The Misericordia University cross country teams enter their second season in the Middle Atlantic States Athletics Corporation (MAC) looking to improve on their solid finishes at both conference and regional meets in 2008.

Both teams had tremendous success in their previous tenure in the Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (the men were champions from 2001-2006 while the women won three straight from 2000-2002), and will now look to establish themselves as leaders in their new conference.

With both squads coming off finishes in the top half of the field in championships meets and three all-MAC athletes returning, the outlook is bright for MU's runners this fall.

The men will be led by junior Frank Redmond, a second-team All-MAC runner last season and an NCAA qualifier in the 800 meters this past spring. Fellow junior Pat Blaskiewicz should join Redmond at the front of the pack after running 34:01 in the 10k last spring.

“Frank and Pat will be a very good 1-2 punch,” said head coach Chris Wadas. “If people can step up in the 3-4-5 spots, we could have a very good team.”

Returning runners battling for these key places will include senior captains Ryan Garges (the school record holder in the 3k steeplechase) and Dave Verzella, along with juniors Patrick Noonan and Brian O'Neill.

Joining the team this fall are seven newcomers: Corey Byrd, Marty Castaldi, John Gibbons, Jeff Hess, Anthony Powell, Brent Salsman and Kyle Suponic. “All of the newcomers have the potential to make important contributions to the team this season,” said Wadas.

“Our goals for the men this year are a top-four finish at the MAC championships and to place in the top 15 at regionals,” said Wadas.

The women’s team will be led once again by senior Ali Ostrum, a three-time team MVP and first-team All-MAC runner in 2008. “One of our goals is for her to qualify for NCAA’s and I believe it could happen this year,” said Wadas.

The Cougars also return sophomore Aimee Dilucido, a second-team all-MAC selection in her first collegiate season.

Other returnees include senior Kayla Weaver, junior Amanda Radishofski and sophomores Jodie Kitchell, Maura O'Rourke and Rachel Tomkins.

Junior Marcie Cusatis (an All-MAC 800-meter runner in outdoor track) joins freshmen Kelsey Cameron, Brianna Kramer and Marina Orrson as newsmers to the team.

The women should have a squad capable of exceeding last season’s placements at both the MAC championships (3rd) and NCAA Regionals (16th). “We might have an outside shot of winning the MAC if things come together, if we train hard and if everyone stays healthy,” said Wadas. He also added a top ten finish at regionals to a lofty set of goals for 2009.

Overall, the fourth-year head coach is optimistic about both his programs going into the fall. “I’m expecting some good things out of people,” he said.
MISERICORDIA BELONGS TO NCAA, MAC, ECAC

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY IN BRIEF

MISERICORDIA University is a liberal arts based, co-educational Catholic institution serving both residential and commuting students. Founded in 1924, MISERICORDIA is the oldest four-year institution in Luzerne County and made the transition to University status in 2007. The University is dedicated to the values of the Sisters of Mercy: mercy, service, justice, and hospitality. These values can be found throughout the University, from programs of study to service projects. The hallmark of MISERICORDIA is a dedicated faculty and high-quality core liberal arts and sciences curriculum. With a total enrollment of 2,501 students, MISERICORDIA offers the benefits of a small university with the scope of a larger institution. Classroom size is purposefully small to ensure personalized attention and our 12:1 student/faculty ratio allows students and faculty to truly know one another. In addition to academic pursuits, MISERICORDIA students participate in the school’s Guaranteed Placement Program. The GPA is a promise that, within six months of graduation, students will have a position in the career of their choice or be enrolled in graduate school, or the University will provide a paid internship to the student in the field of study. With a total enrollment of 2,501 students, MISERICORDIA offers the benefits of a small university with the scope of a larger institution. Classroom size is purposefully small to ensure personalized attention and our 12:1 student/faculty ratio allows students and faculty to truly know one another. In addition to academic pursuits, MISERICORDIA students participate in the school’s Guaranteed Placement Program. The GPA is a promise that, within six months of graduation, students will have a position in the career of their choice or be enrolled in graduate school, or the University will provide a paid internship to the student in the field of study. With a total enrollment of 2,501 students, MISERICORDIA offers the benefits of a small university with the scope of a larger institution. Classroom size is purposefully small to ensure personalized attention and our 12:1 student/faculty ratio allows students and faculty to truly know one another. In addition to academic pursuits, MISERICORDIA students participate in the school’s Guaranteed Placement Program. The GPA is a promise that, within six months of graduation, students will have a position in the career of their choice or be enrolled in graduate school, or the University will provide a paid internship to the student in the field of study.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

The athletic facilities at MISERICORDIA are highlighted by the Anderson Athletic Complex and the Anderson Outdoor Athletic Complex. Since 1993, the Anderson Center has provided a home for the Cougars basketball, volleyball and swim teams. The building houses the athletic department offices, camera control, physical therapy and occupational therapy classrooms and laboratories. The center features a six-lane swimming pool, indoor track, racquetball courts, fitness center and an aerobics/dance studio. The Anderson Sports Health Center attracts more than 75,000 visitors annually for recreational use.

Mangelsdorf Field at the Anderson Athletic Complex was constructed in 2002 and serves as a home for the soccer, field hockey, lacrosse and track teams.

The complex features a synthetic grass field and a six-lane synthetic track which allow MU’s student-athletes to remain active even when weather conditions are less than ideal. Named for the late Dr. Robert S. and Geraldine Ruth Daley Anderson, the Anderson Sports Health Center, Anderson Athletic Complex and Anderson Fields are tributes to their commitment to MISERICORDIA University.

Mangelsdorf Field honors the dedication of Jack and Dorothy Mangelsdorf to MU and the region.

The MISERICORDIA tennis complex was completed in 2004 as part of a gift by the M&T Foundation.