September 23

Steak Fry ‘n Auction tips hat to student athletes

“Hats off to the Eagles” is the theme of the Varsity Club’s annual Steak Fry ‘n Auction at Burdette Park’s Discovery Lodge on September 23.

Tickets are $25 each. Proceeds will benefit USI student athletes. Call the USI Varsity Club office at 812/464-1973 for reservations.

Attendees are encouraged to wear their favorite USI or red, white, and blue head attire to show support for student athletes. Prizes will be awarded for best spirit and enthusiasm.

The live auction, conducted by Bill and Andrew Wilson, will have some of the best bargains around, including vacation condominium packages, autographed sports paraphernalia, and a Marx Barbecue pig roast for 140 people.

The annual Steak Fry ‘n Auction has raised nearly $136,000 in the last seven years. In the last three years, the event has averaged more than $21,000.

Every step you take can help women’s athletics

Fans of USI women’s athletics programs will be on their feet October 23 in the Walk for Women’s Athletics. Marilyn Johnson, wife of USI team orthopaedic doctor Alan Johnson, and Diane Douglas, WIKY morning host, co-chair the event to help raise money to support USI female student athletes.

The Walk was a staple fundraiser for the women’s programs from 1989 to 1994, raising more than $50,000 in six years. The 2005 revival of the event celebrates the achievements and progress of the women’s programs and is designed to raise additional funds needed for the women’s varsity programs.

Registration will start at noon at the Physical Activities Center. The non-competitive walk will begin at 12:30 p.m., starting and ending at Strassweg Field (soccer). Participants will help support women’s athletics with every step they take.

Money raised by each team will go to that specific team with coaches directing the dollars into programs that fit team needs. For instance, golf players might travel to a spring-break tournament in the South where early spring weather is conducive to play. The softball team might direct its funds into equipment to maintain the new field which opened last spring. Additional funds raised by committee members and participants will be spent on special projects for the women’s programs.

Walk for Women’s Athletics
Come join the fun on October 23!

Whether you are a leisure stroller or a race walker, you can participate and enjoy the camaraderie of others who want to raise dollars to support USI women’s athletics programs.

For more information, contact USI Athletics at 812/464-1846.

Men’s basketball

USI vs. Tennessee

The USI men’s basketball team will begin the 2005-06 campaign November 3 with an exhibition game at the University of Tennessee. The teams of Screaming Eagles Head Coach Rick Herdes and former USI Head Coach Bruce Pearl, now head coach at Tennessee, will go head-to-head on the basketball court at Thompson-Boling Arena in Knoxville.

Game time is tentatively scheduled for 6 p.m. (Central Time).
Walk
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involvement has expanded, the need for additional funding and development of budgets also has grown.

Jon Mark Hall, USI director of athletics, said, “If you want to improve in any walk of life, it takes extra investment. For us to set ourselves apart from other institutions in our league, private support is important.”

Women’s athletics began at USI 30 years ago with 13 varsity women’s basketball players participating in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. In 2004-05, the USI Department of Athletics boasted seven varsity programs with 117 female student athletes. These programs are fast becoming model programs not only in the region, but the nation. (See box at right.)

Johnson said, “The funds raised are important to continue the wonderful success the USI women’s programs have had the last 15 years. In addition, the Walk for Women’s Athletics will be a source of awareness to the community so that these young women receive the recognition they richly deserve.”

Douglas said, “Being a former student athlete myself, I’m amazed how much women’s athletics have grown not only at the collegiate level, but also in the high schools and the youth levels. Events like the Walk for Women’s Athletics give everyone a chance to see how far female athletes have come and how far they have to go.”

Golf Scramble nets record $26,033

The Varsity Club Golf Scramble netted a record $26,033 to benefit USI student athletes. The event was highlighted by the return of three former USI head coaches: Bruce Pearl (men’s basketball), Chancellor Dugan (women’s basketball), and Beth Watson (softball).

The foursome from Happy Housewash—Mike Corley, Ryan Evans, John Williamson, and Randy Cape—won the men’s division with a 17-under 54. Chancellor Dugan, Beth Watson, Shannon Litton, and Leeanne Crain won the women’s division with an 11-under 63. The foursome from Tornatta Tire—Troy Tornatta, Eddie Ralph, Barb Dykstra, and Mary Klaser—won the mixed division with a 16-under 55.

The scramble was held June 9 at Helfrich Hills Golf Course and trophies were presented afterward at Hill Top Grove.
Eagle eye

Calendar

September
23  Steak Fry ’n Auction

October
3–8  West Side Nut Club Fall Festival
14  Varsity Club membership deadline
23  Walk for Women’s Athletics

November
3  Men’s basketball exhibition game at University of Tennessee
3–7  Women’s basketball at Disney Tip-Off Classic
10–14  Men’s basketball at Disney Tip-Off Classic
20  Men’s basketball exhibition game at University of Louisville

Dates are subject to change. Call the Varsity Club office at 812/464-1973 for confirmation.
Watch for additions to calendar, including Varsity Club Days at volleyball and men’s and women’s soccer.

Leah Mercer named volleyball head coach

Former USI volleyball player Leah Mercer ’02 leads the volleyball program as head coach this year.

Mercer, an Evansville native, served Loyola University (Chicago) as the top assistant coach in 2004, helping guide the Ramblers to the Horizon League Tournament championship. She spent a year as a graduate assistant coach at Ohio University.

A two-time All-Great Lakes Valley Conference performer, Mercer helped lead the Eagles to a three-year record of 61-27.

Leah Mercer named volleyball head coach

Darrell Ragland to lead Varsity Club in 2005-06

When David Ragland ’04 came to play basketball for the Screaming Eagles in 2001, USI got a bonus — the addition of his father Darrell Ragland to the Varsity Club.

Darrell Ragland will chair the club in 2005-06. He co-chaired the Steak Fry ’n Auction and the Fall Festival booth last year. He also has served on the Outback Luncheon committee and helped with Varsity Club Days and the All-Sports Picnic.

“Our goal is to help the athletic department reach full funding for scholarships,” Ragland said. “A scholarship gives a student athlete a chance to succeed at USI.”

Ragland’s volunteer activities do not stop with the Varsity Club. He recently was named president of USI’s new Parents and Families Association.

Ragland’s wife Karen ’96 is a member of the USI Alumni Council and was elected in 2004 to the School Board of the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation. Their son David played two seasons for USI men’s basketball and now is assistant men’s basketball coach at Vincennes University.

The Varsity Club Board of Directors for 2005-06 includes Dale Hardin, first vice chair; Donna Mesker ’86, second vice chair; Kent Kleiman ’97, treasurer; Lynn Reed, secretary; and directors Tim Barnes, Rosie Cullum, James Dippel ’77, Jason Fleck, Tom Fleenor, Jim Floyd, Bart Gander ’91, Scott Gordon, Jon Mark Hall, Mark Head ’88, Bill Henderson, Terri Herrenbruck, Jeff Jewell ’89, Jack Marr, Andrea Miller ’97 M ’99, Todd Niemeier ’93, Steve Oliver, Carolyn Ruminer, John Stephenson, David Stevens, Troy Tornatta ’93, Kevin Valadares, Matt Wannemuehler, Bill Wilson, Jeff Worthington ’92, and Bryan Zeller.

Perry wins national championship in long jump

Sophomore long-jumper Candace Perry became the second USI female student athlete to win a national championship at the 2005 NCAA Division II Track and Field Championships. Perry won the national title with a leap of 20 feet, 3.75 inches. She was named All-American for the fourth time. Perry also helped lead the USI track and field squad to its fourth straight top-10 finish. Perry is from Anderson, Indiana. The national championship meet was held in May in Abilene, Texas. Heather Cooksey was USI’s first female national champion, winning the 3,000-meter run in 2004.
1995 national championship team reunites

USI’s 1995 national championship men’s basketball team reunited for a 10th anniversary celebration June 10 at the Physical Activities Center. The celebration was in conjunction with the USI Varsity Club Golf Scramble. Pictured are, front row from left, Brian Huebner; Bruce Pearl, head coach at the time of the championship and now head coach at the University of Tennessee; Dr. Donald Bennett, vice president emeritus for Student Affairs and former director of Athletics; Rick Herdes, assistant head coach at the time of the championship and now head coach; and Marc Hostetter, current assistant coach. Back row from left are Ray Simmons, director of Sports Information; Chris Diaz, trainer; Ken Troutman; Neil Coyle; Chad Gilbert; Stan Gourard; Joel Thomas; Joe Patton, student assistant; and Brad Schmitt and Jennifer Riggs, student managers.

Varsity Club membership

The Varsity Club benefits USI intercollegiate athletics with financial support and fan participation. Five membership levels are available with special benefits at each level.

**Silver Eagle** ($125)—Admission to Varsity Club Room hospitality events, name on Varsity Club Roster in Physical Activities Center, Eagle Outlook newsletter, invitations to fan trips/special events and All-Sports Picnic, basketball season ticket priority

**Golden Eagle** ($250)—Above benefits plus invitation to basketball pre-season events

**Regal Eagle** ($500)—Above benefits plus pregame event at University Home

**All-American Eagle** ($1,000)—Above benefits plus reserved parking for basketball games, post-season ticket priority

**Screaming Eagle** ($2,000)—Above benefits plus personal parking place for basketball games


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