduate assistant coach Michael Prunty enters his first year of assisting with the men. A three-time letter winner, and Academic All-American from Simpson College, Prunty has been very involved in Denver, Colorado soccer for the past two years, and comes to St. Ambrose to pursue a Master of Education in Teaching degree.

Academic success

Grant and the SAU soccer program place a strong focus on academics. Grant said the soccer program is offered not only to give students an avenue to excel in athletics, but also in academics. A quality academic experience awaits each player.

Since 2000, SAU has turned out 10 NAIA All-American Scholar Athlete honors.

Community service

Typically, the soccer team will participate in five community service projects throughout the year. Projects include a gift-giving program with SAU’s neighborhood schools and participation in “Catholic Schools’ Week” at neighboring Assumption High School.

Facilities

Lee Lohman Arena on the St. Ambrose campus has an exercise room with free weights, weight machines and cardiovascular workout machines. Soccer athletes use the Lee Lohman facilities during the off-season. During the season, St. Ambrose plays its games at the Davenport Soccer Complex.

Financial aid

Partial scholarships not tied to academics and financial need are available.