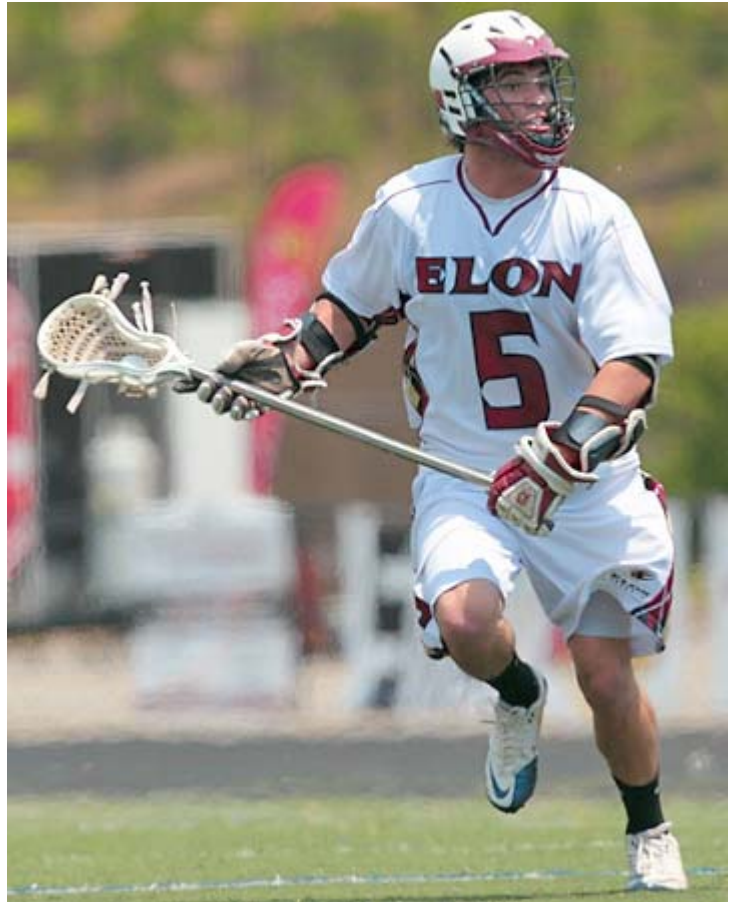


Coyne's All-Americans: MCLA Division II

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Elon didn't make the tournament, but junior Colin Madden was still one of the best midfielders in the country.

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Five attackman, four midfielders, two LSM, two FOGOs, a shorty, four poles, a goalie. Ladies and gentlemen, your 19-man MCLA Division II All-America team. Seems a bit much, don't you think?

The America I believe in means only the finest players are recognized for their accomplishments during the year, meaning there can be just one squad.

As such, for the second year, I've put together my own All-America team.

It consists of 12 players – I've allowed for the addition of a faceoff middle and LSM in a nod to the specialization of the game – who I think have earned the distinction

Attack – Joe Costello, Senior – St. Thomas

The numbers were there again for Costello, who scored 56 goals and added 29 assists to lead the Tommies to the brink of their third consecutive national championship. Costello's impact was always

felt beyond the numbers, and this year was no different. He was the motivational compass for the Tommies and pushed himself just as hard as he did the rest of the team.

Attack – Cameron Holding, Senior – Grand Valley State

Holding made his return to the MCLA after two years at NCAA Division II Florida Southern, and the results were predictable. He was spectacular, scoring 120 goals and dishing out 35 dimes for a national best 155 points. Holding cracked the double-digit goal barrier on four occasions (all against tourney teams) and had at least six goals 11 times, pacing the Lakers to a 19-1 record and a spot in the semifinals.

Attack – Jordan Richtsmeier, Sophomore – Davenport

Many would say Davenport's Shawn Beer should be in this spot and I wouldn't argue too much, but Richtsmeier was the straw that stirred the drink for the Panthers this year from my perspective. A talented scorer who operated at 'X,' Richtsmeier was a magician feeding both the crease and the wing, setting up the likes of Beer, Dominic Baggiano, Cody Cross and Sam Carlson. Richtsmeier finished with 41 goals and 67 assist for 108 points.

Midfield – Ian Bohince, Senior – Western Oregon

A multi-threat middle from the day he stepped onto the Monmouth, Ore., campus, Bohince finished up his career with another strong campaign. He scored 37 goals and dished out 21 assists, and had at least one goal in all 15 contests this year as the Wolves went 14-2 and advanced to the national tournament. While he has emerged as one of the premier offensive middies, Bohince would also take faceoffs and had the athletic ability to work on the defensive end of the field.

Midfield – John Larkin, Junior – Briarcliffe

The midfield position gets overlooked on the Bulldogs roster because most of the points run through the prolific attack unit, but Larkin was critical for Briarcliffe's transition into the upper echelon of Division II. Larkin finished with 13 goals and 12 assists – relatively pedestrian numbers for an offensive middle – but his role as a facilitator for the Bulldog finishers won't show up in the stat sheet.

Midfield – Colin Madden, Junior – Elon

The Phoenix season was truncated by a decision not to participate in the national tournament, but it doesn't minimize the year Madden had. The Georgetown Prep product had a goal in every game, and had three or more markers five times as he finished with 28 goals and 16 assists. In the five games against tournament teams, Madden finished with eight goals and four helpers.

F/O – Marshall Serzen, Junior – Westminster

Because of stat-keeping reasons or website issues (we're still waiting for the final stats from the tournament games to be posted), numbers outside of G-A-P are strictly anecdotal in the MCLA. Some programs, like Westminster, which is an NAIA school and has a dedicated institutional website, makes things a little clearer, opening the door for Serzen to snag my FOGO All-American slot. He went 96-for-147 (65.3%) this season and was second on the team in ground balls.

LSM – Adam Bowers, Junior – Davenport

No (sane) individual argues the fact that Davenport had the toughest schedule in the country, and if the Panthers were going to navigate their way through it and win the national championship, they needed a good LSM. Bowers doesn't take your breath away when you see him on the field, but his ability to match-up with a dangerous offensive player as well as spring the transition game for the champs was impossible to ignore.

Defense – Matt Dowd, Junior – Dayton

Dowd was the best defender in the country in 2011 and showed it every week against some of the top competition in the division. He had the ability to be both a positional or takeaway defender, and was a ground ball vacuum. In the national semifinal game, Dowd gave St. Thomas fits, forcing the Tommies to move personnel in order to isolate Dowd.

Defense – Dan Comite, Senior – SCAD

When SCAD is running hot, it's due to a strong defensive unit. When SCAD keeps its opponents to seven goals are left, the Bees were 12-0 last season. Comite was the lynchpin of the backline and was also quite proficient when the ball was on the ground. He even chipped in with a goal and two assists this spring.

Defense – Jesse Amar, Junior – St. Thomas

At 6-foot-4, 210 pounds and possessing the attitude of a former linebacker – Amar played on the Tommies football squad – the junior was a handful for the top attackmen in the country. He isn't a big take-away guy, but he can run with anyone. With his physical style, Amar limited GVSU's Cam Holding to just two goals – the lowest output of the season for the nation's leading scorer.

Goalie – Michael King, Sophomore – St. John's

He's not the most conventional goalie around, but he gets results. Despite daring forays out of the crease – including exhilarating end-to-end sprints – King posted a 62.8 save percentage against one of the tougher schedules in the country. He was also a monster in the big games, including a 24 save performance in the UMLL title game that lifted the Johnnies to the 10-9 victory over St. Thomas in overtime.

Joe Costello, Senior – St. Thomas

It was tough to pin down Costello as an attackman or midfielder this year. Depending on what the Tommies needed, he would fill the role. In the current age of specialization, Costello's ability to be one of the premier attackman in the country and then get in the crouch for a big faceoff is all you need to know about his credentials. The first thing every team had to do, whether it was at the start of the game or coming out of timeout, was figure out where Joe Costello was. Most of the time, he wasn't where you wanted him.

Bob Clarkson - Davenport

Once Davenport advanced to the quarterfinals of the national tournament, the road was pretty clear. If the Panthers were going to win the championships, they'd have to avenge four of their five losses – Briarcliffe, Grand Valley State (twice) and St. Thomas. Thanks to the magic of Clarkson, it happened. He unlocked Briarcliffe's secret in the first round on the way to a 23-10 rout. He came up with a simple strategy to contain GVSU and the Lakers were mystified by it for the entire game. And then he used a brilliant motivational tactic to spur the Panthers to the championship game shocker

over St. Thomas. The best coaches are not only versatile, but learn from their mistakes. No one was better at both than Clarkson in 2011.
