

THIS WEEKEND >> @BaylorFootball takes on Kansas 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

BaylorLariat.com

Sports take:

Find out where the Bears stand in the college football playoff positions. **pg. C2**



Marine turned Bear

Kyle Boyd brings new spark to Baylor football team. **pg. C3**

“Every team’s goal is to win a championship.”
-Jim Grobe

Sports take on bowl eligibility. **pg. C4**



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

DEFENSE WINS EVERY TIME Senior safety Orion Stewart jumps up in the air to celebrate with his teammates after he grabs a pick off SMU redshirt freshman quarterback Ben Hicks on Sept. 10 at McLane Stadium. The Baylor Bears won that game by a final of 40-13.

Bring on the Jayhawks

NATHAN KEIL
Sports Writer

After enjoying their first of two bye weeks, the Baylor football team returns to action Saturday as it hosts the Kansas Jayhawks for homecoming at McLane Stadium. The bye week allowed the Bears to relax, get healthy, and re-focus after two difficult games against Oklahoma State and Iowa State.

Perhaps more important than the physical rest was the mental break the Bears got to enjoy during this last week.

“I think it’s been pretty good for our kids mentally with two really tough, physical football games and stressful games,” said Jim Grobe, the acting head coach. “It was good to relax and take some time off.”

Baylor will now turn its attention to the Kansas Jayhawks, who enter the game 1-4 overall and 0-2 in Big 12 play. After rotating quarterbacks throughout the first four games of the season, Kansas seems to have found its pick in sophomore Ryan Willis who completed 31 of 45 passes for 348 yards in their 24-23 loss to the Horned Frogs. Sophomore wide receiver Steven Sims Jr. and junior wide receiver LaQuivonte Gonzalez are the favorite targets of Willis, tallying 413 and 349 yards respectively while contributing six touchdowns.

As far along as the offense has come this season for the Jayhawks, the thing that has impressed Grobe the most has been their defensive tenacity and their ability to explode to the football.

“The things I like about Kansas is the way their defense chases the football. They fly around and get a lot of people to the ball. They play really hard defensively,” Grobe said. “They’re very aggressive. They like to blitz and bring pressure and mix things up. I like their scheme. They’re fundamentally coached really well, and you can tell they’re very fundamentally sound defensively. They did everything against TCU but win the football game.”

Kansas head coach David Beaty knows the plethora of talent Baylor possesses and the challenge they present for his Jayhawk team.

“They’re aggressive and physical,” Beaty said at his weekly press conference Monday. “Our guys have had really good practices the last two days, I know they’re excited to get back out on the field.”

Baylor hopes to re-establish the aerial attack of Russell and company after the Bears threw



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

OFF TO THE ENDZONE Senior quarterback Seth Russell takes off down the field trying to score a touchdown against the Southern Methodist University Mustangs on Sept. 10 at McLane Stadium. The Bears won by a final of 40-13.

for a season low 178 yards on 12 completions. The return of junior wide receiver KD Canon might serve as the perfect remedy for the Bears as Grobe confirmed that he expects Canon to be healthy and full strength for Saturday’s affair.

The Bears also hope to see senior running back Shock Linwood pick up where he left off after his 237 yard performance against the Cyclones. According to Grobe, he has earned the right to start and see the majority of snaps.

“That was Shock being Shock,” Russell said. “He’s here, he knows what his role is, and it was huge for him to step up in that way for us.”

However, Baylor will continue to use their

balanced run attack with Linwood’s youthful counterparts, sophomore running back Terence Williams and redshirt freshman JaMychal Hasty, both of whom are having productive seasons in the back field.

Baylor will also look to take advantage of Kansas’ mistakes offensively as the Jayhawks have turned the ball over 17 times in their five games this season. The Baylor defense will look to be aggressive, as it has been all year, to try take advantage of this Jayhawk trend.

Baylor, after watching Kansas give TCU a scare and surviving a scare of their own against Iowa State, will not take the Jayhawks lightly.

“They’re definitely a different ball club from last year for sure. They fly around, they’re doing good things on defense, and we just have to focus on what we do and play better football,” Russell said. “Coaches are going to have a good scheme going into it. As long as we execute it, we’ll be okay.”

For Baylor, their defense has been at its best in the fourth quarter, outscoring their opponents 45-0 and eliminating any chance of a comeback.

“I think it’s reflective of a team that knows how to finish, and that’s a tribute to our coaches and our players,” Grobe said.

If Jayhawks hope to escape Waco with a win, they’ll have to score early and often or somehow manage to find their way into the end zone in the fourth quarter, something that has yet to be done this year.

With a win against Kansas, the Bears will reach six wins, making them bowl eligible for the seventh consecutive season. Although it is far from the Bears’ ultimate goal, it is a step in the right direction and the continual growth of a program that struggled for many years.

The Bears defeated the Jayhawks last year in Lawrence, 66-7. The two teams are set to kickoff at 2:30 p.m at McLane Stadium. The game will air on FS1.

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NATHAN KEIL
Sports Writer



At the top of the list remains the teams that control their own destiny: Alabama, Ohio State, Clemson, Michigan, Washington, Texas A&M




Associated Press

Ohio State and head coach Urban Meyer have their work cut out for them. They face upcoming road tests at Wisconsin on Saturday, at Penn State the following weekend in typical Happy Valley White-Out fashion, at Michigan State the end of November, as well as 10th-ranked Nebraska and No.4 ranked Michigan at home to conclude their season, plus probably

Washington, after overcoming its annual stumbling block in the Oregon Ducks last week, sits in very good position. They have road trips to Utah and California, which could potentially be tricky, but they should be favored in both. They have three other opponents at home in Oregon State, Arizona State and USC — all winnable games. They finish the

Thirdly, Baylor needs to look good on the road. They have wins against Rice and Iowa State away from

There still remains a lot of questions in the college football world, and we will have to continue to wait for answers as the season rages on. The college football playoff committee will unveil their first group of four teams at 6 p.m Nov. 1. The committee's decision will be aired on ESPN.



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Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

LEADING WITH PRIDE Freshman linebacker and former Marine Kyle Boyd leads his team onto the field on Sept. 10 at McLane Stadium against Southern Methodist University. The Bears won on Military Appreciation Day, 40-13.

From the Marines to the field

MEGHAN MITCHELL
Sports Editor

William Shakespeare once said, “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” But then there are people like freshman linebacker Kyle Boyd, whose greatness has surpassed the norm, yet he is too humble to realize it.

Boyd grew up hearing stories of his grandfather who served in the Marines and great uncle who received a purple heart after serving in the Army during the Vietnam War. Although Boyd did not know at the moment, years later he would find himself serving alongside brave men and women of the United States.

As a young boy growing up in Mesquite, Boyd spent his days outside playing football. He enjoyed playing with his brother and father, and that love spurred his passion to continue playing as he went into high school.

“I played football since I was 4 years old,” Boyd said. “I played pee-wee and flag football all the way up to middle school. I played in middle school and in high school all four years. I didn’t play any other sport; this was my sport. I just loved everything about it.”

At John Horn High School, his football coach, Rodney Webb, said he noticed something different about Boyd.

“Kyle is one of those really rare kids. They talk the talk, but they also walk the walk. He was a very good leader in both respects, as an example and as a vocal leader. He commanded the respect of all his teammates,” Webb said. “I think Kyle is just a person of high character, and I think you see character in a person, in particular in a football player. You see their character on and off the field. He is just a solid guy. It showed up in the classroom, on the field, in off season and when you were having casual conversation with him.”

Boyd credits Webb for his success, as quotes from high school practice continue to pop up and play as inspirations for Boyd.

“Show me a satisfied man, and I’ll show you a failure. If you are satisfied with what you have, you are never going to grow anymore,” Boyd said. “You need to always enjoy what you have done, but you need to grow and expand and really push yourself. If you are satisfied, then you aren’t doing it right.”



Courtesy of Baylor Athletics

IN UNIFORM Kyle Boyd enlists in the Marines, forgoing his full ride to Baylor in 2011.

As Boyd continued to excel on the field with this motto in his head, colleges started to gain interest in the 6-foot-2 linebacker. After receiving five collegiate offers to play football, Boyd first committed to Iowa State his junior year, but changed his mind after getting a call from Baylor.

“I was actually on my way back from a visit at Iowa State when Coach [Phil] Bennett called me,” Boyd said. “We came and sat down with Coach [Art] Briles and Coach Bennett, and they offered me. I was so excited. I didn’t even think twice about it. I feel bad, but I guess it’s sort of the nature of the game – decommitting. I signed with Baylor on signing day, and of course Iowa State coaches weren’t happy with that.”

Although he signed with Baylor on signing day in 2011, Boyd quickly found himself in tough spot – a spot that his coach and family would try and talk him out of. He had his mind and heart set on something: The Marines Corps.

“I had a true calling. I had never had this in my life. I just felt like I really needed to do this. I was a hard headed 18-year-old. I was trying to rebel against everything everyone told me to do. Coach Webb tried to talk to me. I had the Baylor coaches come down and try to talk me out of it. My dad tried to talk me out of it,” Boyd said. “I had people trying to set me up with ex-Marines, but I couldn’t back out of it. I had to do it, it was what my heart was calling me to do, and it felt like it was right.”

While many may have jumped at the opportunity to play a collegiate sport, Boyd saw the bigger picture for his life, and those closest to him supported him.

“At first we were shocked, it sort of came out of left field,” said Doug Boyd, Kyle Boyd’s father. “Kyle was never one to express his feelings. He keeps to himself for the most part, but we he came to us and told us we were surprised. We tried to talk him out of it, and tried to tell him to get his education first. We told him he could always join the Marines when he was done with college, but he was dead set on it.”

Although it was not what Boyd’s parents had envisioned for their son’s life, Doug said they continued to support him even when he was far from home.

“We support him 100 percent in what he decided, and looking back at it now, I wouldn’t change a thing,” Doug said. “I’m more proud of him for doing that than anything he has ever done in his life. It took a lot of courage for him to do that, a lot of inner strength, and if we could go back and do it again I wouldn’t change a thing. We are extremely proud of Kyle for serving his country. There aren’t many things that are larger than sacrificing yourself and serving your country and giving up the opportunity he had at that time.”

Boyd would find himself stationed in Hawaii for two years after enlisting in the Marine Corps.

“It was cool to be there and those experiences, but its kind of one of those places you only want to be at for a week. You don’t want to live there. I was probably there for a year and a half. I had a total of two years on my contract. The other years, we were training in different states and in other countries,” Boyd said. “In my deployments, we didn’t go to Afghanistan. My unit stopped deploying to Afghanistan three months before I got there. But being in the infantry, it’s tough. You never get to go do your job really. It’s like practicing football for four years and never getting to play. You would train for nine months and then have a deployment, and then you would come back, that deployment. Then you would come back,



Courtesy of Baylor Athletics

SERVING OUR COUNTRY Deployed in 2011, Kyle Boyd poses while he was in service. Boyd spent most of his time stationed in Hawaii.

and you would just train again. It was a never ending cycle of training.”

Though Boyd never regretted his decision to serve his country, he said he wondered what it would be like to come back and play collegiate football. Toward the end of his deployment, Boyd started to write to coaches and show interest in playing, but he was a long way away from being prepared for the tests of football.

His body was in shape for endurance. He would have to gain the muscle he once had back, but that was the least of his troubles, and he didn’t hear back from any coaches immediately.

However, when the call came, Boyd was ready.

“I finally I got in contact with Beau Trahan. I was super happy ... I knew my scholarship was not there anymore, but I came down and went on a visit,” Boyd said. “Coach Briles saw me and he recognized me. He saluted me on the field, and I was like, ‘Whoa!’ Coach Bennett remembered me, and the other coaches remembered me, and they said they would be happy to have me on as a walk on.”

For many, July 7 was just another day in the year, but for Boyd it was a second chance. Boyd checked in at Baylor as a student and athlete that day. After nearly five years of never putting on a helmet or strapping on shoulder pads, Boyd found himself in a familiar place: on the football field.

“It was all surreal to me. My first day of practice I was fresh, I was just ready to be out here. I still think about that when I start to get complacent. I think about where I was and just how thankful and fortunate I am to put on a uniform,” Boyd said. “The first game I got a lot

of butterflies. That first game, putting on a jersey and knowing that I was going to go hit someone on the other team, it was amazing.”

Doug believes that God has a plan for everything in life, and for Kyle, it was to join the Marine Corps at the time that he did, and now it is to be at Baylor.

“Without faith, I don’t know where he would be and where we would be,” Doug said. “God has a plan for all of us, and I believe Kyle followed what God was leading him to do.”

While many play for the fame and the glory, Boyd was able to show who he plays for on Sept. 10 against Southern Methodist University. Boyd proudly led his team onto the field on Military Appreciation Day as he waved the American flag above him.

“I love my parents, I love everything, but I kind of made it for myself to go back and play for those guys ... from where I was and from where we served, and the way we lived. The lifestyle is hard, it’s cold, it’s gritty, but coming back here,” Boyd said. “I play for those guys because they don’t get the chance, and they really care, and are really special to me. If I can bring more awareness and more love for the military, than I’m going to do it any way I can. Being on the football team and fly that flag really meant a lot. I do it for them.”

As Boyd continues to lean on God, he also holds dear to his heart the example his father has set for him.

“My father is my role model,” Boyd said. “I know it’s cliché, but my father is more of a man than I could even hope to be, and hope I can be there for my children one day the way he is.”



Timothy Hong | Lariat Photographer

SOARING AWAY Sophomore cornerback Verkedric Vaughns runs onto the field before the Bears matchup against Oklahoma State University on Sept. 24 at McLane Stadium. The Bears won 35-24.

Bears on the brink of securing a bowl

JORDAN SMITH
Sports Writer

The Baylor football team looks to be the first team in the Big 12 to claim bowl eligibility this weekend as it takes on the Kansas Jayhawks in its homecoming matchup at 2:30 p.m. Saturday at McLane Stadium.

“Right now we’ve got a bunch of good football teams in front of us, and we have to play really good each and every week to make sure that we win,” interim head coach Jim Grobe said.

Baylor is sitting at the top of the Big 12 conference and is ranked No. 11 in the country with a 5-0 record on the season, with the last two being close ball games.

One thing that has helped Baylor win every game so far this season is their ability to close out games in a strong way. The Bears in the fourth quarter alone have outscored their opponents 45-0.

Senior quarterback Seth Russell gives credit for the comeback win against Iowa State to the offseason workouts and his teammates’ unwavering determination.

“We had a lot of guys talking, saying this is where our work was going to pay off,” Russell said. “During the offseason with our workouts, our summer workouts, our fall camp workouts and stuff like that, this is where it’s all going to matter, and I feel like the guys really bought into that on the offensive and defensive side, and it was huge. We were able to pull off a big win away.”

With a win against the Jayhawks, the Bears will become bowl eligible and head to their seventh-straight bowl game. The last time Baylor wasn’t in

a bowl game was in 2009. It would be Baylor’s 23rd bowl game in the program’s history.

“What I think our players understand, and I think Coach Bennett talked to the defense about this yesterday,” Grobe said, “Is that it is a good message to the football team that there is nobody left on our schedule that we are not capable of beating, but that there is nobody left on our schedule that isn’t capable of beating us.”

Max Olson, a staff writer for ESPN, said, the Bears have completely derailed all preseason concerns that were made about their lack of depth, making defensive stops 76 percent of the time and only allowing 1.4 points on average per drive during this 5-0 start to the season.

Grobe said he knows the road to success is never easy, but a win would validate the hard work and dedication these players give week in and week out.

“Certainly every team’s goal is to win a championship, so we can’t downplay that, but what I do think we need to understand is that we just need to play every week without worrying whether or not we get bowl eligible or where we stand in the Big 12,” Grobe said.

Russell said he likes the idea of being bowl eligible after the first six games of the season and said he is looking forward to getting the job done against Kansas this weekend.

“It’s huge,” Russell said. “That’s always our first goal is to be bowl eligible, and if we win this next one then we get that and we’ve achieved that accomplishment. So as long as we stay focused, you know, go out there and play ball, then we’ll get the win.”

Kids confident in Chicago Cubs

DON BABWIN
Associated Press

CHICAGO – Kaitlin Reap didn’t listen when her dad tried to warn her about the lifetime of misery waiting for her if she cheered for the Chicago Cubs. She rejected his invitation to share with him the joys of being a St. Louis Cardinals fan. And all his talk about curses simply guaranteed him a daughter who wants nothing to do with goats.

“I want to be a Cubs fan,” said Reap, a 9-year-old third grader at Saint Andrew School. “I think they’re going to win.”

Cubs fans everywhere are hoping for a World Series champion for the first time since 1908, and they have a loaded team this time, one that piled up the most wins in the majors this season. But there is also fear - the kind of fear that is handed down from generation to generation in Chicago, the kind that comes from heartbreak after heartbreak, the kind that is fed by billy goat curses (1945), black cats (1969) and infamous plays (looking at you, Steve Bartman).

Cubs fans know this feeling as well as they know their way to the friendly confines. They’ve grown up with it.

For Reap and her schoolmates, there is optimism that the Cubs will win it all this year and, if not, they will certainly end the long championship drought by the time they leave Saint Andrew. At nearby Hawthorne Scholastic Academy, the only fear is that the principal won’t let them out of class to watch the parade they know is coming.

The way these kids see it, all those older fans are being a little silly.

“People are a little paranoid (because) it hasn’t happened, but it might be a coincidence that they haven’t won in a while,” said Max Oldham, an 11-year-old sixth grader at Saint Andrew.

All that talk about paranoia, not to mention referring to 108 years as “a while,” might have something to



Associated Press

ONE STEP CLOSER Chicago Cubs closer Aroldis Chapman, left, celebrates with Kris Bryant after defeating the Pittsburgh Pirates 6-5 on Aug. 31, 2016, in Chicago.

do with parents who have protected their children from what they know and what they have witnessed for themselves.

“We have not told him about Bartman,” said Cy Oldham, who saw what unfolded from the left field bleachers after she and her husband decided to postpone their honeymoon so they could attend the playoffs. “We try not to dwell on that time (and) it is not something we want to sit down and say, so, ‘Let me tell you how bad things used to be.’”

Addison Casavechia could not help knowing about those times, not with a first name that her parents chose because they liked the way it sounded and because Wrigley Field is on Addison Street. That might explain why the 11-year-old sixth grader doesn’t think the Cubs will win it all this year.

“I have my bets for next year because we’ll have Kyle Schwarber back,” Addison said.

Her mother, the assistant principal at Saint Andrew, doesn’t want to see her daughter suffer. But Sarah Casavechia also sees rooting for the Cubs as part of growing up in Chicago.

“I think being a Cubs fan is like taking a leap of faith every year; it’s like falling in love,” she said. “You know there’s a chance you’re going to get your heart broken, but you do it anyway,” Sarah said.

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What makes them great

Baylor sports nutrition works to fuel athletes' success

SHAYLA KELLEY
Reporter

Without exercising, student athletes would not be able to perform to their maximum potential. However, in order for them to get the energy to perform, the student-athletes must concentrate on one of the most important factor of athletics: nutrition.

Jana Heitmeyer, director of performance nutrition, is responsible for nutrition education, body composition analysis and diet analysis for all Baylor student-athletes.

“At the core, it’s all about making the student-athletes more successful,” Heitmeyer said. “It changes every day. I would say it’s best for someone who cannot sit still. You deal with all the different athletes and all the different sports.” Heitmeyer said the most rewarding part of her job is when “people get it.”

“It’s really fun to work with people who have an issue — whether it’s that they have no energy or if they need to lose or gain weight,” Heitmeyer said. “For the light bulb to go off and to see them reap the benefits in their performance is the most rewarding part of my job.”

Heitmeyer was a gymnast in college herself, and said she wishes that she was told what she is currently preaching to Baylor’s student athletes. Heitmeyer said each sport is different and requires different nutritional requirements, but every sport at Baylor revolves around a core acronym: BEAST.

“Everything in our program revolves around ‘the BEAST,’” Heightmeyer said. “This means; Breakfast, Eat fruits and vegetables, Always hydrate, Sleep and recover, and the T is ‘think lean protein.’ We put this in because everybody needs to do this.”

Although the BEAST is used for all sports, it changes based on each person and sport. “You take these basics and adjust them to a particular athlete and sport,” Heightmeyer said. “Some people have time between every bat, some people are running up and down the court for 30 minutes straight, so then it becomes much more individualized.”

Kiara Nowlin, senior acrobatics and tumbling athlete, nutrition is very important in her sport.

“Every day we break our bodies down, so this



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

MEAL FIT FOR A KING Dallas sophomore Sean McCullough selects sushi from the selection available in the Beauchamp Athletic Nutrition Center.

nutrition is so important in order to recover and perform well and be successful in our sport,” Nowlin said.

Nowlin said that it is not easy to incorporate

nutrition as a full-time student-athlete.

“Time management is the hardest,” Nowlin said. “It’s really hard to go from class straight to practice, and trying to find something to eat. We

aren’t normal students, so we have to be more conscious of what we eat, so the snack and meal choices are harder. We have to make sure we have that balance of healthy and non-healthy food.”

Sophomore midfielder Kennedy Brown said nutrition is vital in her athletic performance. “Nutrition plays a key part in any athlete’s development,” Brown said. “You need to know what foods will recover you, give you energy and help you compete at the highest level possible.”

Heitmeyer said that nutrition is the most important part of being an athlete.

“Everything that athletes do is tearing down their body,” Heitmeyer said. “The only thing that can repair their bodies is food, so the only way to build things back up is by eating.”



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

FRESH IS BEST An array of fresh fruits are available daily for the student-athletes at the Beauchamp Athletic Nutrition Center.

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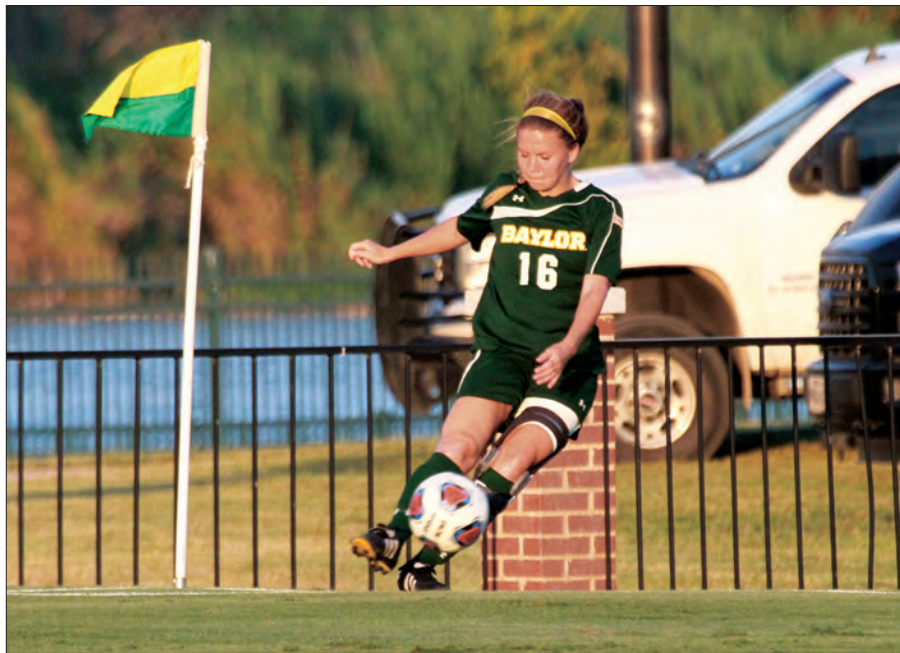
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Jessica Hubble | Lariat Photographer

CUTTING CORNERS Senior midfielder Ashley York makes a corner kick hoping that a teammate will score against the UT Longhorns on Sept. 23 at Betty Lou Mays Soccer Field. The Bears soccer team tied the Longhorns by a final of 1-1.

Bears look to defeat heated rivals in TCU

JORDAN SMITH
Sports Writer

The Baylor soccer team (10-4-1, 3-1-1) is looking to take down one of its biggest rivals of the season, the Texas Christian University Horned Frogs (8-2-2, 0-2-1). Between the two teams, Baylor leads the all-time record at 9-0-3 against TCU.

Junior goalie Sara Martinson said she is pumped about the fact that the Bears get to play two of their last three games at home.

"Being at home is great. We get to be back in front of our home crowd. We get to sleep in our own bed the night before a game which is nice," Martinson said. "We've done a really great job of continuing to fight on the road and fight at home

as well, so it'll be fun to be back."

TCU this season has had its fair share of success with a shot-on-goal percentage of 44.4 percent this season and have scored 26 goals in its 12 matches, averaging 2.17 goals per match.

Baylor head coach Paul Jobson said he is glad his team was able to take care of business on the road heading into this final homestretch on the schedule.

"We've said that from the beginning of the season we were going to have to be road warriors this year because obviously we are on the road quite a bit," Jobson said. "We wrapped up our road trip with two really big wins in Oklahoma ... I think that the girls really stepped up to that mentality of being road

warriors through this season ,and I couldn't be more proud of their performance."

Martinson is the No. 5 all-time winningest goalie in Baylor history with 18 wins, nine of them coming from this season. She is also tied at the No. 5 all-time spot for number of consecutive shutouts by a goalie at three games in a row.

Martinson will need to continue to perform at her best as she goes against TCU freshman goalkeeper Katie Lund, who registered her first career complete-game shutout last week against Iowa State. Lund is ranked at No. 3 and leads the Big 12 in save percentage at .917.

The Bears will play against the Horned Frogs at 7 p.m. today at Betty Lou Mays Soccer Field.

NBA Player Union discussed help for retired players in talks

**JON KRAWCZYNSKI
AND TIM REYNOLDS**
Associated Press

Cleveland Cavaliers superstar LeBron James, vice president of the National Basketball Player Association's executive committee, told The Associated Press on Thursday the union has made getting aid for retired players a priority in their talks with NBA owners on a new deal.

The NBA and its players have agreed that the next CBA will include new league-funded programs to help retired players with education and medical expenses, four people with knowledge of the situation told the AP. The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because talks are ongoing.

In exchange for those programs, and pending full approval from both sides, the split of basketball-related income would remain the same "50-50" deal as it is in the current agreement.

For James, NBPA President Chris Paul and the rest of the union, taking care of those who are no longer playing is a worthy compromise for trying to recoup any of the financial ground lost during the 2011 labor dispute.

"We got a group of guys that are in there that know the negotiations, so any way to give back and try to help our former teammates and help former players and things of that nature," James said. "Because we've all built this league together. No matter how big of a guy you were or if you were the 15th guy on the bench, we all built this league into what it is today. But it's not just

my idea. I'm not taking any credit for that. But it's all part of the process."

That process will resume next week when the league and the union meet ahead of the NBA Board of Governor's meeting in New York, which begins on Oct. 20. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and union head Michele Roberts met in Spain earlier this month when the league had a preseason game there and they - along with other members of the negotiating committee - are preparing to return to the bargaining table with both sides in deal-making mode.

But the talks between the owners and players this time around have been much

more cordial. And there is a trust level that was absent from previous talks, a factor that was only strengthened when the owners agreed to the new programs that will help players after their careers come to an end.

"I just want to see the league continue to grow, that's all that matters to me."

Lebron James | NBPA Vice President

James stressed that the medical and education programs benefiting retirees were not his idea alone, but a collective decision from the union to seek help for the players that helped make the league what it is today. Now, with so much revenue flooding the system to the benefit of both sides, the dialogue appears to be centered on the greater good

over dollars and cents.

"I just want to see the league continue to grow, that's all that matters to me," James said. "The players are a huge, huge piece but we also know the owners have great minds as well, our commissioner is great, but our league, our logo, the Jerry West logo is probably the most well sought-out, admired logo in the world and we've got to figure out a way to keep it going, keep raising the bar. That's my only concern."

The new agreement is expected to include several other new elements as well, said the people with knowledge of the discussions.

They said owners are pushing to give their teams more options to keep homegrown players in their organizations, a topic that came to the forefront after Kevin Durant left the Oklahoma City Thunder to form a new super team in Golden State. One of the proposals, the people said, includes the possibility of adding a second five-year maximum contract. Currently, teams can only offer one five-year max contract, which can make it more difficult for teams to keep multiple stars happy.

The people told AP new elements also include an increase in the rookie salary scale to fall more in line with the surging salary cap, which was first reported by Yahoo Sports. The people also say two-way contracts that would pay players less when they are in the NBDL and more when they are with their NBA teams - a structure that has worked well in hockey for some time - will be a part of the deal.



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