

The 2002 Montana State University-Billings Women's Soccer team had high expectations for the season. The Yellowjackets were coming off their best record yet (9-9), brought in new head coach **Don Trentham**, and had a fresh outlook. Their hopes were not to be however, as the team finished 2-14 on the year.

Change is difficult on anyone, and this year's team was no exception. With a different coaching method and style of play, transitioning from four-year coach Carlos Arce to Trentham took time to adjust to.

Numbers and injuries plagued the team this season, playing 16 games with only 13 players. Of those 13, only 12 players were healthy at the same time. Playing through pain and mental exhaustion, the Yellowjackets managed to play only two games the whole season down a player, the second and last games of the 2002 season.

September was adjustment time for the team, allowing the freshman to get used to playing at the college level and allowing the players get used to each other and Trentham. It was also a busy month of traveling and playing numerous back-to-back games on the road. The Yellowjackets played 12 games in one month.

The Yellowjackets opened up their season by hosting the Inaugural MSU-Billings Cup Sponsored by Thrifty Car Rental. University of Minnesota-Morris served as the first opponent of the season and a great game to open up with. The Yellowjackets took the game into overtime but couldn't hold on, losing 2-1. Metro State ran over the Yellowjackets in a 7-0 victory the very next day, going on to eventually win the Cup.

The Yellowjackets traveled across town to Rocky Mountain College to play in their tournament the very next weekend. The Yellowjackets brought home their first win of the season by defeating Wayne State in an all-out battle. Although outshooting Wayne State, the Wildcats managed to boot in the first goal of the game. Answering back, freshman **Lacey Badger (Salt Lake City, UT)** scored her first collegiate goal towards the very end of the second half, sending the game into overtime. With only five seconds left in the second and final overtime, junior **Kelly Bryn** (Missoula, MT) netted her first goal of the year to win. The Yellowjackets

also played University of Lethbridge the next day in an exhibition match, winning 2-1.

With the confidence of two wins on their shoulders, MSU-Billings went down to Greeley, Colorado to take on nationally ranked University of Northern Colorado. Playing with passion, the Yellowjackets held UNC to a 1-0 lead at halftime. However, playing their second game in two days with only 12 healthy players took its toll on the team. MSU-Billings ended up losing a hard-fought battle 3-0.

Just as sophomore **Dana Frenzel (Anchorage, AK)** was ready to return from her injury, senior **Kristen Johnson (Rapid City, SD)** was hurt during the game against Whitworth College. That injury left Johnson out until the very last weekend of October. MSU-Billings lost both games during their trip to Eastern Washington.

The next game of the season was a big one for the Yellowjackets, taking on in-town rival Rocky Mountain College for the first of two games of the Inaugural Rimrock Cup. The Bears scored three goals in the first half before MSU-Billings' junior **Mandy Reed (Denver, CO)** scored the first goal of her career on a long shot from half field with less than a minute remaining in the first half. Rocky went on to win the game 3-1 as well as the second game 3-0 later in the season, taking home the Cup for the 2002 season.

The Yellowjackets took off for Seattle to take on regionally ranked Seattle University and then NAIA powerhouse Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, Canada the next day. It was a tough weekend for the team, letting 18 goals in two games.

With results like these, anyone could have given up. This team however showed amazing character and managed to regroup and look towards the second half of the season, opening up the month of October with the first shutout of the year in a 2-0 win over Jamestown College.

In the cold windy weather, the Yellowjackets played the first of two games over a weekend in Fargo, North Dakota, taking on North Dakota State University. Down 4-1 at halftime, MSU-Billings came out fighting, scoring three goals to bring the game to a one-goal difference. Running out of time, the Yellowjackets just couldn't put one into the back of the net and lost the hard-fought game 5-4.

Exhausted from the battle, MSU-B went on to lose to Jamestown College the next day 4-2, even though they out-shot the Jimmies.

The final weekend of the year brought NAIA nationally ranked Embry-Riddle University of Florida to the fall weather of Billings. Pumped up to play the nationally ranked Eagles, the Yellowjackets came out fighting as junior Bryn netted the first goal of the game only 27 seconds into play. Bryn's goal was a bright spot to the rough season, as it ended up being the 14<sup>th</sup> fastest goal scored in NCAA Division II history. Junior **Sara Otis (Vancouver, WA)** booted in another goal halfway into the first half, sending the Jackets into halftime with a 2-0 lead over the Eagles. Things weren't meant to be as Embry-Riddle scored two unanswered goals in the second half, sending the game into overtime and eventually winning 3-2. MSUB also lost the second game of the weekend to Carroll College, playing down a man during the second half.

Although not many wins were posted during the 2002 season, the Yellowjackets broke team records for highest game attendance, highest season average game attendance, as well as the highest season total attendance. Sophomore **Margot Merrill-Johnson (Salt Lake City, UT)** moved up to third place on the Yellowjackets career scoring leaders list, while juniors Otis and **Heidi Robertson (Great Falls, MT)** placed fourth and seventh respectively. **Senior Vicky McCarthy (Butte, MT)** placed third on the most games started list with 51, while fellow senior Johnson placed third on the most games played list with 62. With the addition of Bryn's record-breaking goal, the Yellowjackets ended the season on a positive note.

With ten players returning and what appears to be a very strong recruiting class coming in, the 2003 Yellowjackets squad promises to be a much improved squad.