



KEVIN FREEMAN | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior wide receiver Antwan Goodley (5) runs away from a Horned Frog defender during Baylor's 61-58 win on Oct. 11 against TCU at McLane Stadium in Waco. The Bears return to McLane this Saturday to face Kansas.

No. 13 Baylor football looks to get back on track against Kansas

By JEFFREY SWINDOLL
SPORTS WRITER

At the halfway mark through Baylor football's 2014 season, questions still linger on how good the Bears can be. In the past three weeks, the perception of the Bears' standing in the conference and the country has changed substantially, rising and falling.

The Bears started the season with no real surprises on the field, trouncing the opponent in each of their three non-conference games against SMU, Northwestern State and Buffalo. Baylor's signature, high-powered, pass-heavy offense what they have become known for – scoring a lot of touchdowns, and scoring fast.

In retrospect, it's easy to say the Bears took care of business on the field with much ease, but the beginning of the season had its fair share of distractions that could have tripped up the Bears. First, Baylor opened their brand-new McLane Stadium. Attention for the team rose to fever pitch. Fans wanted to see the Bears play in the new stadium and the media hype added to that fire.

Baylor head coach Art Briles and senior quarterback Bryce Petty said that the stadium is a great addition to the program, but emphasized that the team is, first and foremost, concerned with winning football games and protecting their "palace." The Bears heeded Petty's words well. They have yet to lose in McLane Stadium.

On top of the stadium opening, the Bears had to play the majority of their first game and the entire second game without their quarterback, and leader, Petty. Sophomore quarterback Seth Russell entered into the Baylor Nation spotlight and did not miss a beat. Russell set records and seamlessly stitched the gaping hole in the offense

that the injured Petty left behind. Russell stepped up, did his job and passed the baton back to Petty for the Buffalo game.

The Bears were still not back to full strength in their final pre-conference game though. Experienced receivers like seniors Levi Norwood and Clay Fuller each had injuries for the first three games of 2014. Living up to the nickname 'Wide Receiver U', the Bears' youngest receivers, namely freshman receiver KD Cannon, shined the brightest in the senior absences.

Overall, the first three games of the season challenged the depth of Briles' roster, specifically on offense, and the young players were up to the task when their names were called. Considering the distractions and complications with starters out of the lineup, it could've been a bumpy start for the Bears. However, Baylor opened the season with a perfect record against non-conference teams and picked up valuable conference road wins at Iowa State and Texas.

The Bears returned home after three-straight away games, rising in the AP rankings and building momentum for a potential berth in the inaugural College Football Playoff. No. 5 Baylor hosted No. 9 TCU in a game that turned out to be an instant classic at McLane Stadium. The Bears pulled off a dramatic fourth quarter comeback to beat the undefeated Horned Frogs to stay perfect on the season and continue their campaign for a College Football Playoff spot. That campaign would come to a screeching halt one week after the storybook ending against TCU.

"It was a really good win the other night [against TCU], significant for a variety of reasons," Briles said. "First of all, we got bowl-eligible and secondly, [it kept] us in the competition for a Big

12 championship."

The high point of the Bears' season came one week before their lowest point. Baylor hit the road again, this time to Morgantown, W. Va., a place where the Bears continue to struggle. Unranked West Virginia derailed the No. 4 Bears hype-train of national championship hopes, stumping the Bears 41-27. The West Virginia game damaged Baylor's College Football Playoff poll stock. The Bears were no longer undefeated and lost to an unranked team. At this point, many pundits have written Baylor off as a team on the outside of the College Football Playoff, looking in.

The Bears return to McLane Stadium and start their road of redemption against the University of Kansas at 3 p.m. tomorrow. The Jayhawks (2-5, 0-4) are undeniably the conference's worst team. Having benched starting quarterback Montell Cozart, and fired head coach Charlie Weis a few games into the season, the Jayhawks are in shambles ahead of their clash with the Bears tomorrow.

"[Kansas is] a team that's been through a lot, so you've got to admire their players for their resiliency in having a coaching staff change and to keep fighting and keep going like they're going in conference play," Briles said.

The Jayhawks' defense has two of the conferences Top 5 players in tackles for loss and sacks. Their porous offense shadows the Jayhawk's generally talented and effective defense this season.

"Thirty-three points is the most points they've had scored on them and in this league that's pretty good," Briles said. "They're extremely talented and playing really good defense. It's a conference opponent. Anytime you play a conference team you know you're going to be in for a battle and this will be

no different."

KU is, by far, the Bears' easiest conference opponent at home this season. The Jayhawks have struggled in stringing drives together for touchdowns. The Jayhawks lack a playmaker at the receiver position and are inefficient running the ball.

Kansas has close results against conference opponents, including two games decided by just one touchdown against Oklahoma State and Texas Tech, but the Bears are heavily favored in tomorrow's matchup. The Bears' offense can put points on just about any team in the country, and the Bears' defense hangs with the Big 12's best as well.

Most of the concerns ahead of Baylor's homecoming matchup with Kansas come from within the Bears' own camp. Senior offensive tackle Troy Baker, an outspoken leader and arguably the team's best lineman suffered a season-ending ACL injury against West Virginia. The Bears were left to find a replacement for Baker who leaves big shoes to fill, both literally and figuratively.

"Losing Troy to injury and not having him on the field as a leader hurts," junior offensive tackle Spencer Drang said. "He always knew what to do about everything. I do have to fill some of that void and take up some slack, but the other guys on the line can fill in too."

Petty's completion rate is down to nearly 50 percent, missing many wide open looks at key moments throughout the conference schedule. Petty looks to right those wrongs against Kansas.

"Everything that we set out to do is still ahead of us," Petty said. "We are fine in that aspect of it. We need to take care of Kansas, and the rest will take care of itself."

Behind enemy lines

Five notes about Kansas

By BRIAN HILLIX
DAILY KANSAN SPORTS EDITOR

1. Kansas is by far the worst team in the Big 12, but since Charlie Weis was fired on Sept. 28, the team has gone through a bit of a revival. Interim head coach and defensive coordinator Clint Bowen – a former Kansas player and Lawrence native – has energized the Jayhawks and made them competitive again. In the last two games against Oklahoma State and Texas Tech, Kansas had a shot at winning the game in the fourth quarter. You couldn't say that about many of Weis' games.

2. The Jayhawk defense is very good. Looking at the Big 12 statistics, you wouldn't get that impression, but keep in mind that the offense continually puts the defense in tough spots. Kansas ranks last in the Big 12 in scoring and only averages about 17 first downs per game. In conference games, the defense ranks fourth in the league in scoring defense and passing defense. In a league with explosive quarterbacks, the Jayhawks are holding their own.

3. At quarterback, junior Michael Cummings has done an admirable job of taking over for the struggling Montell Cozart, who performed poorly against level competition. Cummings has completed 40 passes for 523 yards over his last two games, in addition to logging two passing and two rushing touchdowns. In the only conference game Cozart played in full, he threw 140 passing yards with four interceptions against Texas. While Cummings has done a nice job at the helm, I don't think he exactly scares opposing defenses.

4. Ben Heeny is a monster. The senior inside linebacker and captain of the defense leads the conference with 12 tackles per game and is coming off a 21-tackle performance against Texas Tech, the most by a player in the Big 12 in a game this season. He also ranks fifth in the league in tackles for a loss, helping to make up for a below-average defensive line.

5. The secondary is the strength of the entire team. Cornerbacks JaCorey Shepherd and Dexter McDonald have played well and are a big reason for the defense's successes. Again, the secondary's job is a lot tougher because the defensive line struggles to pressure the quarterback. Despite giving up some big-play touchdowns this season, Shepherd and McDonald have made been bright spots for the defense. Shepherd ranks sixth in the Big 12 in passes defended while McDonald leads the team with two interceptions.

Big 12 Roundup: College GameDay travels to WVU

By CODY SOTO
SPORTS WRITER

No. 19 Oklahoma (5-2, 2-2) at Iowa State (2-5, 0-4)

No. 19 Oklahoma looks to pick up its third Big 12 win as it travels to Ames, Iowa to play Iowa State at Jack Trice Stadium on Saturday morning.

The Sooners took its second conference loss on Oct. 18 with a heartbreaking 31-30 finish against then-No. 14 Kansas State in Norman, Okla. Two missed field goals and a blocked extra point attempt doomed Oklahoma in the long run after quarterback Trevor Knight threw an interception for an easy Wildcat touchdown early in the second quarter. Knight finished with 318 passing yards on 26 completions and three touchdowns. Sterling Shepard received for a career-high 15 passes for 197 yards and a score in the loss.

The Cyclones were idle last week and are coming off a 48-45 loss to Texas on Oct. 18. Iowa State was crushed by a 21-yard field goal made by Texas with only three seconds left in the game to remain winless

in Big 12 play so far. Quarterback Sam B. Richardson threw for 345 yards for three touchdowns and two interceptions in the loss. Running back Aaron Wimberly ran for an impressive 110 yards on 14 carries and scored late in the fourth quarter to tie the game.

Kickoff is set for 11 a.m. and will air on FOX Sports 1.

No. 10 TCU (6-1, 3-1) at No. 20 West Virginia (6-2, 4-1)

College GameDay heads to Morgantown, W.Va. as No. 10 TCU and No. 20 West Virginia meet for a Top 20 matchup in Milan Puskar Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

The Horned Frogs took a dominant 82-27 win over Texas Tech in Fort Worth last Saturday. TCU headed into halftime with a convincing 37-20 lead and held the Red Raiders to only one touchdown in the final two quarters. Quarterback Trevone Boykin was 22-for-39 on pass completions for 433 yards and seven touchdowns in the win. Deante' Gray received for 165 yards on

four receptions which included a huge 92-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter.

The Mountaineers cruised to a 34-10 win over Oklahoma State in Stillwater, Okla. last Saturday for their fourth consecutive conference win. Receiver Kevin White caught a 19-yard pass early in the opening quarter, and Mario Alford received a 79-yard pass to put West Virginia up 14-0 going into the second quarter. Kicker Josh Lambert made two field goals in the second half to extend the lead while quarterback Clint Trickett had 238 passing yards for two touchdowns in the win.

The matchup is set for 2:30 p.m. and will air on ABC and ESPN2.

Texas (3-5, 2-3) at Texas Tech (3-5, 1-4)

Texas will travel to Lubbock to face Texas Tech on Saturday evening in Jones AT&T Stadium after two disappointing losses for both teams.

Texas suffered a 23-0 shutout to No. 11 Kansas State and only rallied for 196 total offensive yards in Manhattan, Kan. Quar-

terback Tyrone Swoopes completed 13 passes for 106 yards and averaged 4.2 yards per completion. Running back Johnathan Gray ran for 24 yards on 10 carries as part of the Longhorns' 90 rushing yards. Texas was only 4-for-13 on third down efficiency.

The Red Raiders dropped a disappointing 82-27 to TCU on Saturday after taking a 10-7 lead early in the opening quarter. Texas Tech was held to one touchdown in the second half, a three-yard reception by Dylan Cantrell with three minutes left in the third quarter. Quarterback Davis Webb threw for 300 yards on 15 completions for two scores and an interception in the loss. All touchdowns by the Red Raiders were made by receivers as the team rallied for 345 passing yards.

Texas and Texas Tech will play at 6:30 p.m. on FOX Sports 1.

Oklahoma State (5-3, 3-2) at No. 11 Kansas State (6-1, 4-0)

Oklahoma State takes a Big 12 road trip to Manhattan, Kan. to play No. 11 Kansas State in Bill Snyder Family Stadium on Sat-

urday night.

The Cowboys look to shake off a dismal 34-10 loss at home to then-No. 22 West Virginia. Despite having 23 first downs compared to the Mountaineers' 22, Oklahoma State was only 2-for-15 on third down conversions and could not gain momentum in the game. The only points for the Cowboys were in the second quarter as the team headed into halftime down 14-10. Quarterback Daxx Garman had 242 passing yards for one touchdown and two interceptions in the loss.

The Wildcats took a solid 23-0 win over Texas at home to remain perfect in conference play last Saturday. Kansas State used two touchdowns and three field goals to put away the Longhorns after limiting them to 12 first downs and 196 offensive yards. Quarterback Jake Waters posted 224 passing yards on 19 completions, and running back DeMarcus Robinson and Charles Jones combined for 29 carries and 99 yards to score twice in the win.

Oklahoma State and Kansas State face off at 7 p.m. on ABC.



LARIAT FILE PHOTO

Senior point guard Kenny Chery dribbles the ball up the court during Baylor's 74-69 loss to Texas on Feb. 26 at the Erwin Center in Austin. Chery is one of two seniors this year for Baylor basketball.

Retooled MBB hungry for victory

By CODY SOTO
SPORTS WRITER

The Bears are coming, and they're ready to roll.

Baylor men's basketball returns to the Ferrell Center on Nov. 14 in its first game for the 2014-2015 season. The Bears bring with them a new team and new attitude, but one thing is constant: they want to make the NCAA tournament.

Head coach Scott Drew is ready to make school history and lead the team to back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances. Drew and the Bears made an impressive run to the Sweet 16 last year before eventually falling to No. 2-seed Wisconsin in Anaheim, Calif.

"Baylor basketball has never gone to the NCAA tournament on odd years and we haven't gone in back-to-back years, so I think there's definitely some firsts that we would like to take care of," Drew said. "Each and every game, we want to win and be competitive and put ourselves in a good position for conference titles and national championships."

The Bears bring back seven lettermen and add six newcomers to the roster after losing seven players, four of whom played major minutes: Brady Heslip, Cory Jefferson, Gary Franklin and Isaiah Austin.

Senior guard Kenny Chery and senior forward Royce O'Neale expect to lead the way for an inexperienced team. They know it is not going to be easy, Chery said.

"The coaches have a lot of trust in Royce and me," Chery said. "The key is going to be keeping everyone on the same page and making sure we're focused. We need to execute what the coaches want us to execute."

Chery said his role is bigger this year after starting for the Bears last season. He averaged

11.5 points per game and is the only returning double-digit scorer. O'Neale posted 7.1 points per contest his junior year.

"I've been getting better every day and I'm making sure everyone does as well," Chery said. "Our focus this year is really on speed, pushing the ball, and putting pressure on defense. I have to communicate on and off the court and make sure that everyone is listening and paying attention to all the details."

Chery and O'Neale will get help from junior forward Rico Gathers, a 280-lb power player. Gathers came off the bench last season and scored 6.4 points and added 6.4 rebounds per game.

Gathers is ready to get the sour taste of the team's Sweet 16 loss out of his mouth and use it as motivation for the upcoming season, he said.

"Coming off a Sweet 16 year and taking a bittersweet loss to Wisconsin, that's motivation enough to make that push to not just make the tournament, but go to the Elite Eight and the Final Four," Gathers said. "I am most excited about this great group of guys with a new team, a new look, and new expectations. We are ready to be back on the floor to get the season started and get it underway."

Redshirt freshmen Johnathan Motley and Al Freeman will also be in the rotation after taking their first year to learn the program, Drew said.

"We expect a lot more out of them because we lost a lot of production and players," Drew said. "Al Freeman is someone who is a strong guard who can play multiple positions and score points for us. For Johnathan Motley, going up against Cory [Jefferson] and Isaiah [Austin] every day really made him better. He's somebody that everyone saw as a great poten-

tial player, and now he'll be able to back that up."

Baylor will play a shorter and more athletic lineup after losing Jefferson and Austin, both big men. The duo measured out at 6-foot-9 and 7-foot-1; the tallest player on the Bears this season at 6-foot-9.

*"At Baylor, we reload.
We don't rebuild."*

Scott Drew | Head coach

"Motley is our tallest and strongest vertical-wise. We are used to having many six-foot guys [in the middle], and he's the closest one we got now," Drew said. "We are going to find a way to put our best team on the floor and adjust from there."

The Bears also added two true freshmen, forward T.J. Maston and guard Dee Durham, along with three transfers: guards Austin Mills and Lester Medford and forward Deng Deng.

"At Baylor, we reload. We don't rebuild," Drew said. "It's great for our coaching staff knowing that we have new players this year because we can work with them. We are going to learn a lot more about our guys within the first month of practice."

Coming from Beverly Hills, Calif., Mills feels welcomed to Baylor and looks forward to using the team's chemistry on the court.

"It's a big change from Los Angeles to Texas so far, but the guys have been great and Waco's been good to me," Mills said. "I am really excited because people don't know what to think about us. With many guys leaving last year, more of us have to step up and we're ready to shock people."

The Bears used their summer workouts and a Marine training

program as a great bonding tool to bring together the young but talented team.

"There are going to be times during the season when we're down at halftime and have to come out and pick it up. We cannot be pointing fingers," sophomore forward Ishmail Wainwright said. "That Marine training helped us out a lot because it really bonded us. When that came around, it showed that we could trust the guy to our left and our right. We are young and still getting used to each other, but now we say, 'This is my brother. We got you. We are going to be there to help you up.'"

Despite losing a lot of talent, the Baylor Bears are ready to prove themselves once again and play tough non-conference matchups to prepare themselves for a challenging Big 12 conference slate.

"Every year, we try to play the best non-conference schedule that we can," Drew said. "A lot of the teams we are playing made the NCAA tournament, and some of them had some success in the tournament, so it will definitely prepare us for conference."

While the team's strengths may not be their height, Baylor will find ways and have the belief that they can win, Drew said.

"Each team has different strengths, but we believe in the people we have," Drew said. "We've adapted our style of play to meet whatever our team's strengths might be. We don't have the seven-footer that we're used to. We've been very efficient on the offensive end in the past, so that's why it's important to get practice in. We always like to play fast in position, but without [Austin and Jefferson] we are going to have to play fast."

Baylor men's basketball starts the 2014-15 McNeese State season at 8:30 p.m. on Nov. 14. The game will broadcast live from the Ferrell Center on FOX Sports.

Projected starters

PG – Kenny Chery, Senior

SG – Al Freeman, RS Freshman

SF – Royce O'Neale, Senior

PF – Rico Gathers, Junior

C – Johnathan Motley, RS Freshman

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Lady Bears look to forge new identity this season

By JEFFREY SWINDOLL
SPORTS WRITER

Moving past the Brittney Griner era was part of the Baylor women's basketball's maturation process last season. With the loss of Griner, much of the responsibility, defensively and offensively, was put on Odyssey Sims' shoulders. Growing out of that dependency on Sims will be inevitable for the Lady Bears in the 2014-15 season.

Sims affected the Lady Bears (and the opponents') tactics perhaps more than any other player in the country last year. Despite that, Baylor head coach Kim Mulkey has a roster with widespread talent to maintain the elite program status that her basketball team has achieved over the past few seasons.

"It's the unknown, I don't know how fun it will be until we get on the floor during games," Mulkey said. "Who's gonna be our scorer, who's gonna be our defensive stopper, who's gonna be the leader? We've got players with experience but they'll be in different roles. They'll need to step up and do things they haven't done before."

Without Sims, the Lady Bears were far from utterly weaponless last season. As the season went on in 2013-14, the Lady Bears started to spread the ball around. Their attack came from just about anywhere on the court, not just Sims. The Lady Bears return three of their five starters from last year's 32-5 conference championship team.

Even with a young roster filled with question marks, Mulkey did an excellent job — a share of the Big 12 regular season title, the Big 12 Tournament Championship title, and an appearance in the Elite Eight of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament. The Associated Press also ranked the Lady Bears No. 8 in the nation.

The 2014-15 season could be no different for the Lady Bears in the sense of shattering preseason expectations. The Lady Bears were picked to finish second in the Big 12 in the Big 12 preseason coaches poll.

"Preseason rankings bring great recognition to your program," Mulkey said. "It's a respect thing, but we haven't done anything yet. We've got a non-conference schedule that will challenge us. We'll go on the road more this year than we did last



Baylor women's basketball huddles together before its Jan. 29 game against the Texas Tech Red Raiders in Waco. The Lady Bears defeated the Red Raiders 92-43 at the Ferrell Center. The Lady Bears prepare to open their 2014-15 campaign on Tuesday.

LARIAT FILE PHOTO

year. So, I don't know if rankings are accurate, but it's nice to have your name written somewhere."

Sophomore forward Nina Davis broke onto the scene unexpectedly for the Lady Bears last season. Davis, who is 5-foot-11, is considered short for her post position. The young star was overlooked at first, but teams were forced to take notice of her when she began dominating the paint every game for Baylor.

"I guess you could say last year I wasn't sheltered, but I was more sheltered with Odyssey being on the team," Davis said. "More of the defense and strategy were focused on her, but I know this year there will be more of a target on me. I just have to step my game up even more knowing that every game we play I'm going to be somewhere on the scouting sheets."

Davis was named All-Big 12 first team and Big 12 Freshman of the Year last season for her performance. As a freshman, she averaged 15 points and a league-leading 8.9 rebounds per game.

"I'm prepared to take on a role," Davis said. "Before the season started [Mulkey and I] had a meeting, and there was one thing she told me and that was that I need to be more of a leader, more vocal. As you can see on the court, I don't like to talk a lot. But I know this year, in order to be a leader, I can't be quiet."

Junior guard Niya Johnson will likely be the offensive maestro in the 2014-15 season for the Lady Bears. Last year, Johnson was the team leader in assists and boasted the best assist/turnover ratio in the country (4.0). However, much of her offensive responsibilities were deferred to Sims, the

leader of the Lady Bears' attack.

Johnson was more than happy to dish out passes to Sims for layups last season, but she may have the ball in her hands more of this season. Johnson is in the driver's seat now, and she can assist and score at will, Mulkey said.

"I used to pass, pass, pass, and this year I have to look to do more scoring instead of passing," said Johnson, who started 32 of 37 games. "I'd rather pass than shoot. I just love to watch my teammates score off my assists. Now I don't have any choice but to shoot."

Although Davis and Johnson were some of the most productive players in points and assists last season, the departure of Sims and Makenzie Robertson leaves a huge gap in the scoring department for the Lady Bears. Mulkey and her

staff are searching for the players to carry the load this season.

"We're going to have to find out who can score," Mulkey said. "Scrimmaging is a big part of it early, but I don't know what we have out there. We've got 38 points we've got to replace with Odyssey and Makenzie [Robertson] being gone."

The return of senior guard Alexis Prince from a season-ending foot injury in 2013 will help bolster Mulkey's lineup. Prince was on the sideline for nearly all of last season with a medical boot on her foot. Her ability to encourage her team without being able to suit up helped her leadership role for the team in this season. Prince is likely to be in the starting five for the Lady Bears.

"[Prince] hasn't missed a practice, she hasn't limped, hasn't had to see the doctor so all is good," Mulkey said. "When you have a player of her size with her skills and versatility, it makes your team so much better. We would have been much better last year if she was healthy. We anticipate her being a big factor for us. We've done all we can to prepare her and get her healthy. Two months from now. You never know."

The lone senior in the starting lineup, post Sune Agbuke, was an invaluable piece to the Lady Bears' defense last season. Agbuke anchored the Lady Bears' rebound game on both the offensive and defensive ends. Mulkey said Agbuke is like "a wall back there," and she is vital to how the team game plans for defense.

More than anything, Agbuke has been on an undefeated, NCAA championship winning team and her experience and amount of minutes played is unmatched by any other player on Mulkey's roster.

Offense is a concern for the Lady Bears ahead of the 2014-15 season, but Mulkey has long been a coach that takes pride in her team's ability and discipline on the defensive side of the ball. The team's defensive strength is often overlooked because of the scoring done by the Lady Bears' fast-paced offense. Mulkey will be working on the Lady Bears' defensive shape more than anything else in preseason training.

The Lady Bears 2014-15 begins against Midwestern State at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Ferrell Center.



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Baylor volleyball building confidence down closing stretch of 2014 season

Kawhi Leonard will play tonight

By CODY SOTO
SPORTS WRITER

The Baylor volleyball season is like a roller coaster.

The Bears (13-11, 3-6 Big 12) came into the 2014 season as the sixth-ranked team in the Big 12 standings, and they didn't think it did the team justice.

Baylor only lost two players due to graduation and brought back three players from injury to have a chance for redemption.

In the beginning of the season, they took a commanding three-set sweep over Abilene Christian to kick off its non-conference schedule. The Bears won its first two games before falling to Portland in the Hampton Inn Waco North Baylor Invitational at the Ferrell Center.

Baylor took a four-set win over Rice and played six straight away matches and recorded wins in Arlington, San Marcos, and Washington D.C. The Bears remained perfect in the George Washington Colonials Challenge to take the tournament title on Sept. 13.

Baylor returned to Waco and defeated Northwestern State to improve to a 9-2 season record and prepared itself to compete in its last tournament of non-conference play.

Then, Baylor volleyball took a downward ride on its roller coaster season.

The Bears dropped all three of its matches in the UTSA Classic and headed to Manhattan, Kan. with a 9-5 record, dropping matches to UTSA and LSU before Big 12 play.

Baylor rallied for a thrilling five-set win over Kansas State to win its first conference road opener since 1997 and returned to Waco to host Texas Tech on Oct. 1.

With a good conference win under their belt, the Bears then went on a six-game conference-losing streak starting with a five-set loss to Texas Tech and a four-set loss to West Virginia, both of which were at home. The Bears had hit a low point in their season, sitting at 1-6 in conference play.

"It's not ever been about the will and the hustle of our team, but it's about having enough players playing a high level," head coach Jim Barnes said.



Sophomore outside hitter Katie Staiger (4) goes up for a kill against West Virginia on Oct. 22. The Bears lost 3-1 at the Ferrell Center in Waco.

Also, things did not help when junior outside hitter Laura Jones tore her ACL during the team's match against Kansas. Jones is out for the season and left a hole in the Baylor offense.

"We definitely took a big hit by losing Laura Jones," senior outside hitter Nicole Bardaji said. "She's a great player who has a lot of firepower and intensity, and she always works so hard, so that was a tough break for us."

After evening up the season record at 11-11, the Bears have turned things around and have taken two big conference wins over Iowa State at home and against Texas Tech in Lubbock.

The Bears rallied from a 2-0 deficit to take a five-set win over the Cyclones in an exciting two-hour matchup in the Ferrell Center while the team took care of business on the road and

rolled over the Red Raiders with a 3-1 win.

With this roller coaster taking a lot of turns, junior outside hitter Andie Malloy said that the team is just taking it one step at a time.

"We are taking this one game at a time," Malloy said. "We have to come out with the mentality to out work the other team and stay positive. It's about never giving up to get every point."

The Bears have only been swept by one Big 12 team and have gone through the rest of the matches either winning or losing in four or five sets. This says a lot about the resilience of the team, Malloy said.

"It definitely shows that we can hang with anyone in the Big 12, and if we are playing our game throughout the match, then we can battle and keep up with these teams. We can win if we keep pushing," Malloy said.

The Bears look to turn around their season just as quickly as it was turned on them, but it's going to take a team effort, Bardaji said.

"We definitely have a lot of talent and athleticism, but we just need to put it all together," Bardaji said. "We're a very close knit team. We want to work hard for each other and for Christ. We're in a good place to move forward, so things look hopeful for us."

Baylor is already improving different weaknesses of its game, and the players see that.

"If we can take our serving to whole another level, we can get teams down," Malloy said. "Also, we have got to pass well with no over-passing and good serve-serve. We need to make it easier on our setter to take care of the ball."

After Wednesday's win over Texas Tech, the Bears collectively hit .214 and post 13.8 kills per set, 15.5 digs per set, and 2.1 blocks per set. Malloy currently leads the team with 4.01 kills per set and contributes 2.94 digs per set. Right behind Malloy is freshman outside hitter Katie Staiger who adds 3.05 kills per set after coming back from a torn ACL last season.

At the net, sophomore middle hitters Sam Hill and Tola Itiola post 1.00 and 0.94 blocks per set. Both players have been able to also create an offensive flow on the frontcourt by contributing kills during the match. Itiola adds 1.89 kills per set, and Hill contributes 1.63 per set.

In the back row, senior libero Hope Ogden has 2.92 digs per set followed by freshman liberos Jana Brusek and Ashley Myer at 2.33 and 2.58 digs per set.

As the Bears make the upward climb to save their season, Barnes said the team needs to turn everything into points.

"The confidence is growing, but we need to continue to push hard to get our serves and passing game to continue to move forward because that's what's going to continue to help our blocking and our scoring," Barnes said.

The Bears head to Lawrence, Kan. to face Kansas for the second time this season on Nov. 5 and look to avenge their four-set loss to the Jayhawks at home. Game is set for 6:30 p.m.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — NBA Finals MVP Kawhi Leonard is set to make his season debut for the San Antonio Spurs tonight against the Phoenix Suns.

Leonard missed the final six preseason games and the season opener against Dallas due to an infection in his right eye.

The 23-year-old Leonard averaged 12.8 points, 6.2 rebounds and 1.7 steals for the Spurs last season while shooting 52 percent from the field. But he really blossomed in the playoffs as the Spurs rolled to their fifth championship.

In the final three games of San Antonio's finals victory over Miami, Leonard averaged 23.7 points and 9.3 rebounds and shot 68.6 percent to earn MVP honors.



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Tola Itiola learns fast, both on and off the court

By CODY SOTO
SPORTS WRITER

Sophomore middle hitter Tola Itiola had never played a sport before the eighth grade, let alone volleyball.

Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Itiola came to the United States in 2008 with no prior knowledge of how to play volleyball. When she enrolled at Carrollton Christian Academy, she decided to give it a try.

During tryouts in middle school, she needed several water breaks and rests to continue the tryout. She couldn't serve a ball over the net and was unable to bench press much weight during the team's off-season program.

However, Itiola used this as an opportunity to grow into something that she had never done and she did just that. Five years later, Itiola is one of the top assets of Baylor.

volleyball and brings athleticism, faith and team leadership.

Alice Klunck, Itiola's eighth grade and freshman year coach, said that while Itiola didn't necessarily know the fundamentals of the game, she didn't let that stop her from learning.

"I loved that she was so interested in improving her game and tried her hardest on and off the court," Klunck said. "I took the game and broke it down working on each individual skill with her, starting with blocking

on the right side. I believed that her vertical was a strength for her."

After starting school a year early in Nigeria, Itiola was one year younger than the rest of her teammates. However, belief was all she needed to learn and improve her game.

"They told me their belief in me, and in the end it made me believe in myself," Itiola said. "It was a huge learning process for me, and I loved the challenge of growing every day in my skills. They've really helped me be the player I am today."

Learning to play volleyball wasn't easy though. Tola's younger sister Mofe Itiola remembers just how difficult it actually was.

"We would feel really bad when we messed up," Mofe Itiola said. "We had no idea what we were doing because we hadn't played any sport before. We just continued to play, and that's how we learned."

We picked it up and we've both gotten better every year."

Tola's 6-foot-2 stature allowed Klunck to put her at the middle blocker position during Itiola's eighth grade year.

"The coaches really

wanted me to play the middle blocker position, so I really had to grow into it," Tola said. "It didn't come naturally at first, but with a lot of work, it became a lot easier. It's nonstop, so I really enjoy it."

Her speed and big vertical jump proved to be an advantage for Tola, and Klunck quickly moved her up to play on the varsity team her freshman year of high school.

"I believe she was surprised by that decision," Klunck said. "She mentioned at one point that she thought she might not make any of the teams. Imagine how much more surprised she was when she began starting for our team along with seniors."

Tola's personality is very distinctive. While she may not be the loudest player on the team, her confidence grows every match, Mofe said.

"She's pretty soft spoken, but when she does speak you think, 'where does that come from?'" Mofe said. "She plays with so much confidence though. No matter how the game's going, she will keep it up. She has that mentality."

Mofe isn't the only one to see Tola's quiet personality. Klunck said Tola's personality shows in her performance, and that plays a big factor in matches.

"She was shy at first on the varsity team, but once she got comfortable, you could see her coming out of her shell," Klunck said. "Tola has never been a cocky player, and I spent some time trying to convince her of her talents and I never felt like she knew how talented she truly is. She is a tremendous role model of the mentality a true athlete should strive to have."

Tola Itiola's faith has been one factor that has separated her from the rest of her teammates. Junior outside hitter Andie Malloy said Tola's message before a game this season really stuck with her.

"She said to play free because we've all been saved, so she told us just to go out there and play with freedom," Malloy said. "It was awesome to hear her say that and

"I've learned that my mistakes don't define me, and I'm going to have to believe in myself."

Tola Itiola | Soph. Middle Hitter



SKYE DUNCAN | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore middle hitter Tola Itiola prepares for a point against Iowa State on Oct. 25 in Waco. The Bears won 3-2 over the Cyclones to snap a six-game Big 12 losing streak.

give those words of encouragement for the team. She's definitely a spiritual leader on our team."

Itiola said she uses her faith to stay positive during tough matches. Her love for her faith helps her take every day as an opportunity to get better. In turn, that helps her become a spiritual leader, she said.

"My spiritual life has really helped me stay focused and not to take mistakes personally and be able to brush them off," Itiola said. "I've learned that my mistakes don't define me, and I'm going to have to believe in myself."

Tola's relationship with her sister has blossomed over the past year with the death of their mother, Nike Itiola. Mofe said this experience made her sister more mature and allowed her to take on a motherly role for their family.

"We really have to be there for one another, and we've learned to be grateful for each other," Mofe Itiola said. "Every night, she would always text me because she wants to keep me uplifted and is stepping in like a mom to me."

Faith has brought these two sisters together even though they are now miles

apart with Tola Itiola playing for Baylor.

"God truly has a plan," Mofe Itiola said. "Even though we have no idea what the future holds, we know that He will do everything for us. Knowing that statement helps us keep faith in God and understand that He does everything for a reason."

Tola's faith shines in her play for Baylor volleyball, and the team is taking full advantage of her threat in the middle.

"She is a very quiet player, but I can see that she's exuberating confidence," junior setter Amy Rosenbaum said. "It's been exciting to see her grow as a player and to see her belief on the court. It's going to add a lot of blocks and silent kills for us."

Itiola's growth on and off the court makes her a special athlete for Baylor, head coach Jim Barnes said.

"She's getting more confidence and learning to get more aggressive and consistent, and as that comes along she's going to be one of the best players in the nation," Barnes said.

Looking back on her first days playing volleyball, Tola would not have pictured herself wearing a Baylor jersey. Her determination to grow into new roles and step in when needed makes her an impact athlete for the Bears.

"I've grown a great love for this game," Tola said. "The opportunity to play volleyball and to be here at Baylor is a huge blessing from God."

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CARLYE THORNTON | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Senior forward Natalie Huggins, left, leads an attack with freshman forward Precious Akanyirige, right, on Sept. 21 against Oral Roberts University. The Bears won 5-0.

Soccer hopes to finish season strong

By JEFFREY SWINDOLL
SPORTS WRITER

It's been a season of ups and downs for Baylor soccer. The Bears were tested by strong opponents and produced some impressive victories, but struggled with being consistent in Big 12 play. The Bears' regular season of mixed results ends at 7 p.m. tonight in Morgantown, W.Va. against the conference-leading West Virginia.

Baylor started the season with a bit of a measuring stick, playing against the national powerhouse University of Florida in Gainesville, Fla. The Bears only managed to get one shot off against the Gators, but Baylor co-head coach Marci Jobson described UF as "the best team [she has] ever coached against." From there, the Bears saw the areas in which they needed to improve.

The Bears returned to Waco and remained undefeated in five games at Betty Lou Mays Field before kicking off conference play against Kansas. Home wasn't the only place the Bears found success in the pre-conference schedule though.

The nationally-ranked BYU and Notre Dame faced off against the Bears. Baylor stunned BYU in front of their home fans with a 2-1 decision. Against Notre Dame, the Bears' defense stood strong apart from one mistake on a set piece that ended up being the game-winning goal for Notre Dame.

The taste of victory from the BYU game was equal to the portion of humble pie they had to swallow in their loss to Notre Dame. The Bears entered conference play with level heads, with faith in their potential to be one of the conference's toughest teams.

Conference play started sour for the Bears. Baylor's pristine record at home in 2014 was tarnished

by the Jayhawks. KU forward Liana Salazar finished a cross into Baylor's goal early in the first half. Salazar's goal was the difference in that game which ended 1-0. The Bears bounced right back with a convincing 2-0 victory over Iowa State at home, just two days after a demoralizing loss to Kansas.

The middle of the conference season is when things got a little shaky for the Bears. TCU came to Waco and escaped with a 1-1 tie against the Bears. Since the beginning of conference play, the Bears have only won one match when the opponent scored. The Bears' goal production has not been on par with the rest of the Big 12's aggressive offenses. After TCU, Baylor lost three of its last four games, including a heartbreaking loss on a 90th minute goal from the Longhorns in the Bears' home finale for the season.

"Soccer is a game of moments," Jobson said. "You have to be alert, concentrated and focused for moments. I think that last 20 seconds [against Texas] is kind of a metaphor for what our problem has been for a lot of the season. It's not that anybody taps out of the play, but we need somebody to step up. That's the difference."

The Bears are currently tied with Oklahoma at sixth in the Big 12 Conference standings with 7 points. Baylor can end its regular season with a bang against the league-leading Mountaineers tonight. West Virginia has been near perfect against conference teams this season, en route to their third-straight Big 12 regular season title.

"I think it makes it an exciting challenge to finish our season [against West Virginia]," senior midfielder Alexa Wilde said. "Why not finish our season against a great team, have a great game and have a team that challenges us to be the best team that can possibly be in our very last game of the season? I'm

more excited to finish against them than anything."

Wilde contributed to the team with her physical playstyle, willingness to sacrifice her body and aerial versatility. Wilde notched three goals and one assist in 17 matches this season.

West Virginia, currently on a six-game winning streak in conference and 14-game winning streak overall, has won three Big 12 regular season titles in three years as a Big 12 school. West Virginia has been, without a doubt, the most dominant team in the Big 12 since joining in 2012.

"Going through every game, all of our losses, we were right there with every team and I think West Virginia is going to be another one of those teams and I think it's about us saying, 'We're not right there with them. We're better than them,'" junior midfielder Bri Campos said.

Campos is arguably the team's most valuable player. Her work ethic, calmness and decisiveness on and off the ball is critical to the Bears' success. If Campos has a good game, the Bears probably have a good game. She is the engine for the Bears' offense and is the first line of defense in front of Baylor's back line. Campos leads her team with six goals and two assists on the season.

The Mountaineers' goal difference over the course of the season (+12) speaks volumes for their athleticism and offensive prowess. West Virginia is the clear favorite heading into the match against Baylor and the Big 12 Championship Tournament next week in Kansas City, Kan.

"We need to continue to be motivated and go into West Virginia getting it right," Jobson said. "We've been in every game this season, competing with some of the best teams in the country. If we can get that missing piece right on a 90-minute scale then we can beat, I think, anybody."

Bears run for championship

By JEFFREY SWINDOLL
SPORTS WRITER

Baylor cross country travels to Lawrence, Kan. to compete in the 2014 Big 12 Cross Country Championship on Saturday. While Baylor freshman are running the line for a few yards, the Bears' cross country team will be running much longer distance with two Big 12 (men's and women's) title on the line.

"It's easier in these kind of meets to know exactly who your competition is, compared to when you're running against 300 people," Harbour said.

"We'll have about 80. So, it's going to be a lot more to know exactly where the other runners are at. It's just a totally different type of race than what they've been in the last two times." The best overall team wins the Big 12 Championship title while the 30 best runners, (15 from the men's race and 15 from the women's race) are named to the all-conference team. The Oklahoma State men and the Iowa State women won the conference title in 2013. The OSU men have won six Big 12 Conference Championship titles in-a-row and the ISU women have won three-straight Big 12 titles.

Women's

"We've got a really strong team," Harbour said. "We're the fourth ranked team in our conference right now. Iowa State and West Virginia are both top 10, Oklahoma State is in the 20s. We're right behind them, so, we've got a shot, but we're going to have to run really, really well."

The Cyclones have a three-year streak in conference titles. The Bears have placed second three times in the conference championship, but have never won the title. Harbour sees the tournament this weekend as an opportunity to finally claim the Big 12 crown.

"We've got to match up, know who their number one, know who their number two is and we've got to go get them. We've second three times, but we've never been able to pull it off. So, here we are in striking distance again."

One the Baylor's star runners from the women's side is senior Rachel Johnson. Johnson, like many of the cross country runners is part of the track team. Johnson had a very successful end to her track season during the summer. She looks to carry over her success in track to the cross country conference championship on Saturday.

Johnson and Harbour met before the season and agreed to have her race much less in the early part of the cross country season to rest and recover for the bigger cross country meets throughout the season. She said it was difficult sometimes to see her team line up for meets without her, but is thankful for the time off now.

"In my freshman year and sophomore year, I was always racing every single race," Johnson said. "So, it's really nice this year to race on fresher legs and bigger races."

Men's

Like the women's team with Iowa State, the men know who they're targeting and what their goal is. That is to beat Oklahoma State and eventually make it to the national championship meet.

"The goal that we've had all season is to make it to nationals, and [the Big 12 Cross Country Championship] is our big, big test to prove that we have what it takes to make it, at regionals," senior Jonathan Tijerina said.

For most of the season, the men's team has been led by freshman Eric Anderson. The senior runners usually follow Anderson's lead. Overall, it pushes the runners, regardless of age or classification, to be the best they can be, he said.

"It's great motivation," Tijerina said. "Freshman traditionally come in, run well and then sort of fizzle out towards the end of the season. Eric has held up really, really well. I think that this is a chance for us to again have great races and show what we can do."

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HOMECOMING MAIN EVENTS

FRIDAY, OCT. 31

CARILLON RECITAL

5 p.m. Be enchanted by the Homecoming recital from the McLane Carillon in the tower of Pat Neff Hall.

FRIDAY NIGHT FLASHBACK

5-10 p.m. Enjoy this showcase before making your way to Extravaganza and Bonfire.

EXTRAVAGANZA, PEP RALLY, BONFIRE, PIGSKIN REVUE

6-11:45 p.m. Enjoy a variety of family-friendly activities including food, rides, face-painting and more, in and around Fountain Mall. Pep Rally begins 9 p.m. Pigskin showtimes are 6:30 and 10:30 p.m. in Waco Hall.

SINGSPARATION

7 p.m. Seventh and James Baptist Church. Join in fellowship, worship and praise with the Baylor family, featuring the alumni choir.

Note: There will be ample parking for these events at the Ferrell Center. Shuttles to campus will run regularly.

SATURDAY, NOV. 1

PARADE

Also broadcast at 9 a.m. on KCEN (Channel 6)
8:30 a.m. Delight in the country's oldest and largest collegiate parade from downtown Waco to the campus. (Enjoy music and food in the SUB Bowl following the parade.)

REDEDICATION CEREMONY FOR THE GRANT TEAFF STATUE

11 a.m. After 12 years at Floyd Casey Stadium, the Grant Teaff statue has a new home along the *I Believe Walkway*, which connects campus to the Umphrey Pedestrian Bridge and the Stadium.

THE BEAR WALK

AND BAYLOR ALUMNI NETWORK TAILGATE

Noon Arrive early to welcome the team to the stadium and visit with friends at the Baylor Alumni Network Tailgate tent. Free food while it lasts.

FOOTBALL

3 p.m. Kansas vs. Baylor

PIGSKIN REVUE (New Time!)

8 p.m. Waco Hall. Enjoy the final performance of Pigskin.

HONOR CLASS REUNIONS

FRIDAY, OCT. 31

50th REUNION FOR HONOR CLASS OF 1964

4-7 p.m. Barfield Drawing Room, Bill Daniel Student Center

HERITAGE REUNION DINNER

5-7 p.m. Baylor Club, McLane Stadium for the classes of 1939, 1944, 1949, 1954 and 1959

HOMECOMING REUNION BUFFET

5-7 p.m. Baylor Club, McLane Stadium for the classes of 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009

SATURDAY, NOV. 1

REUNION PICNIC

Noon All Honor Classes will enjoy a come-and-go picnic at the stadium (located in the Baylor Alumni Network Tailgate tent).

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TO THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2014-15 BAYLOR UNIVERSITY MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Baylor alumni around the globe reflect the very best of Baylor University. The recipients of the 2014-2015 Baylor Meritorious Achievement Awards are:

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- Katie Jenkins Norris Young Alumna of the Year
- Jim and Jamie Thomas Loker Pro Ecclesia Medal of Service
- Will D. Davis Pro Texana Medal of Service
- Robert Pryor Contributions to the Professions in Medicine & Healthcare
- John Lee Hancock Contributions to the Professions in Media & Arts
- Pearl Beverly W.R. White Meritorious Service Award
- Bob and Joyce Packard Legendary Mentor Award
- Clyde Hart Distinguished Achievement Award
- Kate McLane Dimmitt Baylor Legacy Award
- Tom and Pat Powers Baylor Legacy Award
- Walter and Sheila Umphrey Baylor Legacy Award
- Gale and Connie Bird Galloway Baylor Founders Medal

HOMECOMING PARKING

A large crowd is expected for Homecoming 2014 and new parking procedures are in place. Visit baylor.edu/homecoming/parking for the most up-to-date information when making your plans.

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Special thanks to Baylor Chamber of Commerce for the many hours of work that have gone into preparation and execution of events for this very special weekend in the life of the University. Your dedication to Baylor and the Homecoming tradition truly reflects your motto: "Anything for Baylor."



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