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For immediate release

Saint Mary’s/Notre Dame Lacrosse Club wins first-ever home contest

The joint Saint Mary's and Notre Dame Lacrosse club won their opening game of the season, the first home lacrosse game ever on the Saint Mary's campus, over visiting Western Michigan University by the score of 9-6 today.

Ashley O’Keefe scored the first and second goals ever recorded on the team’s home field, and Molly Fox and Julia Wilkerson both added two goals for the Irish-Belles. Heidi Goeppinger, Fox and Wilkerson scored on unassisted goals while Sarah Smith and Lynn DeFilippo each netted one apiece. Katie Mooney led the team in assists with two. Sheena Ketchum was in goal, playing big all game but especially late in the game with two clutch saves from “free positions” after minor foul calls just outside the critical area.

The club plays in the Women’s Collegiate Lacrosse League (WCLL), a college club league representing over 50 schools from the northeast to the southwest. Beginning its 10th year, the league is the largest club lacrosse league in the country. The Irish-Belles belong to the 3rd-Division which includes Albion College, Calvin College, Grand Valley State, Hope College, Michigan State (pre-season #2 in the country), and Western Michigan. The league includes schools such as Pittsburgh, Penn State, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Auburn, and Tulane, as well as from as far west as members Arizona and Arizona State. The WCLL hosts a League Championship, won by Michigan last season, and the champion receives an automatic berth to the National Championships hosted by the Women’s Division Intercollegiate Associates (WDIA), this season held in St. Louis.

The Irish-Belles began two years ago, initiated and led by club president Kate Weiss. The club exists as a Saint Mary’s College club, one that admits Notre Dame students, and is administered by a council of officers and a faculty/staff advisor. Last season the club had only 13 full-time members but has grown to 27 players in one short year. Each member pays dues, as well as participates in fund-raising activities to cover all expenses such as travel and uniforms. The club had to receive special permission to join the league under the joint school arrangement and must follow additional rules and guidelines to be able to exist in the league as a combined-school club program.

Their next games will be March 27 when they’ll travel to Albion College to play Grand Valley State, Hope College and Albion College.

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