

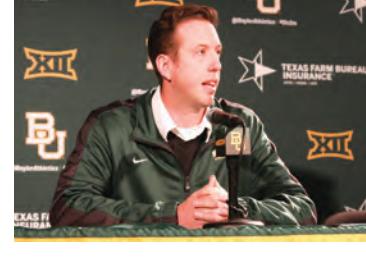
# sports

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## NEW COACHES, NEW ERA

Fresh leadership brings new life to athletic programs

**pg. D5**



## SUMMER BALL

Lady Bears play with national teams, win medals over summer break.

**pg. D2**

**“ I don’t apologize for what I said.”**

What was RGIII thinking? **pg. D4**

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**OVERVIEW >>Page D7**



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Lariat File Photo

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It's the start of another college football season and the Baylor Bears, fresh off a second consecutive Big 12 championship, are reloaded for another title run. The Bears also have a good chance to become one of the final four in the College Football Playoff, something that the Bears barely missed out on in 2014.

"We've used last season [as motivation]. We knew somebody would get fifth, we just didn't know it'd be us," head coach Art Briles said in an ESPN interview.

The playoff snub isn't the only source of motivation the Bears will have at their disposal coming into 2015. The last time Baylor took the field, they surrendered a 21-point lead to Michigan State in the Cotton Bowl, ultimately losing a 42-41 shootout.

"We're using [Cotton Bowl loss] as motivation. We've got a little extra fire going into this season," Briles said of the Cotton Bowl loss.

With this motivation teamed up alongside some of the best talent in college football, Baylor looks primed to make a powerful statement this year.

Offensive firepower has been the trademark of the Bears, ranking nationally in the top five offensively in both yards gained and points scored in the last two seasons. With nine starters returning on the offense, Baylor is predicted to be among the nation's elite offenses in 2015. The loss of quarterback Bryce Petty stands out.

One of the most successful Baylor quarterbacks ever, Petty led Baylor to consecutive Big 12 championships, two New Year's bowl games, and posted statistics that rank him second in school history in passing yards, touchdowns, and completion percentage. Baylor has shown the ability to plug in talent year in and year out and the quarterback position looks no different.

Seth Russell will be the man responsible for ushering in a new era of Baylor football at the head of the offense after having served as the backup for Petty the last couple of seasons and

head coach Art Briles believes he has been preparing for this moment for a long time.

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Russell will step into the starting quarterback role armed with a plethora of weapons as well as the entire starting offensive line from last season. Few first year starters can boast the experience that the junior signal caller has from playing over the years - including starting for an injured Petty last season against Northwestern State, a game where he threw for 438 yards and five touchdowns.

Among the aforementioned weapons is the dynamic wide receiving duo of junior Corey Coleman and sophomore K.D. Cannon, who combined for 2,149 yards and 19 touchdowns in 2014. Both players were named to the preseason watch list for the Biletnikoff Award, given to the nation's top receiver annually.

**FOOTBALL >> Page D7**

## Soccer to benefit from World Cup buzz, new facility

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With the U.S. Women's National Team capturing the Women's World Cup this summer, women's soccer has been in the spotlight a great deal in this country. Stars like Alex Morgan and Carli Lloyd are becoming increasingly popular in today's sports landscape for their great performances on the pitch. That spotlight can only create positive buzz for soccer around the nation and Waco.

The winning of the women's world cup fittingly coincides with the opening of one of Baylor's new sports facilities this season. The Williams Family Soccer and Olympic Sports Center, a \$3.3 million facility opens this fall as the Bears begin their season.

While the soccer craze in America tended to only last for a few months during the country's participation in the Men's and Women's World Cups, lately, Americans have shown a growing interest in the sport, with game attendance number increasing year by year. That new interest, combined with the Williams Family facilities, has increased the image and interest in women's soccer nationwide and at Baylor in general.

"We're blessed with what we have to help us keep up with what's going on in the

soccer world and the money that's being put into college soccer, college women's soccer especially," BU head coach Paul Jobson said. "[The facility] is a huge piece in keeping us up with some of the top programs in the country."

"I think now that we have some of the best facilities in the country, it does help with recruiting, especially going along with McLane stadium and the new track and field facility."

The draw of a new stadium and state of the art facilities helped the Lady Bears catch the attention of several recruits, bringing in a good size class. The 2015 recruiting class consists of 13 players, double that of the 2014 class, and Jobson believes that this athletic bunch will greatly help the program.

"They're a very athletic and fast class ... which are the type of kids we like in our system," Jobson said. "We're a fast and athletic program. We move the ball fast, we're an athletic team, we're a physical team and we are going to put pressure on your back."

Since the Women's World Cup was first played in 1991, the U.S. has won three times and has never finished lower than third place. The dominance continues to the Olympics, where women's soccer has been played since 1996 and America has won four of five

possible gold medals. Clearly America is the dominant country in women's soccer, which has led to higher viewings than ever before.

With the success of the USWNT carrying over to the youth and lower levels of women's soccer, it only strengthens the fan base and excitement for women's soccer at Baylor. Seeing successful teams also allow young people to strive to succeed in a sports atmosphere and become involved either as a fan or a player.

"Girls are going to come on to our campus and fall in love with that piece [Williams Family facility] as well as all the other pieces we have to offer with our program," Marci Jobson, assistant and wife to head coach Paul Jobson, said.

With the triumphant performance of the national team, the participation and attendance numbers for soccer players and fans will could see an increase.

"We are very excited about the future of Baylor Soccer under the Jobsons' leadership, and this state-of-the-art facility will afford the program first-class space and amenities," Director of Athletics Ian McCaw said.

The Bears are in action at 7 p.m. tonight at Betty Lou Mays Soccer Field against the Michigan State Spartans. The Bears look to capture their first conference title since 2012.



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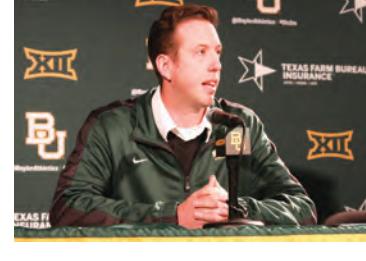
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# Wright, Small no longer on Mulkey's roster

**JOSHUA DAVIS**  
Sports Writer

The Lady Bears will have a slightly different look in the upcoming season after losing junior guards Imani Wright and Ieshia Small over the summer. Wright, a Texas-native, decided to transfer to Florida State after playing two seasons with the Bears. The 5-foot-9 guard, who started 31 of Baylor's 37 games last year, led the team in 3-pointers made with 43, while averaging 9.4 points and 3.2 rebounds per game.

She earned All-Big 12 Honorable Mention honors for her part in guiding the Lady Bears to a 33-4 overall record (16-2 in the Big 12) and clinching Baylor's fifth consecutive conference title. Per NCAA transfer rules, Wright will have two years of eligibility left starting in the 2016-17 year.

Ieshia Small also decided to make a move this summer, joining the Maryland Terrapins. Small, who is from Miami, averaged 2.6 points and 1.7 assists while playing in 28 games as a sophomore for the Lady Bears last season. Small will also sit out next season and have two years of eligibility remaining.

The transfer hurts the Lady Bears as they lose a player that was named All-Big 12 pre-season freshman of the year in 2013-14. A year earlier, she was tabbed a McDonald's All-American at Florida State University High School in Tallahassee.

Head coach Kim Mulkey's squad will also be without freshman post player Micayla Buckner who transferred to Collin County Community College. There have been speculations about

Buckner transferring in order to be closer to her family, as the school is located in McKinney, Texas - not far from Buckner's home in Richardson.

Buckner, a high school McDonald's All-American nominee, was in uniform for games but never saw any action on the floor at Baylor. Despite the losses, last year's Big 12 champs return key players to attempt to make another run at the title.

The Lady Bears have All-American junior forward Nina Davis and senior guard Niya Johnson to provide leadership. A member of this year's USA team in the World University Games, Davis averaged 20.7 points and 8.6 rebounds per game last year for the Lady Bears - leading Baylor to a spot in the NCAA Elite Eight.

All-Big 12 Honorable Mention in 2014, Niya Johnson will continue to be the catalyst as she ranks No. 1 on BU's single-season assist chart with 322. She finished with 7.2 points and 8.8 assists per game last year.

With the subtractions of Imani Wright and Ieshia Small, junior guard Alexis Prince (8.2 points per game 4.1 assists per game) and sophomore guard Kristy Wallace (7.8 points per game 2.3 assists per game) can expect additional playing time. The extra year of experience under their belt and added minutes should translate into improved numbers this season.

Junior post Khadijah Cave appears to be slotted in the starting lineup as well this season for the Lady Bears. Last season, she averaged 10.5 points and 5.1 rebounds per game. With the losses of graduating senior Sune Agbuke and



Lariat File Photo

**LADY BEAR NO MORE** Former Lady Bear Imani Wright dribbles the ball in the team's NCAA Elite Eight matchup against Notre Dame on March 29 in Oklahoma City. The Lady Bears lost 77-68.

transferring freshman Micayla Buckner, the low post appears to be all hers this year.

The Lady Bears look to improve upon last year's 33-4 record that saw Baylor win the Big 12 and go on to reach the Elite Eight in the NCAA tournament, where they eventually lost to Notre

Dame. Baylor previously knocked off Iowa 81-66 in the Round of 16.

The Lady Bears look to defend their Big 12 title as the team opens the 2015-16 season on Nov. 3 against Texas A&M-Commerce at the Ferrell Center. No time has been set for tipoff.

# Davis, Wallace earn international medals

**JOSHUA DAVIS**  
Sports Writer

Lady Bears forward Nina Davis, a junior, won some jewelry this summer - a gold medal at the World University Games in South Korea. The 5-foot-11 All-American experienced quite the ride as she helped team USA go undefeated en route to an 82-63 victory over Canada in the championship game.

"[The experience] is definitely one of a kind," Davis said. "It's something I always dreamed of

and wanted to do, and now I have. It was everything I thought it would be and more."

Davis becomes the second Lady Bear to earn gold at the World University Games behind former teammate Odyssey Sims who won in 2011 and 2013.

Davis averaged five points, shooting 60 percent from the floor, while grabbing 2.8 rebounds in 10.5 minutes of action in the tournament.

"Being able to play on the USA team and represent your country [at that level] is an opportunity that many people don't get to do," Da-

vis said. "It was such a blessing to be a part of."

Baylor teammate Kristy Wallace also got the chance to perform on the international stage as a member of team Australia in the 2015 FIBA U19 Women's World Championship in Russia.

Wallace helped guide team Australia to a bronze medal in a 69-62 win over Spain in the third-place game.

The sophomore guard finished second on the team with ten points per game, while leading the Gems in assists with 3.6 per game.

This marks the second year in a row that

Wallace has represented Australia on the international level.

Last year, she took part in the 2014 FIBA Oceania U18 Championship for Women where she averaged 11.8 points and 3.2 assists per game.

Her play last year helped the Gems qualify for this summer's tournament.

Both players were able to gain experience that could prove useful for the Lady Bears coming off of their fifth straight Big 12 title last season. summer to the team.

**Wear it with pride.**



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# Congratulations Official Baylor University Ring Recipients!

The Official Baylor University Ring is a visible symbol of a graduate's affiliation with other members of the Baylor family and demonstrates, wherever it is worn, a lifelong link with the University. The students listed below are the latest group that were presented with their rings during the Spring ring ceremony in May by Judge Starr. Congratulations!

PAULO ABALOS	HASSAN DAGHA	CYNTHIA HINOJOSA	COLE MOORE	ABBY SHIAPARD
KATHERINE ABBOTT	ASHLEY DAVIS	DEMI HODAM	ALLY MORA	AUSTEN SHEAROUSE
KIMBERLEE AKUNA	BRANDII RÉANN DAVIS	HALLIE HOFFMAN	ANN MORRISON	CHRISTIAN SHEEHAN
ANDREW ALLEN	KAYLA RENÉ DAVIS	MICHELLE HÖLIK	SARAH MULLINS	RACHEL SHRIVER
JACOB ANGEL	RACHEL DESROSIERS	FORREST HOLLAND	MASON MULLOY	JACOB SHUMAN
MARIO ANGELES	LINDSEY DUCKWORTH	JON HOLTER	DANIEL MUNIZ	EMILIE SIMS
SKYLER BAKKEN	ELIGA DUPREE	MITCHELL HOWELL	MOLLIE MUSGROVE	ANDREW SMITH
BRIELLE BANKS	DOMINIC EDWARDS	JESSE HUGHES	ZACHARY NAIL	BROOKLYN SMITH
JENNIFER BARLOW	ALYSSA ESQUIVEL-GRAMMER	COLBY HUTH	RACHEL NANKERVIS	SHELBY SPANIEL
CODY BARRETT	ANDREW ESTRADA	KATHERINE HYKEL	MATTHEW NELSON	TIMOTHY SPARKS
JUSTYN BARTHE	SYDNEY EVANS	ANNELISE INGRAM	SHANTHA NITHIANANDA	MASON SPEARS
ARDEN BECKHAM	ASHLEY FAHNESTOCK	GILLIAN JACKSON	MARGARET O'BRIEN	BLAKE ST. LOUIS
EMILY BEISERT	JORDAN FAMA	JEFFREY JAMES	ALEX OESTREICH	PHILLIP STEPHENS
KYLER BEISERT	ANTHONY FARFAN	JUSTIN JANIA	SHANNON O'FARRELL	EMILY STEWART
AMANDA BEZILLA	REMY FARIS	CAMERON JENKINS	KRISTEN OLSON	RACHAEL STUHR
JESSICA BINZ	SEAN FLYNN	STEVEN JENSEN	BLAKE OLVERA	STEVEN STURDIVANT
ANDRES BIZZARRI	CHRISTINA FOJTIK	WENJING JIANG	NICOLE ORDONEZ	CALEB SUMPTER
JACOB BLYTHE	KAYLA FOLLIS	RUOYI JIANG	CHASE OWEN	LANDON SWARTZ
AUSTIN BRAKEBILL	SARAH FORSMAN	KYNDALL JIRASEK	SHERWIN OWIESY	RICHMONT SY
KATHERINE BRAUDRICK	TIMOTHY FOSTER	CARIN JOHNSON	CHELSEA PANGBURN	HUNTER TAYLOR
TIMOTHY BRESTOWSKI	ASHLYN FOSTER	NICHOLAS JONES	STEPHANIE PARDO	JOHN TEASDALE
ALEXANDER BROWN	MCKINLEY FREEMAN	JAMES JONES	JOHN PARKER	JEFFREY THOMPSON
BRENT BROWN	CHRISTOPHER FURSH	AUSTIN JONES	AMANDA PEARSON	LYDIA TOAYS
JUSTIN BROWNE	ERIN GADDIS	ANGEL JORDAN	DANIEL PELLEGREN	OLGA TOBIAS
CORINNE BRUTON	VIRGINIA GALLARDO	JONATHAN JOSEPH	REGINALD PELTIER	ABELARDO TORRES
TIEN BUI	LINDSEY GALLIA	HANNA KAITILAKOSKI	GUS PENNING	JESSIE TRESPESSES
KRISTIN BURNS	ANGELICA GARCIA	CHAD KELLEY	DEANDREA PEREZ	CHRIS TURNER
ETHAN BURSON	LUKE GARNER	APRIL KELLY	COLLIN PLOTT	JAMISON VENEGAS
HANNAH BYFORD	JACOB GARNER	CIERRA KING	JOY POGHISIO	MARIA VILLAIWA
CHRISTOPHER BYRD	VICTORIA GARZA	BENJAMIN KIRK	ZACHARY POSEY	VINCENT VILLARREAL
MATTHEW CAHILL	CELESTE GARZA	DANIEL KNIGHT	JESSICA PREE	STEVEN VIRGIL
BRENDA CAMACHO	VICTOR GARZA	CODY KOELEMAY	DALLAS PRICE	ZACHARY WALKER
BRANDON CANTU	ERIC GATES	KATIE KOLEAS	JARROD PRYOR	KIRSTEN WALKER
ALEXIS CARDENAS	REILLY GEISLER	JOHN KOU	MARINA PUENTE	RYAN WALLACE
KATHILEEN CARMODY	SAKINA GEORGE	TROY KRAMER	DANIEL RAGER	AMBREEA WARREN
AMANDA CARRILLO	RACHEL GERLACH	AKARI KUSUNOKI	PATRICIA RAYNOLDS	TRAVIS WATSON
ALILISON CARRINGTON	CLAY GILMER	MARCUS LAKOS	JESSICA REDEMAN	TIM WATSON
KATHERINE CARRIVEAU	ANTHONY GONZALES	JAMES LANDES	LINCOLN REDMON	JAZMINE WELLS
DAVID CARTER	ANJEANETTE GONZALEZ	BRADY LATIMER	JOSEPH REED	CLAYTON WELLS
BENJAMIN CARTER	ASHLEIGH GRANTHAM	STEPHEN LELAND	MEGAN REHM	WILLIAM WESSON
JOSEPH CAVICCHI	BRIAN GRASCHEL	KYLE LILLY	JOSHUA REMINGTON	CHRISTIAN WHITE
DAVID CHANCE	TIFFANY GUILLOT	CARLOS LLANES	ERIK RIDDLERBARGER	WHITNEY WICK
DUSTIN CHEUNG	JOSEPH GUINN	SHEY LOPEZ	ANNA RIVAS	JUSTIN WICKER
JENNI CHILTON	DAVID GUTHRIE	HENRY LUJAN	WILLIAM ROBERTS	LINDA WILKINS
MARVIN CHIZER	ANA GUZMAN	ROGAN LY	FLETCHER ROBERTS	JOHN WILLIAMS
DOMINIC CHO	OMAR HALILAH	KATIE MACKENZIE	MATTHEW ROBERTS	DEREK WILLIAMS
JOONHO CHOI	THOMAS HAMMAN	KRISHAN MAGAN	LAUREN RODRIGUEZ	LAUREN WILLIAMSON
GRANT CLINKINGBEARD	COLE HANSEN	KATHLEEN MARCOS	DIEGO RODRIGUEZ	MARK WILLIARD
COURTNEY CLINTSMAN	KATELYN HARGROVE	LAUREN MARTIN	PAMELA RUFFNER	KATHLEEN WINTERS
RYAN COLSON	BLADE HARMEL	HEATHER MARTINEZ	NADDA RUNGRUANGPHOL	ALEX WOODBY
JUSTIN COMER	MFGHAN HARPER	SUL FI MAN MASUMBUKO	COLIN RUSKA	DUSTIN WRIGHT
COLBY CONNER	JORDAN HATLER	BRYAN MATTINGLY	CINDY SALAZAR	SAMANTHA WRIGHT
DANNY COOPER	KINDRA HEINRICH	DEVAN MAYER	ANDREW SANCHEZ	KRISTIN YOUNG
GRANT COPPINGER	JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ	CURTIS MAYO	STUART SATTERFIELD	MEGAN ZAKOUR
VICTORIA CORLEY	AMY HERNANDEZ	SARAH MCCANTS	STEPHANIE SCHAEFER	MELANIE ZEBALLOS
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VICTORIA COX	KODY HESSEMER	MEGAN MCDONALD	KELCY SCHMIDT	
LEIGH CURL	KATHLIN HESTER	MICHAEL MILLARD	KAYLYN SCHULTZ	
COLIN CURLEE	MARSHALL HICKMAN	LIANNE MITROWSKI	ROBERT SEAMAN	

*"God Bless Baylor and all who wear her ring."*

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# Petty, others strap on new uniforms

Former Bears compete for playing time in new league

**TYLER CAGLE**

Sports Writer

Four of the biggest assets of Baylor's 2014 football campaign are looking to make their names known at the professional level this season. With only two players drafted last season - quarterback Bryce Petty (fourth round, New York Jets) and linebacker Bryce Hager (seventh round, St. Louis Rams) - Baylor also saw receivers Antwan Goodley and Levi Norwood picked up as undrafted free agents by the Dallas Cowboys and the Chicago Bears, respectively.

Bryce Petty was the fifth quarterback and 103rd overall player selected in the 2015 NFL draft by the New York Jets. Although the Jets boast arguably the worst quarterback situation in the league, head coach Todd Bowles admitted that Petty was not selected as an immediate savior.

"He's got a lot to learn," Bowles said. "We're not looking forward for him to be a starter right now."

While Geno Smith returned to the team as the No. 1 starter, he will begin the season on the injury list with a broken jaw after being sucker punched by former teammate IK Enemkpali.

This opens the door for Petty to take hold of the backup position behind Ryan Fitzpatrick, who was traded to New York from the Houston Texans in the offseason.

Coming out of Waco, one of the biggest concerns surrounding Petty is his ability to transition from Baylor's up-tempo, no huddle offense to that of a slower, pro-style game.

On Petty's performance in camp, Bowles said he needs work "understanding the defense, recognizing where to go with the football, commanding the



Rick Osentoski | AP Exchange

Detroit Lions defensive end Devin Taylor, left, and defensive tackle Caraun Reid sack New York Jets quarterback Bryce Petty during the first half of an NFL preseason football game, Aug. 13, in Detroit.

game and having better clock presence."

Petty is still a work in progress for New York, and while he is certainly improving, he will not be looked to play immediately if the Jets can help it, Bowles said.

Hager was selected in the seventh round and the 224th selection overall by the St. Louis Rams, who already possess possibly the best front seven in the NFL.

Hager is competing for the backup role to James Laurinaitis, who has served as the Rams' starting linebacker since his

rookie season in 2009. Laurinaitis has been one

of the most consistent and healthy linebackers in the NFL over his six seasons but depth has always been a problem in St. Louis.

Hager led the Rams with seven tackles in a preseason game against the Oakland Raiders. With play like this, Hager can certainly compete for a roster spot and contribute on either special teams or as a steady backup.

Goodley was picked up by the Dallas Cowboys and is tasked with competing for the fifth receiver spot on the roster. Goodley initially showed plenty of promise and quickly rose to prominence within the Cowboys' camp.

"Goodley isn't the talent that Percy Harvin is, but he can be used in some of the same, creative ways," said Lance Zierlein of NFL.com.

"However, a recent hamstring injury has severely crippled Goodley's chance of making

the team, with other free agent signees Lucky Whitehead and Nick Harwell moving up the ladder of the Cowboys' receiver depth chart."

Levi Norwood was signed by the Chicago Bears and has been in competition for a spot on the roster as well. With the injury to the Bears' first round draft pick, Kevin White, the opportunity for another wide out on the roster is up for grabs.

Norwood has yet to register a catch in the preseason and is listed as the last receiver on the Bears' depth chart but still has a good chance to make the squad as a returner. At Baylor, Norwood was the first team punt returner and took reps as a kick returner as well.

If he can make the transition to the NFL as a returner, he has a very good chance to be one of the last 53 for week one.

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**Sports**

Baylor volleyball players celebrate a big point in the team's 3-1 loss to then-No. 2 Texas on Nov. 19, 2014 at the Ferrell Center. The Bears took the opening set, 25-21.

## New Slate: McGuyre brings new energy to volleyball program

**JOSHUA DAVIS**  
Sports Writer

Last December, Baylor fired head volleyball coach Jim Barnes, who coached 11 years at Baylor and compiled a record of 181-170 – the most wins in program history. The change to the new coaching staff came as a shock to some, but first year head coach Ryan McGuyre and his players have seemingly had a smooth transition.

"It's been a lot of fun," senior setter Amy Rosenbaum said. "It's really different and so fast paced, but honestly it's the first time that I've enjoyed working hard."

The former NAIA Men's and Women's National Coach of the Year has an optimistic outlook for a squad that has suffered two straight losing seasons. McGuyre will bring his expertise and attempt to lead the Bears to a successful season.

"We know the principles and things we need to do to take us to the next level," McGuyre said.

McGuyre is trying to implement the same system of winning that made Baylor Director of

Athletics Ian McCaw so confident in his ability to achieve a championship level of play.

"Ryan is a truly exceptional coach, recruiter, leader and mission fit. We look forward to him building a championship program at Baylor," McCaw said.

The intensity of the new head coach is apparent by his practice schedules. Senior outside hitter Andie Malloy is excited about all of the extra work being put in to improve this team from a year ago.

"[The practices] average about three hours... but it's definitely worth it," Malloy said.

The Bears' first game will be played on Aug. 28 as they participate in the Rams Volleyball Classic tournament in Colorado. After the tournament, the team will return home to play their first home game on Sept. 4. After a successful spring and hard-working summer, McGuyre said his squad will be ready to go.

"We'll be ready. We're young in some positions but I like how the young ones are progressing and I'm pretty confident," McGuyre said.

## BU Baseball names new head coach over summer offseason

**TYLER CAGLE**  
Sports Writer

After 21 seasons with Steve Smith at the helm of Baylor Baseball, it became time for a change. Steve Rodriguez has been hired as the new head coach of the Bears in June. Smith managed the Bears to a 686-469-1 record during his tenure as the Baylor coach but after 3 consecutive losing seasons following a conference title in 2012, Rodriguez was called in to bring new life to Baylor Baseball.

"Steve is a dynamic leader, players' coach, tireless recruiter and wonderful mission fit for our program. His highly successful coaching career and major league baseball playing experience will afford our student-athletes

a rewarding experience as we build a championship program," athletic director Ian McCaw said of Coach Rodriguez, who was a coach for the Pepperdine Waves since 2004.

Rodriguez, who posted a record of 400-301 during his tenure as the Waves' manager, comes to Waco with the hope of revitalizing the program after a 23-32 season last year.

"It's going to depend on the players," Rodriguez said. "We are going to work hard. If we win right now, great. All I know is we are going to get better. Whether it is a little bit or a lot, that is going to be depending on how fast our learning curve can be."

*"All I know is we are going to get better.*

*Whether it is a little bit or a lot, that is going to be depending on how fast our learning curve can be."*

Steve Rodriguez | Head Coach

Rodriguez said.

That type of hype and transparency in both the fan base and student community can help Rodriguez improve the team simply by getting people in the seats and supporting the program. If that can attract a proven coach to Waco, it can surely attract recruits and fans to Baylor Ballpark.

Coach Rodriguez looks to bring not only a new brand and new level of excitement to Waco this upcoming season. With the Bears posting a 16-12 record in Waco, Baylor only went 5-15 in true away games, a trend that will need to be improved upon in order for the Bears to compete with the likes of TCU and Oklahoma State for the top of the Big 12.

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# RGIII: Let the playing do the talking

**JOSHUA DAVIS**  
Sports Writer

What was Robert Griffin III thinking? Those words probably best describe most sports fans' reactions after getting caught up in the media frenzy caused by the outspoken Washington Redskins quarterback for his exceedingly bold assertion during an interview with WJLA-TV.

## SPORTS TAKE

"I don't feel like I have to come out here and show anybody anything or why I'm better than this guy or better than that guy," said Griffin.

"It's more about going out and affirming that for me, I go out and I play; I know I'm the best quarterback on this team."

I feel like I'm the best quarterback in the league and I have to go out and show that."

For a guy with three seasons in the NFL, whose stats have gotten progressively worse, it seems like such an erroneous claim to make.

When I first heard this quote out of context, my immediate reaction was, "Why?"

I'd like for him to show me something before he proclaims himself as one of the best in the league, if not the best.

How can the former Heisman winner from Baylor University believe he is the best quarterback in the league?

Maybe he was the best player in college football in 2011, but this is 2015 and he's certainly not the best player in the NFL now.

This is a guy who's total quarterback rating last season would've ranked 29 out of 32 (Griffin, who only played in nine games last season, didn't have enough pass attempts to actually qualify on the list).

But let's face it; Griffin hasn't always handled the media well in terms of saying things that avoid making headlines. Baylor head coach Art

Briles knows this all too well.

"He's always had a way of stating his opinion that can be misinterpreted and we've always talked about that and dealt with it," said Briles.

"But that's a part of the position he's in, when you're an elite athlete and known across the nation, you have to be conscious of what you're saying and how it's going to be interpreted."

Briles could not be more precise. Griffin realizes the spotlight he's under and there's no doubt in my mind that he knew what attention his statement would bring.

The ex-Baylor QB needs to learn how to conduct himself since so many eyes are watching him.

So what does Briles think about his bold statement?

"He's not going to mince words about it ... he means what he's saying and you're talking to a guy (Briles) that's going to support him 100 percent," said Briles.

"If he feels [like he's the best quarterback in the league], then that's the way I feel."

Let me just say this now:

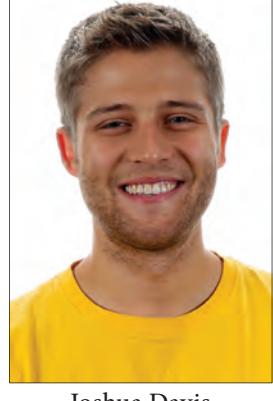
I bleed Green and Gold just like Griffin and Briles, and will always have a rooting interest for Baylor alumni in professional sports, no matter the team.

However, I also drink from the cup of reality, and to think that Griffin is on the same level of an Aaron Rodgers, Tom Brady, or a Peyton Manning is entirely ludicrous.

However, when looking at the quote in its entirety, I actually don't believe Griffin meant exactly what the expedient media portrayed him to mean.

Take a look at the rest of the 25-year-old quarterback's statement...

"Any athlete at any level, if they concede



Joshua Davis

to someone else, they're not a top competitor, they're not trying to be the best that they can be," said Griffin.

"There's guys in this league that have done way more than me. But I still view myself as the best because that's what I work toward every single day."

Now that's undoubtedly an honorable goal and I wish him all the luck in the world in accomplishing that feat.

I absolutely feel that there's some validity in that statement in regards to competitiveness.

After all, in order to reach the highest pinnacle of success, quarterbacks and all players for that matter in the NFL have to be emboldened with an inordinate amount of competitive drive – which Griffin has without a doubt.

So all Redskins fans should be happy to hear their quarterback exuding with confidence, right? Not exactly.

I get what he was saying about being competitive but completely disagree with him uttering those words.

You just don't make that kind of statement in the name of professionalism. Ex-NFL player, head coach and ESPN NFL analyst Herm Edwards also had some things to say on the matter in a recent interview with ESPN.

"I've always said this: 'praise others, never praise yourself'. [Praising others is] up to the head coach. I've always told players that I'll take care of them if they're playing [well]. That's my job. [They] just go play quarterback," Edwards said.

Edwards statement makes perfect sense and I agree with it 100 percent. Griffin should follow that advice for the rest of his career and learn from the quarterbacks at the top of the game.

Look at the best quarterbacks in the league

– Rodgers, Brady, and Manning – and how they handle themselves in the media. Sure, deep down every one of them feels the same way about being the best, because they're competitors... but they'll never say it.

They know how to conduct themselves around the media and say all the right things – the definitions of consummate professionals.

With that being said, Griffin still has a long way to go before he can be considered as one of the best quarterbacks in the league.

I'm talking about his game and his professionalism.

Redskins head coach Jay Gruden knows he will need the 2012 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year to perform well this year.

"He has to go out and prove it and stay healthy and then continue to play," said Gruden.

"The whole thing about great quarterbacks and top-notch quarterbacks is they're durable, and they do it year in and year out, game in and game out."

We have to do our best to keep him healthy, and he has to do his best to perform."

That will be the key – keeping Griffin healthy, who has not proven to be very resistant to injury in his first three NFL seasons.

In his rookie campaign, he was able to throw for 20 touchdowns and just five interceptions.

Since then, he hasn't produced anywhere near the same level of success in the NFL.

By making such an audacious claim, Griffin seemingly ordered his own ultimatum which could signify this as a do-or-die season for the former No. 2 pick.

Only time will tell if he can make improvements to his game and learn to handle the spotlight as a professional.

History is against him.

But we've seen guys make the necessary changes before it was too late.

He just needs to play the game and talk less.

## Bromell to run in international contest

Baylor track and field sprinter Trayvon Bromell will compete as a member of Team USA at the IAAF World Championships, which runs Saturday through Aug. 30 in Beijing, China.

After earning a spot on the national team by placing second in the 100 meters

with a time of 9.96 (0.0m/s) at June's USATF Outdoor Championships, Bromell will start his world run Saturday at 6:20

a.m. CT. Lane assignments for the heats of the 100-meters will be determined once preliminary round action is concluded earlier Saturday.

By his qualifying time, Bromell will not have to run in that preliminary action.

Broadcast television coverage of Bromell's races can be seen on tape delay at 2 p.m. CT Saturday and noon CT Sunday.

Last year, Bromell won the 100-meter

title at the USA Junior Championships in a wind-legal 10.07 and took the NCAA crown in a wind-aided 9.97.

Bromell is also slated to be a part of the United States' 4x100-meter relay quartet, which would run Friday at 11:20 p.m. CT.

*This story was an original release from the official Baylor Athletics website, BaylorBears.com.*

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**Sports**

# Athletics schedule full of marquee matchups

**JOSHUA DAVIS & TYLER CAGLE**  
Sports Writer

With the start of another school year at Baylor comes the start of the Bears and Lady Bears' athletic schedules. Football, volleyball, women's soccer, and preseason basketball all provide great and exciting match ups for students to come support their Baylor Bears. Let's take a look at the games across the Baylor landscape.

Baylor football returns after posting an 11-2 record in 2014, winning a second consecutive Big 12 championship. While every game in football is important and offers postseason implications, here's a look at Baylor's biggest games:

On Saturday, November 14, the Oklahoma Sooners come to Waco after losing the past two contests by a combined score of 89-26. The Baylor offense has absolutely torched the Sooner defense recently, averaging 501 yards against the Sooners, while holding Oklahoma to 278 yards over the same span. When Bob Stoops brings his squad to McLane Stadium, the Bears will have already played eight games, so look for the offense to be at full power and explosiveness, barring any injuries or setbacks.

Friday, November 27 is also a key date as it

marks the rematch everyone in the nation has been waiting for. The Bears will travel to Amon G. Carter Stadium in Fort Worth to take on the TCU Horned Frogs in what will surely be a bloodbath unlike any other. TCU will look for revenge against the Bears after Baylor won last years game in one of more thrilling college football games of the season, if not the decade.

After trailing by 21 in the fourth quarter, the Bears reeled off 21 unanswered points to tie and kicked the winning field goal as time expired to win 61-58. First year head volleyball coach Ryan McGuyre looks to give Baylor its first winning season in three years as he takes over at the helm. His impressive coaching resume at the NAIA level, as well as his time spent as an assistant at Florida State have many people feeling good about the new addition.

The Lady Bears' first match is scheduled for Aug. 28 against No. 12 Colorado State in the Rams Volleyball Classic tournament in Colorado. After the tournament, the team will return home to play their first home game on Sep. 4 versus Sam Houston State.

The next ranked opponent on the Lady Bears' schedule is a home match against Texas on Oct. 7 at 6 p.m. CT. That game will be the first home

game versus a preseason ranked opponent. The Longhorns are currently ranked No. 3 in the nation after their 27-3 record last year.

Women's soccer is back for an eighth season under head coach Paul Jobson. The soccer team finished the 2014 season with a 9-8-3 record. Armed with a young, athletic squad and with the Williams Family facilities opening up for this year, excitement and expectations for 2015 are high.

Friday, October 30 - The West Virginia Mountaineers come to Waco for the final game of the regular season. West Virginia had great success last season, finishing 2014 with a 16-2-4 record and winning its second consecutive Big 12 Tournament.

Returning for West Virginia is sophomore forward Michaela Abam, who ranked 4th in conference goals. However, Baylor's notoriously stingy defense will be very difficult to penetrate, as the Lady Bears only allowed 16 goals during 2014.

The Baylor men's basketball team returns this year after a 24-10 record (11-7 in the Big 12). The Bears are lead this season by seniors Rico Gathers and Taurean Prince.

Gathers, a first team All-Big 12 selection last

season, will look to continue his bruising style that helped him average 11.7 points and 11.6 rebounds per game for the Bears.

Prince, who received second team All-Big 12 honors last year has many experts believing his numbers will rise from a season ago where he averaged 13.9 points per game (which led the Bears) and 5.6 rebounds per game.

Baylor's schedule is impressive, in that it features 16 games against 2015 NCAA Tournament teams. The Bears open the season on Nov. 13 with a home game against Stephen F. Austin, a team that went 29-5 last season. Baylor played SFA last year in a game that they won 67-51.

After the opening home game, the Bears will take to the road to play Oregon, as part of the ESPN College Hoops Tipoff Marathon. That game will be played on Monday, Nov. 16, and will tip off at 10:30 p.m. CT on ESPN2.

Two additional December matchups that present a good level of competition are games against Vanderbilt and Texas A&M. The Bears will play the Commodores on Dec. 6 at the Ferrell Center and travel down for a meeting against Texas A&M on Dec. 19.

Game times and television networks are still to be determined for those games.

## FOOTBALL from Page D1

Senior tight end LaQuan McGowan (6-foot-7, 410 pounds), also returns in a more developed role.

"He's an extremely athletic guy and that's what made us [move him to tight end]," said Briles. "We've got this big, huge person that has good skills and we understand that we're living in 2035 and this is an experiment... but we also understand that we have to take the opportunity to use him to help our team win."

Baylor also returns its entire starting offensive line from the second half of the 2014 season. According to first year offensive coordinator Kendal Briles, this could be one of the best offenses, not only in school history, but in the nation as well.

Baylor is one of only seven programs among 'Power 5' schools to return all five starters on the offensive line. Led by senior left tackle Spencer Drango, an All-American in 2014, and junior center Kyle Fuller, the offensive line will look to continue producing an offensive onslaught that ranked first in the nation in yards per game and

points per game.

Another returnee in junior running back Shock Linwood. Linwood ran for 1,252 yards and 16 touchdowns in the 2014 campaign and will once again be the feature back in a stable of rushers consisting of sophomore Johnny Jefferson and junior Devin Chafin, who combined for 907 yards and 14 touchdowns.

In the past four seasons, the Bears have lowered opposing teams' averages in yards per carry and rushing yards per game, while increasing their production in the sack category. For the Bears to win the Big 12 and be considered National Title contenders, they will need to continue their upward trend on defense.

The defensive improvements are mainly thanks to the nationally recognized corps of defensive linemen assembled under Defensive Coordinator Phil Bennett. The D-line has developed to the point that many experts are including Baylor in discussions for the best in the country. Bennett, however, believes it's a little early to be making such claims.

"They're all really good players but as they well know, projections don't mean anything... you have to go out and prove it," said Bennett.

At the forefront of the defense is mammoth senior defensive end Shawn Oakman (6-foot-9, 280 pounds). Oakman looks to expand upon his record-setting season in 2014 (11 sacks – school single-season best).

Another member on that list is last season's 1st Team All-Big 12 junior nose tackle Andrew Billings. Head Coach Art Briles thinks this group of linemen, led by Oakman, Billings and senior defensive tackle Beau Blackshear, can be a force.

Senior defensive end Jamal Palmer, who suffered an ACL tear last season, said he'll be ready to go for 2015. Palmer joins a loaded lineup on the defensive line.

"This reminds me of 2013," said Bennett. "We've got guys that have played a lot of games and we have a lot of [depth]. It gives us a lot of possibilities."

With the losses of Bryce Hager and Collin

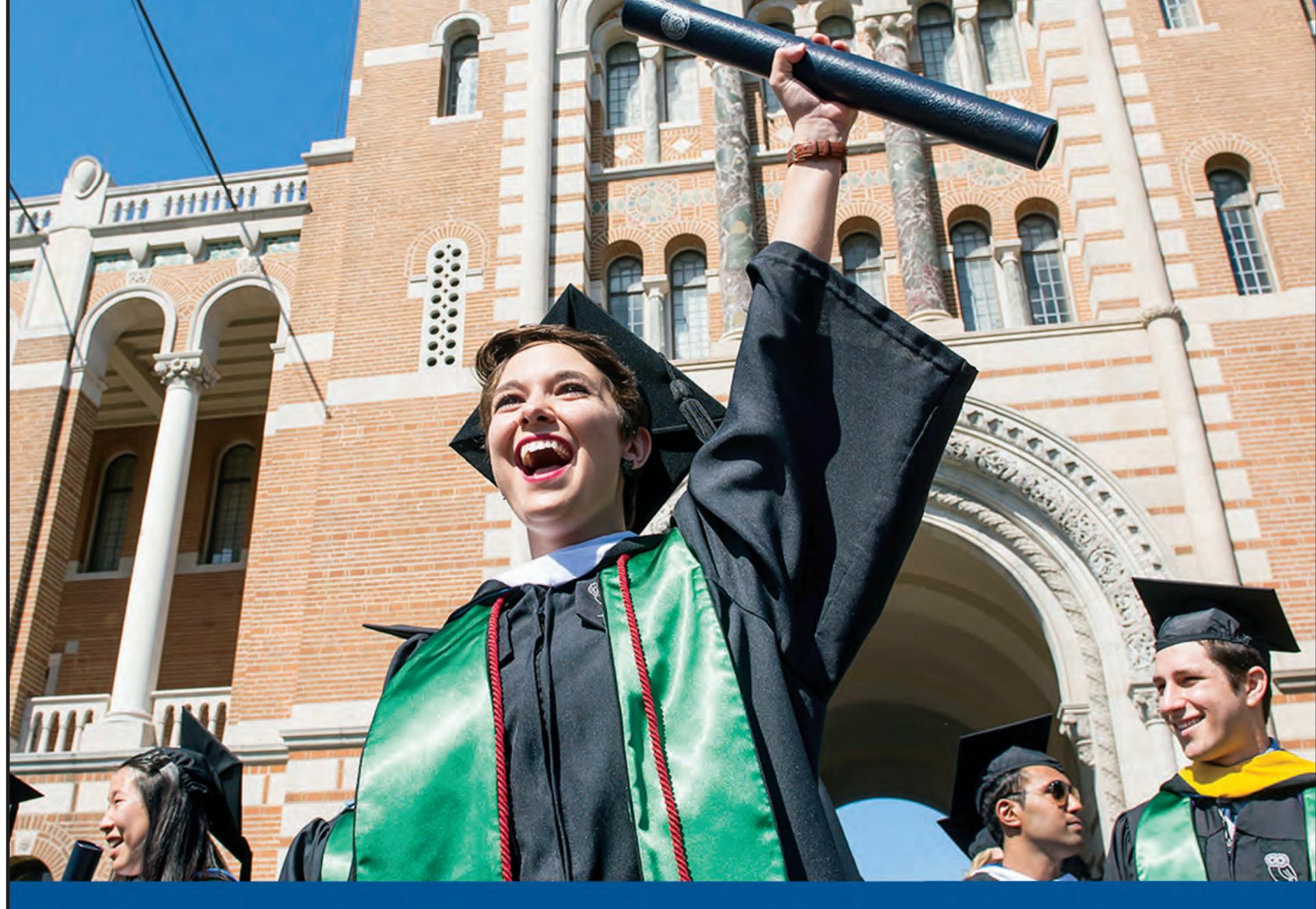
Brence, 2014's No. 1 and No. 4 tacklers for the Bears respectively, sophomore linebacker Taylor Young will have an even greater load on his shoulders this season. Bennett is not worried about Young's progression though.

2nd-Team All-Big 12 safety Orion Stewart, a junior, can help Young lead the Bears' secondary. The two-year veteran caught a team-leading four interceptions and was effective in stopping the run game as he ended the year third on the team with 6.2 tackles per game.

Expectations are high with a team returning 18 starters (9 offense, 9 defense), but there are first-year players at crucial positions this season and the Bears' success depends on their production. Fortunately for Baylor fans, the new starters will have time to acclimate themselves before the heavyweight matchups come to fruition.

"The Big 12 is tough," Briles said. "It's hard to play nine rival games year in and year out. It's a hard schedule and if you go through the Big 12 without a blemish on your record, then you're in [the College Football Playoff]."

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