

Women win 11 straight, sit atop NE10

By Julian Markese
Sports Editor

In 2006, the women's basketball team won 20 straight games to start the season. They compiled 34 wins, culminating in a National Championship victory over Florida Gulf Coast University.

The MVP of that game was current head coach of the women's team, Kate Lynch. She led the team in points, steals, minutes and shooting percentage that season.

Twenty years later, Lynch finds herself again at the helm of a streaking team with lofty expectations.

"Everyone's hungry. Everyone just keeps pushing each other. You can feel it in the locker room and on the court. Everyone's got each other's backs," guard Jaycee Merizalde, a freshman, said.

The 2026 team has won 11 straight games. After dispatching Bentley University on Feb. 4, the Owls took care of business against Pace University on Saturday, Feb. 7, winning 69-56. They then beat Southern New Hampshire University, beating the Penmen 55-47.

Against Pace, the Owls went into the half facing a one-point deficit. By the time the third quarter was over, they held a 12-point lead.

The Owls seem to have what other teams do not: an extra gear. Lynch

credited a shift in "energy level," not a tactical change, for her team's turnaround against Pace.

"In the second half, our defensive intensity and sense of urgency kicked up a notch," Lynch said.

Not every team has that extra notch. In contrast, by the end of the third, the Pace coach derided her team as "pathetic" and loudly proclaimed that they were "falling apart."

The defensive effort of guard Taeya Steinauer, a sophomore, who is tasked with guarding the opposing team's best player every game, encapsulates the team's mentality as a whole.

"Taeya's a dog. Even at practice and walk through, she's getting tips and steals. She loves defense. She pushes everybody," Merizalde said.

The Owls consistently win the mental battle. When cooler heads prevail, it helps to have a leader like Lynch.

"She has been there. She won the 'chip. She knows what it takes," forward Rheyna Steinauer, a senior, said. "She leads us and guides us through our games."

The win streak chugs along, but the team, Lynch says, maintains a narrow focus.

"We don't talk about it. We try to just take it possession by possession, be in that moment and be present," Lynch said.



Guard Hope Fox, a senior, makes a pass.

PHOTOS | WADE BARILLARO

Seahawks win Super Bowl LX



By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

The Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots faced off in Super Bowl LX to determine who would raise the Lombardi Trophy, marking the second time the two franchises met on the league's biggest stage.

Their previous Super Bowl matchup remains one of the most memorable games in NFL history, adding even more intrigue to this long-awaited rematch.

Super Bowl LX was held in San Francisco, California, on Sunday, Feb. 9 at Levi's Stadium. This marked the third time the city hosted the Super Bowl.

As with every Super Bowl, the night began with pregame festivities.

Rock band Green Day opened up the Super Bowl while the national anthem was sung by Charlie Puth. Brandi Carlile performed "America the Beautiful," and Coco Jones sung "Lift Every Voice" which set the tone for the night.

From the start of the game, Seattle's defense controlled the flow of the game which was expected.

The Seahawks took an early lead with a field goal and never looked back. They kept their foot on the gas throughout the night and kept the Patriots from getting near the endzone.

New England struggled to move the ball consistently, as Seattle's defensive pressure limited scoring opportunities and forced multiple turnovers.

While the Patriots fought to generate momentum, Seattle's defense remained disciplined and aggressive.

The Seahawks were also supported by their special teams, as kicker Jason Myers had a historic night. Myers set a Super Bowl record by making five field goals, providing consistent points that kept Seattle comfortably in control.

Superstar Bad Bunny brought high energy and Latin culture to the half-time show. He delivered a dynamic performance that will be remembered for years to come.

In the second half, the Seahawks continued it's dominance on both sides of the ball.

The Seahawks leaned on their running game to control the clock and wear down New England's defense. Running back Kenneth Walker III took over Seattle's offense with tough runs. His performance earned him Super Bowl MVP honors.

The 29-13 victory for Seattle gives them their second Lombardi Trophy and avenges their loss to the Patriots a decade ago.

The Patriots, who had hoped to capture a record breaking seventh Lombardi trophy, came up short despite a strong season and postseason run, ultimately falling to a dominant Seattle squad.

While Seattle fans celebrate all over the world, football fans will now turn their attention to the offseason.

Diarra reaches 1,000 points, men lose



Guard Justice Ellison, a graduate, elevates over a defender for a dunk.

PHOTOS | WADE BARILLARO

By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

After building a strong first half lead, the men's basketball team faltered in the second. They fell 60-56 to Pace University on Feb. 4, at James Moore Field House

This is the Owls' second time facing Pace this season, previously losing to them on the road. The team hoped to defend their home court this time around, but the lack of effort in the second half kept them from doing so.

"We let them dictate everything," head coach Scott Burrell said. "We just didn't compete and gave them a game we should have had at home."

The game started off in the Owls' favor with guard Christian McCleese, a sophomore, draining two of his five threes in the game.

Along with McCleese's perimeter shooting, the Owls found early offensive balance through guard Justice Ellison, a graduate, who finished the game with 17 points, four rebounds and three steals.

Ellison's performance helped the team control the tempo before half, as the team used patient ball movement and defensive pressure to keep Pace from finding any sustained rhythm.

"Justice is a great teammate. He's a big time scorer, and he does what he needs to do for the team," McCleese said.

The Owls carried the momentum into the locker room with confidence, holding Pace to limited scoring opportunities in the opening 20 minutes.

That control, however, began to slip coming out of halftime.

Pace was able to open

the second half with increased physicality on both ends of the floor.

That patience that the team had in the first half was no longer there, and that allowed Pace to capitalize on turnovers and second-chance opportunities.

Despite the second half troubles, the game marked a personal milestone for forward Cherif Diarra, a graduate, who joined the university's 1,000 point club with four left in the game. Diarra had 12 points, eight rebounds, two blocks and two steals

"It's an amazing feeling. I have been here for a while, and I put in a lot of hard work with very supportive teammates throughout my career," Diarra said.

The Owls finished the game shooting 24-52 from the paint and 2-13 from the perimeter.

Pace capitalized on the Owls' second half struggles, forcing them into contested shots as the game tightened.

In the final minutes, the university had opportunities to take over the game but was unable to convert on key possessions and gave up plays they should not have.

This loss gives the Owls a four-game losing streak against Pace and moves the team down the standings, leaving them at a 9-11 record, 5-7 in the conference.

The loss served as another reminder of the thin margin for error in conference play.

The team will look to bounce back in its next matchup as it continues its conference schedule. With contributions from McCleese, Ellison and Diarra, the Owls will aim to turn strong starts into complete performances moving forward.

"We just gotta come back harder, play more defense and limit the turnovers to be ready," McCleese said.



Forward Cherif Diarra, a graduate, before the game.