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As with many colleges and universities across the United States, athletic and recreational departments are cutting sports programs due to a lack of financial funding for non-revenue generating sports. However at Lindenwood University (home to 45 varsity sports) in Saint Charles, Missouri, they are adding sports programs, most notably of which are the men and women's table tennis teams. This is nothing new for Lindenwood who in recent years has also added cycling, women's wrestling, synchronized swimming, and synchronized skating just to name a few. The new program, which is headed up by co-coaches Randy and Kelly Kendle, will compete in the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association's Midwest Division. Their current roster has 14 student-athletes and they plan to expand that number. To assist the coaches in recruiting efforts, Lindenwood has also developed a new scholarship program which will provide aid based on the student's FAFSA, high school grades, ACT, class rank, federal/state aid, and table tennis skill. "The pipeline for future Lindenwood table tennis players is phenomenal," said Kendle. "We are getting emails from all over the world; China, Singapore, Hungary, Brazil, Peru, and Guyana." Table tennis at Lindenwood is spreading throughout the United States as recruiting efforts pick up. "We anticipate that next year's team, and

future teams, will have a majority of highly experienced USATT and foreign nationals make up the roster of players,” voiced Kendle.

As with any small university with this many varsity sports, scheduling practice times is a challenge for the Kendles, “Lindenwood has only one indoor gym and must share that among any of the 45 men and women’s sports that need court time.”

Table tennis has taken Lindenwood by storm just not for competitive team members but for recreational players as well. “Table tennis has become popular enough to cause the Director of Recreation Center to go out and buy a 2nd table to help reduce the wait time for students wanting to play at the student union,” said Kendle in his first year as co-head coach of the program.

The program also hopes to anchor the Midwest Division through competitive strength, by offering the highest level of quality facilities for regional meets (Lindenwood has 18 Butterfly centerfold tables), and by hosting three to four USATT sanctioned tournaments per year.

As for their road schedule, they have planned trips to Indiana (Bernard Hock Open), Wisconsin (Badger Open), Ohio (Cincinnati Open) and possibly a stop to Rochester Minnesota come April for the 2009 College National Championships.

For more information about Lindenwood Table Tennis
http://www.lindenwood.edu/athletics/table_tennis/

If you would like to nominate student-athletes or teams who you feel have made a difference in the NCTTA for future “Member of the Month” features, please email: reillyn@fsuimail.ferris.edu