

Indians start winning in badminton

After going winless in 2006 and 2007, the Institute of Notre Dame has turned the corner in IAAM badminton.

The Baltimore school's principal, Ann Seeley, took on the coaching role in 2006 and was determined to resurrect IND's badminton program.

The team went winless in its first two seasons, but in 2008 the Indians have turned the ship around. The Indians' No. 1 doubles team of seniors Stephanie Martin and Sarah Mohan made it to the final round of the IAAM badminton tournament, losing in two games to Notre Dame Preparatory School, Towson.

The Indians finished the season with a 7-6 record and fielded a junior varsity program as well.

Coached by Amber Wagner, a faculty member at the school, the team has a renewed sense of pride and determination, something that has always been key to IND.

"I just think good sportsmanship is something that we take great pride in here at IND," said Wagner. "We aren't as competitive as many of the other schools, but we do stress good sportsmanship."

The 11-member team was led by sophomore Madison McMann, an IAAM all-star. McMann has a keen sense of the game and plays the bird with a coy strategy and thoughtfulness.

McMann's father, Jerry McMann, has been a "co-coach" with Wagner and has helped the team tremendously with his knowledge and expertise of the game.

"Mr. McMann brings so much to the sport and this team," said Wagner. "He is an excellent player himself and has just done a world of good for our program."

Wagner and McMann moved the team around midseason, which proved to be helpful as the season progressed. A good example was the Indians' No. 3 singles player, sophomore Gabby Hubbe, who moved from doubles to singles midway through the season and did well, using her quickness and relentless efforts to her advantage.