



# re•demp•tion

Giving a new definition to Baylor football

**Season recap:**  
pg. 2

From the Mustangs to the Mountaineers, the Bears have faced challenges offensively and defensively.

**Photo highlights:** pg. 3

Check out these epic moments from the 2016 football season.

**Player spotlight:**  
pg. 4

Hard work has paid off for several standout players this year.

**Faces from the sidelines:** pg. 5

The football team has drawn from the support of the marching band, cheerleaders, fans and coaches.

Cover photos by Liesje Powers | Photo Editor and Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer  
Photo illustration by McKenna Middleton | Page One Editor

# Tale of two seasons

NATHAN KEIL  
Sports Writer

The best news for Baylor football may be the fact that 2016 is almost over.

By now, the Baylor story is well known across the country. Former head football coach Art Briles was fired back May 26. Athletic director Ian McCaw was suspended then resigned. President Ken Starr was fired. All of these events transpired as a result of a Title IX investigation by the Philadelphia-based law firm Pepper Hamilton which revealed Baylor's failure as an institution to in handling of sexual assault cases.

Baylor began to try to restore the health of the program and campus community. It started by bringing in Mack Rhoades as the new athletic director. They also hired former Wake Forest head coach Jim Grobe to serve as acting head coach for the 2016 season, but kept the rest of Briles' coaching staff intact. Dr. David Garland of George W. Truett Seminary was named interim president for the second time in his career at Baylor.

The Bears also had to deal with suspensions to junior safety Chance Waz and sophomore wide receiver Ishmael Zamora. Freshman quarterback Jarrett Stidham transferred out, and sophomore running back Johnny Jefferson stepped away from the team as well.

Grobe seemingly walked into a minefield – having to maneuver his way through a series of obstacles and decisions that he had no say in. He was brought in to “restore confidence in integrity and respect.” Winning was important but was supposed to take a backseat to reshaping and restoring the program.

“That’s the thing we’ve lost. It’s really sad when the behavior of a few affects so many people. The collateral damage that comes from bad behavior of just a few kids is overwhelming,” Grobe said when he was introduced as acting head coach. “I want everybody to know that we have great kids. I’m sure I’ll have a few guys that I’ve got to dust off once in a while, but that’s on every football team. I’m okay with guys that are a little edgy, if it’s missing class or getting parking tickets, things like that. But we have to have a no-tolerance policy right now with bad behavior. Winning is very important, being good students is very important, but nothing is more important than character.”

Even with Grobe’s hiring and the attempt to move in a positive direction, the news that transpired over the summer still crippled the Baylor community and shocked the college football world. By the time August rolled around, amidst all the turmoil, players and coaches alike were ready to get back to football. With its play on the field early on, despite all the changes in leadership and at the university, Baylor was out to prove it was an elite football program.

Baylor opened its season with a dominant 55-7 win over Northwestern State at McLane Stadium. Senior quarterback Seth Russell threw four touchdown passes and proved he was healthy after having his 2015 season end early due to a broken bone in his



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

**RISE ABOVE** Senior safety Orion Stewart jumps up in the air to celebrate with his teammates after he grabs a pick off Southern Methodist University redshirt freshman quarterback Ben Hicks on Sept. 10 at McLane Stadium. The Baylor Bears won that game, 40-13.

neck.

“Our goal is to win the national championship every year. That’s what we’re going to fight for,” Russell said. “Every team has their haters, I guess. We’re not going to let that bother us. They’re not on this team; they’re the guys sitting at home eating pizza. We’re not worried about that. They can say whatever they want; we’re going to play Baylor football.”

Baylor followed up its opening week win with a 40-13 win over Southern Methodist University. The Bears got off to a slow start in the game, but several key plays by the Bears’ defense guided them to a 2-0 record.

Week three began to see bits of controversy creep back into its foresight. First, Briles was in attendance for the matchup with Rice. Next, the Rice band performed one of their patented halftime shows that brought the spotlight back on the sexual assault charges at Baylor. Lastly, after a lackadaisical 38-10 win, former Bear Shawn Oakman, who had been charged with sexual assault back in April, was seen in the Bears’ locker room. When asked about the incident, Grobe claimed to not know who Oakman was.

Despite these distractions, Baylor was 3-0 and headed into conference play with a date against the Oklahoma State Cowboys. After waiting out a weather delay in Waco, Russell threw four touchdowns, and the Baylor defense forced four turnovers en

route to a 35-24 win.

Baylor followed this up with a thrilling 45-42 win over Iowa State in Ames, Iowa. Even though senior running back Shock Linwood had already become Baylor’s all-time rushing leader, he made the Cyclones remember him as he torched them for 237 yards. The Bears moved to 6-0 following a 49-7 win over Kansas – a win sandwiched between the team’s two bye weeks.

Halfway through the season, against all odds, Baylor was 6-0 and in the thick of a Big 12 championship and the College Football Playoff discussion.

“It’s nice and relaxing to be able to play football and not worry about too much else. We’re moving forward through everything and sticking together through it all,” said senior corner back Ryan Reid.

But the second half of the season took a turn no one expected as the Bears’ season spiraled out of control as they dropped their final six games of the season.

It began on Oct. 29, when the Bears lost a fumble near the goal line that would have put the Longhorns away. Instead of leaving Austin with a key road win, the Bears watched as the Longhorns kicked the game-winning field goal, 35-34.

Six days later, after being silenced all season long, various assistant coaches sent out a mass tweet indicating support for Art Briles after a new report revealed that

he knew of at least one instance of sexual assault and failed to report it to the proper authorities. The next day, “#CAB,” or Coach Art Briles, shirts were sold outside McLane Stadium near Touchdown Alley and worn as a symbol of support for the former head coach before the Texas Christian University game. After a touchdown on its opening drive against Texas Christian University, Baylor was not competitive, falling 62-22 to the Horned Frogs. Following the loss, associate athletic director Heath Nielson reportedly assaulted a reporter and was later arrested, adding yet another blemish to the already tarnished image of Baylor football.

Whether through blatant naivete, carefully constructed words or a desire to believe in the best intentions of everyone, Grobe downplayed distractions as a reason for the loss and instead praised TCU’s game plan.

“You know, we talked about it last week for Texas. We had the Wall Street Journal article come out before we played Texas, and that was the question. I really don’t know. I think TCU played great. I hate to make excuses, but I really don’t know how to put my finger on that,” Grobe said. “I think from what I saw today, I just don’t think we fit our gaps very well defensively. We gave up too many big plays again this week, second week in a row, in the throw game. And then it’s the most sluggish I’ve seen us, offensively, so far. So, I have no idea. I

know we just didn’t play as well as we needed to, and I hate to say anything that takes away from TCU’s effort because I think they played really good.”

The season continued to spiral the following week in Norman, Okla., as the Bears fell to the Sooners, 45-24. Even bigger than the margin of victory was the Bears’ loss of Russell for the second consecutive season – this time to a broken ankle. This injury would lead to Grobe turning the ball over to freshman quarterback Zach Smith to take the reigns of the offense.

“I know Zach Smith – he’s really disappointed that Seth got hurt. There’s no question about it,” Grobe said. “At the same time, it’s his opportunity to step up, and he should be excited about that. Because of when it was that Seth got hurt, he got the opportunity to get enough snaps so that he shouldn’t be too nervous next week when he takes the field.”

On Senior Day, the Bears, with Smith starting for the first time, turned the ball over four times and allowed six rushing touchdowns in a 42-21 loss to Kansas State.

In its annual matchup against Texas Tech at AT&T Stadium, the Bears’ defense, especially the secondary, was torched by Red Raiders junior quarterback Patrick Mahomes II to the tune of 586 yards and six touchdowns. Smith would connect on three touchdowns of his own, but it was not enough as Baylor dropped its fifth game in a row, 54-35.

In the regular season finale, Baylor battled the West Virginia Mountaineers but could not overcome four turnovers or a late penalty on an onside kick attempt, falling in Morgantown, W. Va., 24-21 and finishing 6-6.

Baylor entered the season surrounded with uncertainty and full of questions. After a six-game losing streak to end the season, it finds itself once again immersed in uncertainty and seeking answers to difficult questions. Who will be the next head football coach? Will Grobe coach against Boise State? Will other players follow Stidham and Jefferson out the door as a new coach is brought in?

Baylor (6-6, 3-6) will meet Boise State (10-2, 6-2) at 9:15 p.m. Central Standard Time on Dec. 27 in the Motel 6 Cactus Bowl. The game will be played at Chase Field, home of the Arizona Diamondbacks in Phoenix, Ariz.

Regardless of what happens next, Baylor football remains confident and united despite everything that it has been through this season.

“We have an option,” senior nickel back Patrick Levels said. “We can fold, or we can come out fighting, and right now I feel like we’re still swinging. We’re not done yet.”



Leslie Powers | Photo Editor

**OFF BALANCE** Sophomore wide receiver Ishmael Zamora is tripped by a Texas Tech defender as he runs towards the goal line on Nov. 26 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington. The Bears lost, 54-35.

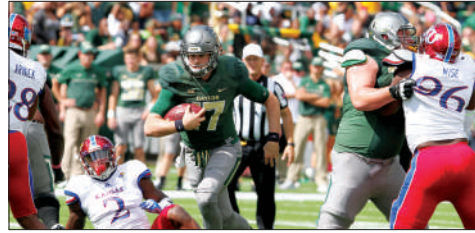


# Tumbles and Touchdowns



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Senior running back Shock Linwood tackles a Kansas State University player on Nov. 19 at McLane Stadium. The Bears lost 42-21.



Jessica Hubble | Lariat Photographer

Senior quarterback Seth Russell runs past University of Kansas defenders during the homecoming game on Oct. 15 at McLane Stadium. The Bears won 49-7.



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

Freshman cornerback Jordan Tolbert dives with the ball in this season's opening game against Northwestern State on Sept. 2 in McLane Stadium. The Bears triumphed over the Demons 55-7.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Senior cornerback Tion Wright runs onto the field before the game against Kansas State University on Nov. 19 at McLane Stadium. Baylor lost 42-21.



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

Senior safety Orion Stewart and junior safety Chance Waz chest bump during the game against Texas Christian University on Nov. 5 at McLane Stadium. The Bears lost 62-22.



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

Senior safety Orion Stewart runs onto the field between the Baylor Line on Sept. 2 before the season opener against Northwestern State at McLane Stadium. The Bears won 55-7.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Sophomore wide receiver Ishmael Zamora is tackled by a Texas Tech University player on Nov. 25 in Arlington. The Bears lost 54-35.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Freshman wide receiver Blake Lynch loses the ball in a game against Southern Methodist University on Sept. 10 in McLane Stadium. The Bears won 40-13.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Sophomore wide receiver Ishmael Zamora falls with the ball after an attempted tackle by a Texas Tech University player on Nov. 25 in Arlington. The Bears lost 54-35.

# Zach Smith

## Freshman QB looks to first bowl game

Jordan Smith  
Sports Writer

For freshman quarterback Zach Smith, this will be the first time he has ever played in a bowl game.

In Baylor's seventh-straight bowl game, the team will take on Boise State in the Motel 6 Cactus Bowl at 9:15 p.m. Central Time on Dec. 27 at Chase Field in Phoenix, Ariz. The game will be televised on ESPN.

Smith has had a unique start to his college career, coming in as a starter after Baylor lost senior quarterback Seth Russell for the season when he fractured his ankle against Oklahoma University on Nov. 12 in a 45-24 loss.

Smith knows how important this game is for the seniors on the team and addressed it after the game against West Virginia on Saturday.

"We need to go send those seniors out with the bowl game and have a great experience out there and just play football like we know how. We showed some of it today, just didn't execute all of it. We are going to go out there in the bowl game and really play hard," Smith said.

Senior linebacker Alavon Edwards thinks highly of Smith and believes that he is a positive light for Baylor in the future.

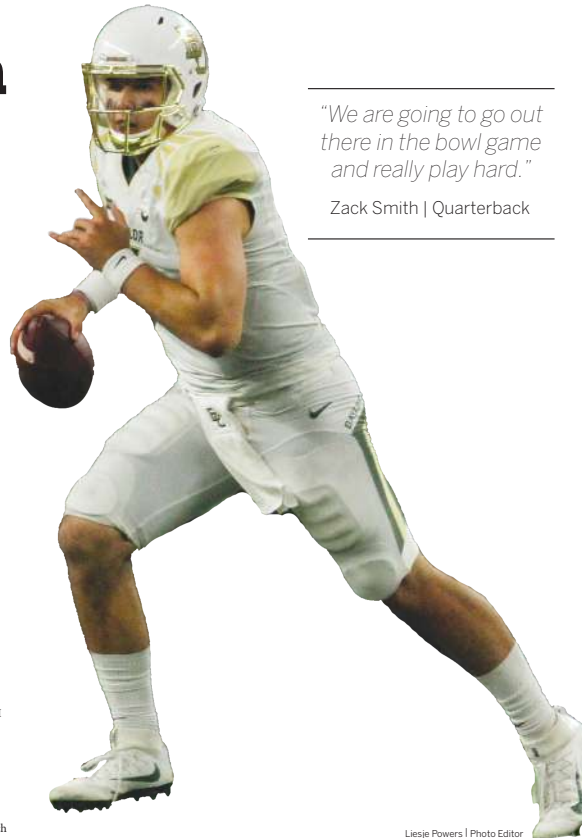
"He's a guy that came in and you saw potential. You see his heart and his will to continue to push through in these past few weeks, and it's been great to see him grow. It's exciting to see that he is the future and how strong and committed to the team he is," Edwards said.

In the nine games in which Smith has stepped onto the field, he has recorded 1,151 yards of passing, 10 touchdowns, and six interceptions. However, in Smith's three starts at Baylor, he has 879 passing yards on 72 for 122 for a 59 completion percentage passing. In the three starts, although having had thrown six interceptions, Smith recorded eight touchdowns with his longest pass being a 60-yard pass against West Virginia on Saturday.

Baylor Bears head football coach Jim Grobe raved earlier in the season about Smith when he came into the game against Oklahoma after Russell was taken out on a cart after fracturing his ankle.

"When it was his turn to go, he didn't panic. He was calm but focused, and I was just impressed with the maturity that he showed taking the field in a tough situation," Grobe said.

According to his profile on [baylorbears.com](http://baylorbears.com), Smith played high school football at Grandview High School in Grandview. During his time in high school, he was an All-American quarterback and a three-time all-star honoree. Smith was also ranked as the number 224 overall prospect on the ESPN300 list coming out of high school. While he played high school football, Smith had a total of 10,217 passing yards and 113 touchdowns, which ranks among top 10 totals in Texas high school football history.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

"We are going to go out there in the bowl game and really play hard."

Zack Smith | Quarterback

## Players receive game-changing scholarships



Jessica Hubble | Lariat Photographer

**SCHREPFER** Junior running back Wyatt Schrepfer runs the ball during a game against the University of Kansas on Oct. 15.



Courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**JAYNES** Redshirt junior linebacker Tyler Jaynes kneels before kickoff at McLane stadium.



Courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**EDMISTON** Redshirt junior wide receiver Cole Edmiston was one of several players to receive a scholarship this year.

Brianna Lewis  
Reporter

During the 2016 season, the Baylor football team has gone through its share of controversy, from the removal of former head coach Art Briles and issues with Title IX to losing six games in a row and going 6-6 for the regular season (3-6 in conference). But even through the strife, there's a number of good things that have come from this year.

Three Baylor football players, each with their own unique story, became scholarship recipients.

Redshirt junior wide receiver Cole Edmiston got his start at Baylor as a preferred walk-on after opting out of scholarships to two smaller colleges. Now a senior in the classroom, after four years of hard work on and off the field, Edmiston was chosen to be put on scholarship.

On Aug. 19, after the Bears' practice, acting head coach Jim Grobe pulled the receiver aside to give him the news.

"He said, 'You need to go upstairs and see Keith Miller; he has some paperwork for you to sign,'" Edmiston said. "I kind of gave him like a weird and confused look, and that's when he smiled and said, 'The coaching staff has decided to put you on scholarship.' My immediate reaction was, I think I had tears in my eyes. I don't know. I gave him a huge hug, and then I just ran inside. I was so happy."

A professional sales and finance major, Edmiston is the primary holder for place kicks on the team. He has played in two full seasons so far in his career at Baylor and has cherished the time he's spent here.

"I would say, spiritually, I've grown there more than anywhere else," Edmiston said. "My best friends are here at Baylor. The best friends I've ever had in my life are here at Baylor ... growing socially in that way was more than I could've imagined ... my education; I'm definitely smarter now than I was when I graduated high school. In two tough degrees, it's oftentimes hard but rewarding as well. There's really not words to describe how much I've grown, but it's tremendous."

Just a little over a week later, another player was awarded a scholarship. Although a redshirt sophomore running back on the field, Wyatt Schrepfer is an undergraduate junior in the classroom. This Trinidad, Colo., native got his start as a walk-on after transferring from the Colorado School of Mines.

"I kind of had a really untraditional way of getting here. I found out Aug. 30," Schrepfer said. "We're outside at practice, and Coach Grobe was just eyeballing me the whole time, and I started to get a little bit nervous; I was wondering what was going on. So finally I just went over to him and shook his hand, and he asked me how to pronounce my last name. He said that they decided to put me on full

scholarship, and I mean there's really nothing, nothing comparable to that feeling."

Being the youngest of three boys and the last one in college, Schrepfer and his family couldn't have been more thrilled for this accomplishment. The running back has been in action this season for the Baylor offense and special teams.

Schrepfer describes being at Baylor as "beyond exciting" and said he feels "beyond grateful" for being given the opportunity to play the sport he loves and to get rewarded for all the hard work he has put in.

As a red shirt sophomore, Schrepfer has two more years of eligibility. His goal for those next two years is to influence his teammates and for the entire organization to grow together and become better as a group.

"Personally, it's one of those goals that I've always had, one of those dreams I envisioned in my head, and when they told me I was going to be put on scholarship, it was having something that you always wanted and always hoped for become a reality," Schrepfer said.

Lastly, redshirt junior linebacker Tyler Jaynes has seen action both as a linebacker for the Baylor defense and special teams.

The Gatesville native originally came to play baseball. Jaynes was offered scholarships to a smaller school but wanted to pursue an athletic career at a big university. Tyler first got his start as a preferred walk-on to play for the Baylor

baseball team. After a year, Jaynes switched to football in 2014.

After four years at Baylor, Jaynes is now going on his third season with the football team. Like Edmiston, the special teams veteran was awarded a scholarship on Aug. 19, after the Bears' Fall Camp.

"It was long anticipated, and I felt like it was going to happen soon. I was just waiting for the day for them to finally pull the trigger," Jaynes said. "I remember Coach Grobe telling me to go upstairs and find Keith because all the coaches voted to put me on scholarship. I ran to the locker room, got my phone and called my mom and dad. My mom, she's a crier, so she was crying ... and I was so happy. It was great."

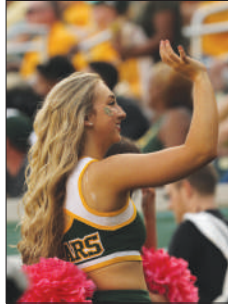
The linebacker has one more season at Baylor and said that "anything can happen" and that he is excited for what's to come for him and the Baylor Bears.

"It just shows that hard work really does pay off," Edmiston said. "It's funny how God really does work in mysterious ways. I never thought I would be here getting a football scholarship, but ... I guess that was in his plan."

Jaynes, Schrepfer and Edmiston are only three of many who worked hard in silence and have allowed their success to be their noise. Everyday, players — both past and present — on the football team are fighting and battling to reach their goals both on and off the field.



# Faces from



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

A Baylor cheerleader waves to the crowd during the Oct. 15 game against the University of Kansas. The Bears won 49-7.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Baylor cheerleaders perform at the Baylor football game against the University of Kansas Jayhawks on Oct. 15 at McLane Stadium. The Bears won 49-7.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Baylor's cheerleaders help keep the crowd engaged during the Baylor versus Southern Methodist University game on Sept. 10.



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

(Top) Baylor fans show support with painted chests during the game against Southern Methodist University on Sept. 10 at McLane Stadium. (Bottom) Students take selfies during the Baylor versus Northwestern State game on Sept. 2 at McLane Stadium. The Bears won both games.



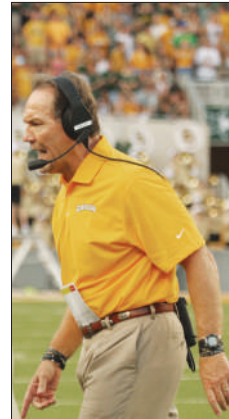
Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

Baylor students show up to cheer on their Bears football team at the Baylor versus Texas Christian University game on Nov. 5 at McLane Stadium. The Bears lost to the Horned Frogs, their longtime rivals, 66-22.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Interim head coach Jim Grobe speaks at Baylor's annual bonfire rally on Oct. 14 on Fountain Mall. The bonfire is held each year before the Bears' homecoming football game.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Defensive coordinator Phil Bennett yells at a player during the Sept. 2 game against Southern Methodist University on Sept. 2.



Jessica Hubble | Lariat Photographer

The Baylor University Golden Wave Band plays during the Oct. 15 homecoming game against the University of Kansas Jayhawks at McLane Stadium. The Bears won 49-7.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

A member of the Baylor Line runs onto the field holding a flag at Baylor's homecoming game against the University of Kansas on Oct. 15 at McLane Stadium.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

Bruiser the Bear, Baylor's mascot, high-fives a young Baylor fan during the Nov. 19 football game against the Kansas State University Wildcats. The Bears lost 42-21.

# the Sidelines

# Bears vs. Broncos

3,277	PASSING YARDS	3,573
3,003	RUSHING YARDS	2,185
54.5	COMPLETION PERCENTAGE	62.3
30	PASSING TOUCHDOWNS	27
24	RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS	29
14	INTERCEPTIONS	6
133.2	PASSER'S RATINGS	168.5

Liesje Powers | Photo Editor



*Named 2016 National Champions  
in 4 Different Categories*

BAYLOR LARIAT APP  
BAYLORLARIAT.COM  
BAYLORFOCUSMAGAZINE.COM  
BAYLOR ROUNDUP YEARBOOK

