



SPORTS NEWS

Presidents' Athletic Conference
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PAC Hires Joe Onderko as First Full-Time Executive Director in Conference History

NEW WILMINGTON, Pa. - The Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) has announced the hiring of **Joe Onderko** as executive director of the conference, effective July 1, 2006. He becomes the first full-time executive director in the 50-year history of the PAC. Onderko will be responsible for all conference administration and public relations duties.

Onderko, 35, has worked full-time for the past 11 years as sports information director at PAC member Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa., and is also in his fifth year serving as PAC Information Director on a part-time basis. He will leave his position at Westminster at the conclusion of the 2005-06 academic year and establish a new conference office for the PAC in Wexford, Pa., located in the North Hills of Pittsburgh. Onderko will report directly to the PAC Presidents' Council, comprised of the presidents of the conference member institutions.

"The growth and expansion of our conference in the past year resulted in a great deal of urgency to identify and hire a full-time conference executive," said **Timothy R. Thyreen**, President of Waynesburg College and chair of the PAC Presidents' Council. "Based on the excellent work Joe has done on a part-time basis over the years, upgrading his position to full-time status was a straight-forward decision that will greatly benefit the conference."

Onderko has been responsible for all public relations and information duties in the conference since 2001, including press releases, conference statistics, and website management. During his tenure at Westminster, he has been responsible for all public relations and sports information efforts at a 20-sport NCAA Division III athletic program, which previously was a member of both the NAIA and NCAA Division II. Onderko has earned 12 national publication awards, including three "Best in the Nation" honors from the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). He has also served as a member of CoSIDA's prestigious Academic All-America committee since 1995, currently serving as national coordinator of the Academic All-American of the Year and Hall of Fame programs.

"My experience working at Westminster was very positive and I had no real desire to leave, but this was an opportunity I simply could not pass up," said Onderko. "I have tremendous respect for all of the schools in the conference and have a comfort level working with each of them. I am looking forward to helping the PAC continue towards its goal of becoming one of the elite NCAA Division III athletic conferences in the nation."

Prior to coming to Westminster in 1995, Onderko served as assistant sports information director at NCAA Division I Virginia Commonwealth University (1992-95) in Richmond and was a public relations intern for the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers (1992). A native of Jamestown, Pa., Onderko is a 1992 graduate of Robert Morris University with a bachelor's degree in communication management, while earning his master's degree in education from Westminster in 2000. He and his wife, **Pam**, reside in Wilmington Township with their daughters **Erin** (4) and **Lauren** (1).

Founded in 1955, the Presidents' Athletic Conference continues its mission of promoting intercollegiate athletics and the pursuit of academic excellence. Comprised of seven select private colleges - Bethany College, Grove City College, Thiel College, Thomas More College, Washington and Jefferson College, Waynesburg College and Westminster College - the PAC remains a unique organization in this day of high pressure intercollegiate athletics. With academics at the center of each member's philosophy, the PAC is built on the principle that an athletic program is a part of college life, but not an entity in itself.

The PAC expanded to seven members in 2005 with the addition of Thomas More, formerly an NCAA Division III independent. Saint Vincent College, currently an NAIA member, will join the conference as its begins provisional membership status in NCAA Division III in 2006-07. Another current NAIA member, Geneva College, will become the conference's ninth member and begin league play as it begins NCAA Division III provisional membership no earlier than the 2007-08 academic year.

The PAC annually crowns champions in 19 sports. In 2004-05, the conference had 18 teams represent the conference in postseason play, including 12 to NCAA Championship events. The conference is scheduled to receive automatic qualification (AQ) status for all NCAA Division III team championships in the 2007-08 academic year.

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