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Abby Waclo

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Kristine Hughes

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SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS
(Football, M Basketball, Softball)
Francis Tommasino

## SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

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ASSISTANT SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR (Volleyball)
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OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS @2022



Kyle McMullin
DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

# **DEAR CAPTAINS FAMILY:**

As we prepare to welcome a new class of Captains to campus, it is fitting to take a moment to celebrate an extraordinary year in the history of Christopher Newport athletics. The women's soccer and softball teams gave us reasons to celebrate as each won their first national championships, but student-athletes in all sports gave us reasons to cheer from start to finish.

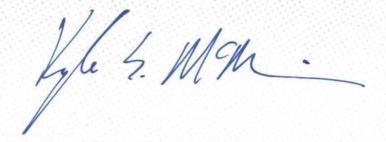
Between sweeping the Coast-to-Coast Athletic Conference's commissioner's awards recognizing the best overall athletics department in the C2C, and placing among the top 4% among all Division III athletics departments in the Learfield Director's Cup, each student who wore a uniform with "CNU" across the front contributed to a memorable year.

Most of all, I am proud of our students for their commitment to being prepared. All of these memories were made in the first full year of competition since the beginning of a worldwide pandemic. When we couldn't compete in the regular rhythms of a season, our coaches challenged our students to do everything in their power to prepare themselves for the moment that they were able to put on their uniforms and compete. They were ready.

Intercollegiate athletics is a powerful tool for teaching our students and training them how to manage the emotions that we all experience in life. Learning how to find your way through the disappointment of a tough loss and the disconnect of a global pandemic is as important as knowing how to chase the elation of a championship and celebrating with grace.

I will always cherish the 2021-22 year because of our students, how they emerged from challenging times and their unyielding commitment to making the most of the opportunities in front of them. As the summer comes to an end, take a moment to appreciate and celebrate the joy that our students brought to our community of champions.

Go Captains!





# 2022 NCAA DIII SOFTBALL



# CHAMPIONS

FRANCIS TOMMASINO // PHOTOS BY BRANDON BERRY '22 /



hile the 2022 softball season cannot quite be described as perfect, what Keith Parr's team produced was about as flawless as one could imagine. The Captains, led by a group of seven senior standouts, played 48 games and managed to win 47 times.

THE MEMORABLE CAMPAIGN began with 23 consecutive victories, and ended with 24 straight wins. The last triumph, on a scorching final day in May, allowed the Captains to celebrate their first national championship in the 38-year history of the program.

"Our team stepped up time and time again this year, and we accomplished our ultimate goal," Parr said, holding the trophy during the postgame celebration in Salem, Virginia. "I couldn't be prouder of this group, they worked so hard and never backed down. This was just one win today, but it's the biggest win you could ever ask for."

To say that the 47-1 record and national championship constitutes the best softball season in school history is a vast understatement. In fact,

the Captains produced the second-best season in all of NCAA softball history, at any level, behind only Tufts' 55-0 championship season in 2015.

Christopher Newport's veteran softball team featured a combination of three key areas: outstanding hitting, pitching and defense. The Captains hit for average (.372 team batting average) as well as power (74 home runs to lead the nation), and scored an average of 8.6 runs per game. The pitching staff, anchored by two freshmen, allowed just 1.27 earned runs per game, and the defense committed just 36 errors in 48 games. The Captains also enjoyed a tremendous home-field advantage, going 26-0 at Captains Park.

Senior first baseman Kaitlyn Hasty stole most of the headlines. The Chesapeake native was



named national player of the year, and Hasty's illustrious career saw her become the first three-time All-American in CNU softball history. She also became the all-time program leader in home runs with 53, led the nation in long balls with 19 and was the national leader in runs batted in with 67. Following the final game amid the celebration in Salem, Parr announced that Hasty's number 27 will be formally retired during the 2023 season.

Freshman pitcher Jamie Martin was a commanding presence. The left-hander from Lorton, Virginia, was chosen as national freshman of the year and earned second-team All-American status. Martin posted a 22-1 record for the Captains, and won five of her games in the NCAA tournament, including a gem in the finale vs. Trine, a two-hit shutout. She was selected the most outstanding pitcher in the NCAA finals.

Senior left fielder Caitlin Abernethy also received an All-American nod after leading the Captains in hitting with a .424 average. Senior catcher Bailey Roberts was awarded with the

most outstanding player honor following the NCAA final series. Freshman pitcher Kate Alger and sophomore outfielder Katie Currin were also named to the NCAA all-tournament team in Salem.

The Captains' domination on the field showed in the national rankings. Christopher Newport was ranked as the top team in the country for the last eight weeks of the regular season, and when the final poll was released in early June, it was no surprise to see the Captains again in the top slot.

The NCAA bid marked the 19th trip to the tournament for Christopher Newport in program history, and the 15th consecutive. It also marked the third trip to the finals for the Captains, and most importantly, the first national championship.

The Captains near-perfect storybook season culminated less than six months after another near-perfect campaign on campus. The women's soccer team captured its own national championship in December 2021, completing a journey that saw them win 22 of 23 games, with only a tie to blemish a near-perfect record.



# 2021 NCAA DIII SOCCER



# CHAMPIONS

JIM HANCHETT // PHOTOS BY MEGAN MAY



ehind the banner that announced they were champions, the women's soccer team crowded together for one of the happiest photos in Captains history, each player and each coach holding a single index finger high to signify they are No. 1.

## NUMBER ONE IS RIGHT.

Number one in Division III women's soccer. The first championship in the team's history after coming ohso-close in 2018. The first NCAA tournament title in Christopher Newport's 60-year history. Number 1.

To win the trophy, the Captains had to beat one of the sport's traditional powers – the College of New Jersey (TCNJ). The 2-0 victory at UNCG Soccer Stadium in Greensboro, North Carolina concluded an undefeated season with an overall record of 22-0-1.

Several hundred Captains students, parents and supporters packed the stands in Greensboro. President Paul Trible, with a grandson in tow, took it all in, enjoying a tournament team title that had proved elusive for so long and finally was realized in his final year as president.

Alumni and friends of the university watched the NCAA broadcast from a distance. There was a viewing party in Gaines Theatre on campus. At the Freeman Center, in the midst of a basketball game, the Pep Band broke into the fight song in a salute to the champions. And there was an eruption on social media when it was over. Cynthia Allen-Whyte '97, a legendary former Captains athlete and coach, summed it up: "Congratulations!!!! So excited!!!!!"

More exclamation points from the post-match news conference.

Defender Jill McDonald: "It's just amazing."

Jamie Gunderson, who led the team to the title in his first year as head coach: "Kind of in shock that this moment happened. I'm just really proud of this group and how they handled this season.





We knew it would be a tough matchup against TCNJ. We came in with our game plan and the girls stuck with it and they executed like they have day in and day out this season. I'm so happy for them to experience this and have our first national championship for our program."

What made it possible? Game-winning goal scorer Sarah Smith: "We all love each other so much."

Fifth-year senior Riley Cook had an assist on that game winner and scored another goal, adding to her unforgettable career to wrap up one of the most impressive NCAA tournament performances of all time. She scored seven of the nine Christopher Newport goals in the 6-0 run through the postseason, and added an assist for a 15-point tournament.

Cook and Smith were named All-Americans. Cook was also named the 2021 NCAA tournament's most outstanding offensive player, matching the most points scored in a tournament by a single player since 2011. Most impressively, Cook is the first player in Division III history to

score five or more game-winning goals in the postseason tournament.

On the other end of the field, McDonald was honored as the tournament's most outstanding defensive player, helping the Captains hold two of the nation's elite offenses without a goal in the championship weekend. McDonald and the Captains' defense earned five shutouts and allowed just a single goal in the tournament. Joining Cook and McDonald on the 2021 all-championship team were midfielders Emily Talotta, Ellie Cox and goal-keeper Haley Eiser.

The Captains earned the university's 13th overall team championship and first in a bracketed team sport. The previous 12 championships were won by the indoor and outdoor women's track and field program, with the most recent coming in 1998.

So what happens next? "Hopefully now this opens the door that Christopher Newport programs have been knocking on and there will be more championships," Gunderson said.

There can't be "more" until there's one. Now there is. The Captains are No. 1.



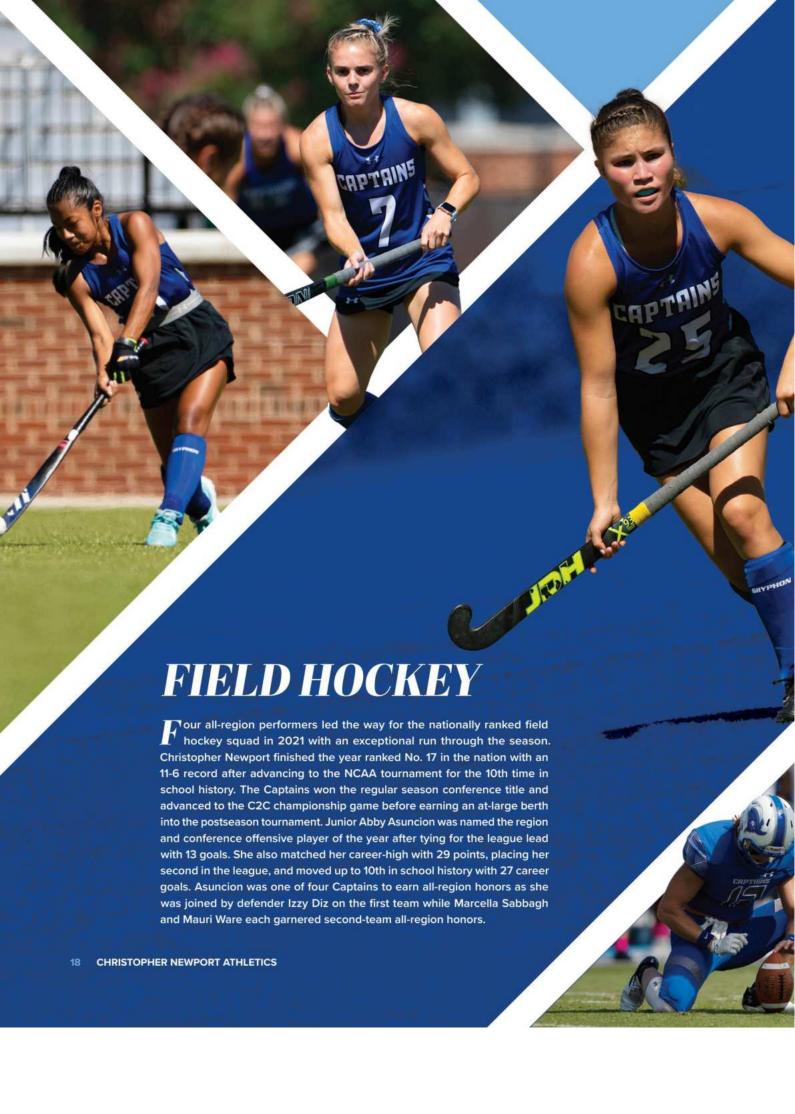














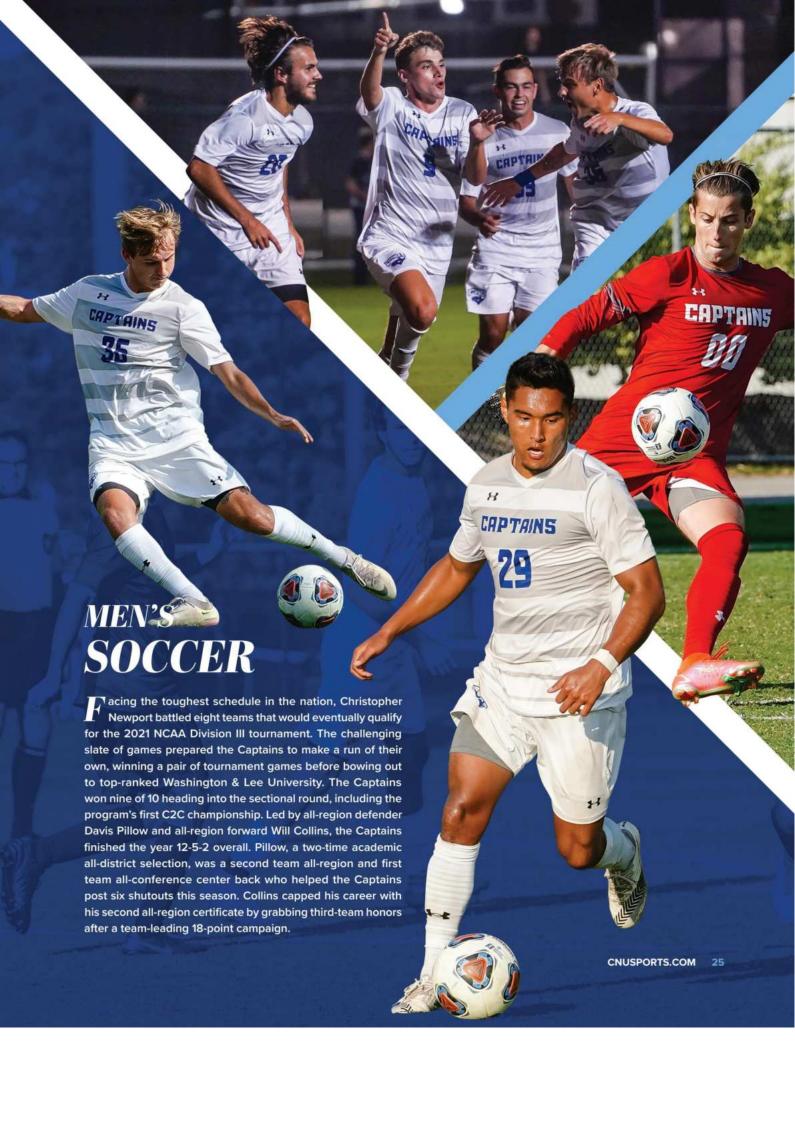




















# HALL OF FAME



JALON BROWN Men's Soccer (2011-14)



SABRINA HILL Softball (2012-15)



**BRIAN JAEGER** Men's Golf (2009-13)



RUDY RUDOLPH Football (2011-14)







# Congratulations!



RACHEL CONWAY Volleyball (2012-15)



TRA BENEFIELD Men's Basketball (2010-14)



BILLY STEEL Baseball (2011-14)



KIM TOMLIN Field Hockey (2007-09)

Class of



**JUSTIN WOLFE** Men's Soccer (2008-11)



# THE VIC ZODDA TRAINING CENTER



# The story behind the project:

Vic Zodda was a leader in Newport News, not only because his restaurant and hotel businesses provided exceptional hospitality, but also through service to his community. Yet, all of Vic's many contributions to improving people's lives were made possible because of his love for baseball. After serving in the Navy, Vic arrived in 1950 as manager of the Dodgers minor league team — the Newport News Dodgers. As a former player and manager, Vic knew the impact that sports could have on one's life. Vic's love for the game of baseball is part of his enduring spirit and lasting legacy.

We are proud to announce that Vic's daughter, Cyndi, has provided a generous leadership gift in memory of her father that will enable Christopher Newport University to begin construction of a new facility for use by our baseball and national champion softball teams.

This new practice site with indoor batting cages will be named the Vic Zodda Training Center. The center will provide our baseball and softball teams with an extraordinary competitive edge and allow them to continue to practice year-round in their quest for NCAA titles.

"We are pleased to be able to honor a legendary figure in our community by naming this facility after Vic Zodda," Kyle McMullin, director of athletics, said. "His name will now be forever connected to our baseball and softball programs. The Vic Zodda Training Center will have a profound positive impact on our student-athletes for years to come, and we are indebted to Vic's family and friends for their tremendous generosity."

As Christopher Newport alumni, family and friends, we know you will be just as excited as we are about this, and hope we can count on your support for the Captains and this transformational project!

For more information about this new training facility, contact Mary-Margaret Wells, director of parent giving and athletics giving, at (757) 594-8590.

# How can I support this new facility?

Mail a check, payable to CNUEF, to:
Office of University Advancement
Christopher Newport University
1 Avenue of the Arts
Newport News, VA 23606
Be sure to write "Zodda Project"
in the memo field.

Make a gift online at **cnu.edu/giving** and select "Zodda Training Center" as your area of support.

