GRINNELL, Iowa – With its first game on the horizon Friday afternoon, the Grinnell men’s soccer team is looking forward to another great season.

After finishing runner-up in the Midwest Conference Tournament last year, the Pioneers are returning a large and talented senior class, with a wealth of younger players to support them in their final season at Grinnell.

When asked about the upcoming season that officially begins on Sept. 1, Head Coach Brian Jaworski said that “We are very excited for the 2017 season to begin. I don’t know how many games we are going to win, but I feel like we have a special team. Our leadership is again very strong, and our senior class is a dynamic group of leaders, loaded with high character people, who are proven great teammates. Their collective leadership on and off the field will be key.”

The senior class is highlighted by the team’s three captains, Anthony DiMarco ‘18 – an NSCAA Scholar All-Region and first-team All-Midwest Conference selection - Artis Curiskis ‘18 and Francisco Sanchez-Conde ‘18. All have been contributing to the team on the field for the past three years, giving them a wealth of in-game experience that will be paramount in the success of the team this year.

Interestingly, DiMarco and Curiskis have the same number of total goals and total assists in their first three seasons. With only one more season to go, the two are excited to combine and work together, and continue to share in success. With those two leading the front line of forwards, Sanchez-Conde will be keeping the middle of the field under control, while combining with fellow veteran Evan Sorenson ‘18.

The senior class is deep across the field, with forwards Juan Martin ‘18 and Zach Thal ‘18 continuing to look to be a big part of what the team is all about. The defense is deep, with defender Kyle Buse ‘20 and Zach Steinberg ‘20, along with returning All-MWC defender Thomas Pflipsen ‘20, midfielder Carlos Piedrasanta ‘20 and Noah Herbeck ‘20, all providing solid contributions to the back line.

Along with the senior class comes a wealth of talent, and Jaworski continued to speak highly of his squad during practice in the week leading up to the season opener. “When I think about the season, what gives me great hope is that our guys enjoy playing together. This means the world to me and is a very underrated component for team success, in my opinion. Playing soccer requires so much hard work, communication and unselfish play, it sure helps a lot when you are surrounded by teammates who are accountable, positive and willing to do what it takes to make the person next to them better. I see that in all our guys.”

The team “GC Pride” was coined in recent years by Pioneer men’s soccer and football coach Brian Jaworski to express the honor and privilege involved in being a part of Grinnell College athletics. The Grinnell student-athlete takes pride in committing to academic excellence, having a strong and healthy mind and body, being a passionate and accountable leader, exhibiting integrity in competition and in daily life, and embracing diversity and self-governance.

This is GC PRIDE!
Head Coach Brian Jaworski

Brian Jaworski has served as coach of the Pioneer men’s soccer team since 2004. The 2009 Pioneer squad won the Midwest Conference Tournament title and earned the school’s first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance as Jaworski was voted MWCCoach of the Year. He also earned league Coach of the Year honors in 2016.

Jaworski has helped build the Pioneer program into a consistent winner. After his first two teams went 10-19-2 overall and 5-13 in Midwest Conference play, Grinnell has posted 97 overall victories and MWCC record of 63-29-11 in the past 11 seasons. The Pioneers have posted winning marks nine times and qualified for the MWCC tournament seven times in that span.

Under his guidance, Grinnell also boasted its first-ever MWCC Player of the Year in 2010, Mark Rosenberg. Overall, Jaworski has developed six All-Region selections while at Grinnell and 10 Academic All-Region selections.

Jaworski’s 2014 team was one for the history books. Grinnell emerged as the NCAA Division III national leader in three categories. Isaiah Tyree led the nation in goals against average at 0.218 and save percentage at .959, while the Pioneers were also tops in team save percentage with a mark of .916.

Grinnell also tied or set five MWCC records in 2014, including Tyree in goals against average and save percentage. The Pioneers established new league marks in goals allowed with eight and team goals against average at 0.44, with the latter mark ranking fourth nationally. Grinnell tied the MWCC record for shutouts in a season with 11.

Jaworski arrived at Grinnell in August of 2004, following a long and successful career as an assistant coach at DePauw University that spanned from 1991-2003. During his tenure as an assistant coach, the Tigers went 167-58-12 (.704) and made four NCAA Tournament appearances.

In May 2003, Jaworski was named Aflac National Assistant Coach of the Year in recognition of his hard-work and dedication to the DePauw University men’s soccer program. The award is based on a coach’s longevity and expertise, as well as contributions to the school and community, and special achievements throughout their careers.

In addition to his work with the men’s soccer program at DePauw, he also was an assistant coach for the DePauw women’s soccer team that advanced to the NCAA Final Four in 2003.

Jaworski was a standout soccer player for the DePauw men’s team from 1984-1988, and he became the first player in the school’s history to earn all-America honors in men’s soccer, earning the distinction in 1988. He currently ranks seventh all-time in career goals scored with 31, and is eighth all-time in career points with 75. Jaworski, a 1989 graduate of DePauw, was inducted into the DePauw Athletic Hall of Fame in 2002.

As a head coach, Jaworski has coached two separate club teams to Indiana state championships. In 2002, his under-17 Dynamo FC Indianapolis club team claimed the state championship, and in 2000 his under-18 Dynamo FC Indianapolis squad won the team title. In 2004, Jaworski guided his Carmel United under-18 club to the final four of the Indiana state championship, where his team lost to the eventual state champion.

He and his wife Leslie (a staff member of the College’s psychology department), with the assistance of College coaches Tim Hollibaugh and Andy Hamilton, began the Grinnell Sports Camp in 2005. The camp allows participants to learn fundamentals and participate in drills in a variety of sports while also learning the values of sportsmanship and enjoyment of several activities.

Jaworski resides in Grinnell with his wife and they have three children: Ann Marie is a second-year student-athlete at Boston University and a member of the BU women’s soccer team. Ann Marie is also a current member of the USA U19 Women’s National Team and has earned two CAPS playing internationally for the USA. John lives in Sioux Falls, S.D., attends Roosevelt High School and is a member of the AAA Jr. Stampede, which is a Tier I hockey team.

Cal enjoys his classes at Grinnell Middle School and plays soccer, basketball and baseball. Jaworski has also served as head men’s golf coach since 2007 and was promoted to Associate Professor of Physical Education in the spring of 2011.

Besides being competitive on the course, consistently ranking among the top teams in the Midwest Conference Tournament, the Pioneers achieved the ultimate academic achievement in 2011 when they were named the Academic National Champion for all of NCAA Division III.

For the first time since 1994, Grinnell had two golfers earn all-conference honors when Evan Bunk and Zach McGuff did so in the 2016 league tournament.

Additionally, over the past several years the Pioneers have had golfers earn Cleveland Golf/Srixon All-America Scholar honors – Pete Kieselbach ‘19 in 2009 and 2010, Peter Marche ‘12 in 2011 and 2012 and Evan Bunk ‘18 in 2017.

Jaworski’s 2015 squad shattered the school record for meet score with a 279, besting the previous mark of 301. In the same meet, JP DeFranco set a school record for individual score with a 66.

Assistant Coach Jake O’Polka

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