

# Game, Set, Match

Men's tennis looks to capture ITA Championship

**NATHAN KEIL**  
Sports Editor

Baylor men's tennis looks to build off its 2-0 weekend as the Bears travel to Seattle this weekend for the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) Indoor Championships.

The Bears defeated Purdue 5-2 and South Florida 4-0 over the weekend, creating some momentum that head coach Matt Knoll hopes will carry over.

"It's hard to get better without playing," Knoll said. "Tennis is a competition sport, so we need to get out and play as many matches as we can. Two great matches, we got to play a lot of tennis and it gives us great momentum heading into this tournament."

The ITA Indoor Championship tournament features the best 16 teams

in the country, and each school is guaranteed at least three matches.

Despite the team's youth, Baylor is confident heading west to participate. According to sophomore Bjoern Petersen, it's the trust the Bears have in the team mentality that has them playing high quality tennis at the moment and makes them a threat this weekend.

**“So far we're doing a really good job. We're really young but we all know how to win matches.”**

**BJOERN PETERSEN | SOPHOMORE**

"We are a really young team, but I think we trust in each other. We're all super committed," Petersen said. "I think we have a good chance to win the tournament, so that's the reason we're going there."

It's the best 16 teams in the country: we don't want to go there just to be a part of it. We want to go and win matches and do our thing. So far we're doing a really good job. We're really young, but we all know to win matches."

Baylor features three freshmen that

have contributed on a daily basis for the Bears this season. The first is Matias Soto, who is 5-1 overall, 3-0 in dual matches and 2-1 on tour.

The other two are Sven Lah and Roy Smith. Lah is 6-5 overall, but is 5-0 in dual matches this season and has been a big lift for the Bears. Smith is 10-2 overall, including a perfect 4-0 record in dual matches.

The two have also teamed up to form a potent doubles pairing, taking a 5-1 record to Seattle.

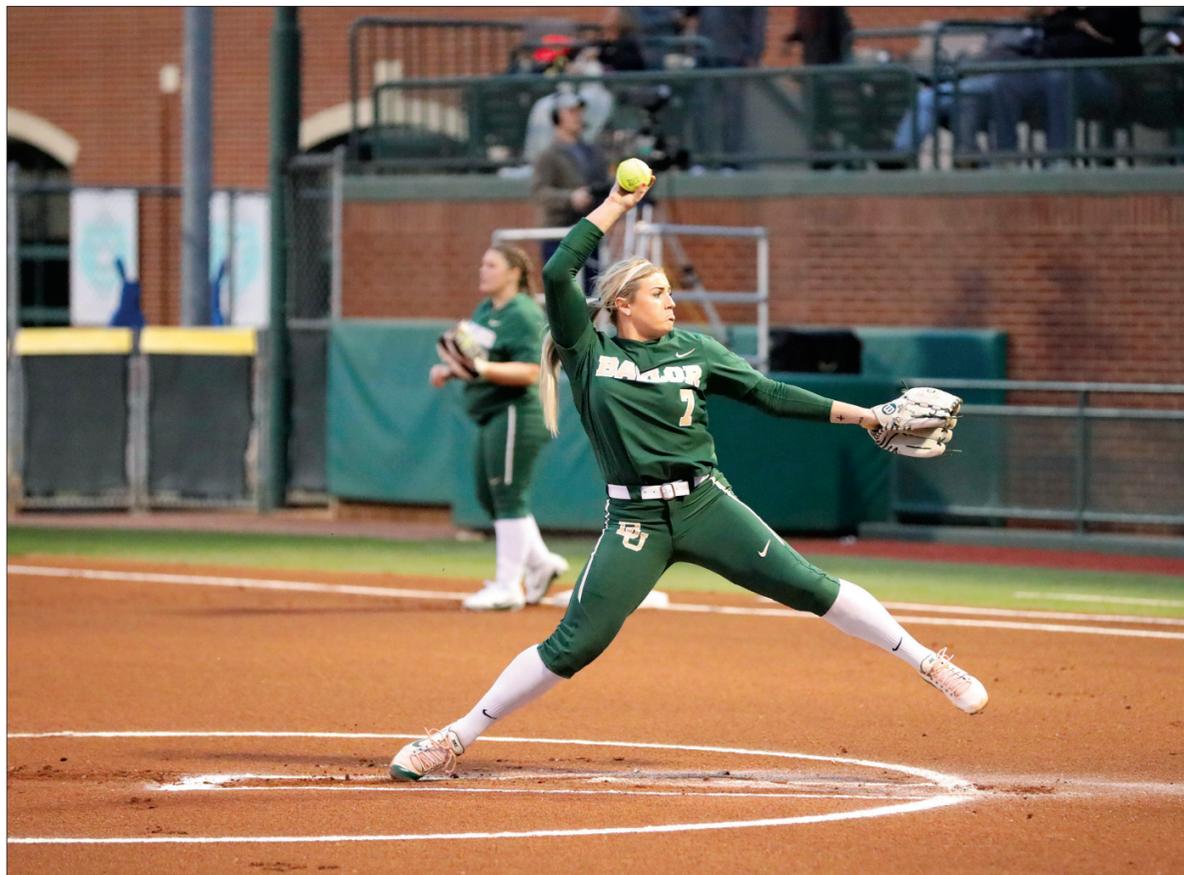
"They've been great. They've been very committed and trusted the process and worked. They're making a difference, and we need them to," Knoll said. "We need to continue to get better. We need everyone to be the best self if we are going to try to achieve what we want to achieve."

**TENNIS >> Page C3**



Ryan Barrett | Multimedia Journalist

**FOR THE LOVE OF TENNIS**  
Tulsa, Okla., senior Will Little works on his serving form during practice.



Jessica Hubble | Multimedia Editor

**BRING IT ON** Senior pitcher Gia Rodoni throws out a pitch on Feb. 9 in a game against Northwestern State. The Lady Bears swept the Lady Demons in their opening series, and Baylor will head to Hattiesburg, Miss., to take part in the Black and Gold Tournament this weekend.

# Lady Bears softball ready for Top 25 showdowns in weekend tournament

**NATHAN KEIL**  
Sports Editor

After a sweep last weekend over Northwestern State at Gettman Stadium, the road gets a lot more difficult for Baylor softball.

The Lady Bears travel to Hattiesburg, Miss., for four games in three days as part of the Black and Gold Invitational hosted by Southern Mississippi.

This is the first of 11 road trips that Baylor will make this season, so the Lady Bears will have to get used to travelling and playing away from Gettman Stadium. However, the heavy travel isn't deterring the team's mindset, according to sophomore pitcher Goose McGlaun.

"We're excited to get going. First road trip is always nice and see how everything plays out," McGlaun said. "We're excited to get to know each other better on this road trip and of course on a bus; it's always fun to hang out with each other."

The Lady Bears will square off against two teams ranked in this week's USA Today/National Fastpitch Coaches Association Poll. Baylor will take on No. 24 McNeese State

today and No. 9 Alabama on Sunday with a doubleheader against Mississippi Valley State and Southern Miss sandwiched in between.

Baylor head coach Glenn Moore said the tournament is the perfect opportunity to test his team early on and see what its capable of.

"It's an elevation in talent, RPI and strength of schedule here for the most part," Moore said. "We will certainly get tested. We're in the process of growing this team, so it will be a great weekend to see where we are and where we need to go from here."

Taking on the McNeese State first means that Baylor will face off against a familiar face in its opener. Dani Price, who worked on Moore's staff as the volunteer assistant coach for four years, now coaches for her alma mater, the Cowgirls. On Saturday, Moore will take on the host Golden Eagles, led by his former player at William Carey, Wendy Hogue.

Moore said that he will change the signals for the games, but only as a confidence boost for his players and not for fear of sign stealing.

"We have a signal system that there's no way to pick it. So we'll probably use that," Moore said. "Dani [Price] isn't about that anyway.

We'll do more so for our confidence than for hers. Dani is a fine coach and a fine person, and you don't have to worry about any of that. But psychologically for your team, I think you change the signals anyway."

Baylor will look to keep its offense swinging at a high rate. The Lady Bears put up 20 runs, pounded out 30 hits and hit .411 as a team. Junior leftfielder Kyla Walker led the team with six hits, while senior centerfielder Jessie Scroggins had five while each scoring five runs. Senior first baseman Shelby Friundenberg drove in a team-high seven runs, and McGlaun was responsible for five.

McGlaun credited Walker and the top of the lineup for setting the stage for the middle of the lineup to produce runs.

"I thought we came out hard, our table setters set the table, and our power hitters were able to bring them in," McGlaun said. "I think that's something we'll build on for this weekend."

From a pitching standpoint, nobody in the country was better than junior Gia Rodoni. Rodoni tossed a five-inning no hitter and

**SOFTBALL >> Page C7**

# Returning roster looks to bring BU baseball back to postseason

**MAX CALDERONE**  
Sports Writer

It was a long four years for the Baylor baseball team without an NCAA Tournament appearance between 2013-2016.

But in 2017, the Bears made it back to the postseason for the first time since 2012. With much of the core roster returning, Baylor hopes to build off last year's success.

Third-year head coach Steve Rodriguez said he has been excited since August to get the new season underway.

"We have a lot of returning guys, which is really exciting. There's just a few spots for us to fill in from last year," Rodriguez said. "But the excitement started back in August."

When players returned from their summer vacations, it was back to work, undergoing strength and conditioning programs. Some players gained as much as 20 pounds of muscle in preparation for the new season.

One of those players is sophomore left-handed pitcher Cody Bradford, who will be tabbed the ace of the pitching staff in 2018. He sported a 5.52 ERA last year, picking up five wins in over 73 innings of work. Bradford said he has gained up to 12 pounds over the offseason.

"I worked a lot in the offseason, putting on more weight," Bradford said. "We all worked hard, we're always out here improving our craft."

Bradford's battery mate and fellow sophomore will be catcher Shea Langeliers, one of the most highly-touted college players in the nation. Langeliers was named to four preseason All-American lists, becoming the first Baylor player in over 20 years to be honored by three or more publications.

After a breakout freshman campaign in which he hit .313 with 10 home runs and 38 RBI, Langeliers will look to live up to the surrounding hype. He is considered a top prospect for the 2019 MLB Draft by Perfect Game.

Langeliers said it's an honor to garner such attention, but wants the media to focus on his team, too.

"Just being a big team guy this year,"

**BASEBALL >> Page C7**



Associated Press

**GOING FOR GOLD** Mikaela Shiffrin raises the American flag in celebration after winning gold in the women's giant slalom Thursday. Shiffrin won her first gold in 2014 in the women's slalom event and became the youngest Olympic slalom champion.

# Team USA superstars shine

**MAX CALDERONE**  
Sports Writer

Through eight days of events, Team USA currently sits in fifth place overall in the latest medal count for the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. The Americans have tallied eight total medals, winning five gold, one silver and two bronze.

Superstars were on display this week, as Shaun White claimed his third career Olympic gold medal in the men's halfpipe and Mikaela Shiffrin picked up a gold of her own in the women's giant slalom.

White was the last snowboarder to come down the hill, needing to beat Japanese snowboarder Ayumu Hirano's score of 95.25 to take the gold. Sure enough, White threw down a massive third run, earning him a 97.75 and putting him in first place.

After a scary injury in October 2017 left White needing 62 stitches on his face, the comeback was complete for the 31-year-old American after not reaching the podium in Sochi, Russia in 2014.

"I didn't go home with a medal, but I learned so much and I just feel like I'm such a better person for having that happen to me," White told NBC before the Olympics began. "Maybe that's something that needed to happen on the path to getting here."

White's back-to-back 1440's won him the 100th gold medal for the United States in Winter Olympics history.

Boerne junior Lee Deckard said it was good to see Shaun White doing well again.

"I liked seeing Shaun White make a comeback and win the gold medal in snowboarding," Deckard said.

Shiffrin took home the gold in the women's giant slalom after posting a time of two minutes and 20.02 seconds. This was her first Olympic win in the GS event.

Expectations were high for Shiffrin after becoming the youngest Olympic slalom champion in 2014. She told NBC's Keir Simmons that with her confidence came feelings of doubt, but relief that she won another gold medal.

"I risked everything that I could," Shiffrin said. "It's an incredible feeling right now."

Shiffrin was unable to land a spot on the podium in what was considered her best event, the women's slalom.

Also making her 2018 Olympic debut was snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis. Famous for falling in the 2006 Olympic games and settling for a silver, Jacobellis was searching for her first Olympic gold in women's snowboard cross. Her bad luck continued as she finished in fourth place in the event in 2018.

Additionally, Team USA sent three men to the ice Thursday to compete in the men's short program portion of figure skating. Adam Rippon, Vincent Zhou and Nathan Chen all competed, but all were knocked off the podium by the time this paper went to print.

The American men's hockey team was also in action, attempting to rebound after an opening game loss to Slovenia by a score of 3-2. Team USA defeated Slovakia 2-1 Thursday night.

Medals were also handed out in the men's skeleton and men's super-G. South Korean Yung Sung-Bin won gold in front of his home fans in the skeleton and Austrian Matthias Mayer placed first in the skiing event.

The 2018 Winter Olympics continue through Feb. 25. All events can be watched on NBC's family of networks.

## PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics USA Medal Count\*



Norway	6	7	5
Germany	9	2	4
Canada	4	5	4
Netherlands	5	5	2

\*Medal count as of 11:30 p.m. Thursday.

Bailey Brammer | Editor-in-Chief

### SPORTS TAKE

# NBA All-Star game leaves out underrated stars

**NATHAN KEIL**  
Sports Editor

In October 2017 the NBA announced a new format for its All-Star game and the way it selects its participants. The process remained mostly the same with 12 players from each conference being chosen by a combination of fan, player and media votes. The leading receivers of votes at each position in both the Eastern and Western conferences were selected as the starters.

However, in a new twist, the top vote receivers from each conference, LeBron James from the Eastern Conference and Stephen Curry from the Western Conference, served as captains and selected their teams from the remaining players who were voted in.

The NBA decided to not televise the draft, but on Jan. 25 the rosters for Team LeBron and Team Stephen were announced.

Joining James on Team LeBron are New Orleans center Anthony Davis and forward DeMarcus Cousins, Golden State forward Kevin Durant, Boston guard Kyrie Irving, San Antonio forward LaMarcus Aldridge, Washington guards Bradley Beal and John Wall, Oklahoma City guards Russell Westbrook and Paul George, New York center Kristaps Porzingis, Indiana guard Victor Oladipo, Miami guard Goran Dragic, Detroit center Andre Drummond, Charlotte guard Kemba Walker and Cleveland forward Kevin Love. However, Love, Cousins, Porzingis and Wall will all miss due to injuries.

Team Stephen will consist of two of his teammates in Golden State, guard Klay Thompson and forward Draymond Green, Toronto guards DeMar DeRozan and Kyle Lowry, Milwaukee forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, Houston guard James Harden, Philadelphia center Joel Embiid, Minnesota guard Jimmy Butler and center Karl Anthony Towns, Boston forward Al Horford and Portland guard Damian Lillard.

The two teams will also be playing for either a local or national organization, with donations directed toward outreach efforts in Los Angeles. The two organizations have yet to be announced, but the winner will get a \$350,000 donation with the losing team getting \$150,000.

On the outside this looks like an incredibly innovative and new take on All-Star Weekend — and it is, and I am all for fresh, innovative takes on the annual narrative. But there is a deep flaw within the system when it comes to selecting the players themselves.

I have no issues with allowing NBA fans to be allowed to vote for their favorite players. However, fans were allowed to vote once per day, every day while the voting window was open, drastically skewing the votes. This isn't the voice of hundreds of thousands of fans, this could be the voice of a few select fans, dedicated to their computers and seeing their "stars" on the court.



Associated Press

**ALL-STAR WEEKEND** Golden State Warriors teammates (from left) Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry receive their All-Star game jerseys Monday night before a game against the Phoenix Suns in Oakland, Calif.

Secondly, there are 30 teams in the NBA and 12 of them are not represented in the All-Star game, while Golden State boasts four players and six other teams boast two. Detroit, Charlotte and Miami are only represented because their players filled injury roster spots. How is this a celebration of the world's best players and the league itself if not all 30 teams are represented in the game?

This is truly a shame, because there are plenty of All-Stars in the NBA not playing on Feb. 20 who deserve the opportunity to showcase their talent to the world. It is an unjust system that favors big-time players, like James, Harden, Westbrook and Curry — big-time markets such as New York, Washington, Boston and the greater Bay Area — and success of the team in Golden State and Cleveland. These are the teams that get the bi-weekly nationally televised games on ESPN and TNT. These are the teams and the players that get the exposure and, therefore, get the fan support. Yes, the NBA is a business, and it has its TV deals, but why shouldn't it look to celebrate all 30 of its teams in 29 different markets? Why shouldn't it allow some of the under-the-radar superstars more opportunities to impress NBA fans like

Phoenix's Devin Booker, the Clippers' Lou Williams, Denver's Jamal Murray, or Chicago's Lauri Markkanen? These All-Stars continue to perform night-in and night-out and don't get the appreciation they deserve.

Major League Baseball has all 30 teams represented in its All-Star game, why can't the NBA do the same? I realize that the NBA rosters are smaller, but it could expand the roster to 20, allowing for all 15 teams in each conference to be represented and then give five additional spots to other fan favorites. I won't make a push for a minutes limit on players, but the games are long enough, and with no defense played whatsoever, there's no reason why all players can't make the court at one time or another.

If the NBA continues to keep the roster sizes as is, and puts all the power in the hands of the fans, the same players and teams will always be the All-Stars, leaving those less seen, but every bit as worthy, players from smaller markets left to watch the game from home.

The 67th NBA All-Star game will air at 7 p.m. on Feb. 18 on TNT and will be played at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

# Training to take on the Toughest Half in Texas

**VIVIAN KWOK**  
Reporter

Take your training to the track by registering for the Student Foundation's annual Bearathon. Its fundraising efforts for scholarships and scenic course of campus and Waco attracted over 2,000 registrants across Texas last year, according to its webpage.

The Bearathon earned its nickname as "The Toughest Half-Marathon in Texas" with its challenging course. However, the race also brings runners other rewards in addition to the physical feat. Overcoming the mental obstacle and receiving support from the running community are two more aspects of finishing a half marathon.

Woodlands senior Katherine Barron, coach for the Bearathon training program, said wrapping your mind around the idea of the 13.1 mile distance can be a difficult aspect for any runner.

"I have been running since junior high, and I still struggle with the mental aspect sometimes," Barron said.

Barron said she listens to music or podcasts as she runs and that training with a partner is also a great way to help avoid the boredom of long-distance running.

"It kind of gets your mind off the repetitiveness of running," Barron said.

Danville, Calif., sophomore and Bear Cycle instructor Madi Jeha is another runner who understands the mental

taxation of marathons. She said she was a very competitive track and cross country runner in high school. Like Barron, she also recommends training and running with a friend.

"The running will feel a lot shorter if you have somebody who's running with you," Jeha said.

Jeha also said she sometimes plans out her day at some point during her long runs.

"You need to concentrate on the running, but at the same time, it's such a long race," Jeha said. "Think about other stuff, too."

Strengthening your marathon mentality could also help push you physically as you train and on the day of the race, Jeha said.

"It really is mind over matter. You really just have to tell yourself, 'you can do this,' because you can do it," Jeha said. "Even if you don't think you can, your body definitely can do it."

Jeha said finishing a half marathon is a feat even if you ran at a slower pace than you intended, needed to walk three miles or had to walk the entire course. She said a half marathon is about you and your achievement.

"That's why you always see those 13.1 stickers on the back of people's cars," Jeha said. "Because they're proud of what they've achieved."

Jeha also said the community of runners and supporters the day of the race maintain a high level of morale, which can continue to push you mentally. She said the running community is one of the best you can be part of.

"Even going into it, you'll know you'll be able to do it, because you have all these people around you," Jeha said. "You're not doing it by yourself. You're running with other runners who are going to encourage you."

Jeha said the people on the sidelines help spur the atmosphere of support for the runners and said she runs for them.

"I think people don't realize how fun of an atmosphere a half marathon really is because you have all these people cheering you on who just want you to finish, too," Jeha said. "When you have all these people around you, it makes everything better. It really does."

Jeha and Barron both encourage people to participate in the Bearathon or any half marathon. Barron said it has helped with her personal growth, self-esteem and confidence.

"You never know what your body can do," Barron said. "Your body can do so much more than you realize and it'll only make you stronger mentally."

Jeha said you will enjoy the experience and may even find a new community of people.

"Keep going. Keep going because you'll absolutely love what you're about to do," Jeha said.

The Bearathon will take place March 24.



Josh Aguirre | Multimedia Journalist

**BEAR IN TRAINING** A student runs around the track in the McLane Student Life Center (SLC).

## TENNIS from Page C1

Petersen, who got off to a rocky start this season, has been excellent his last two times out on court, allowing himself to recapture the confidence in his groundstrokes.

"I was playing really well in the preseason and the first tournament and then I changed to a new racket, which probably wasn't the smartest decision," Petersen said. "Two days before the matches, I decided to switch back, and I trusted my forehand again and my serve again. Those are the two most important parts of my game."

Petersen is 6-4 overall, with a 3-2 record in both dual and tour matches. He also boasts a 3-1 record with both sophomore Constantin Frantzen and junior Jimmy Bendeck in doubles.

"He's not really getting any favors in terms of the competition for him and he's not going to get any moving forward," Knoll said. "I don't think he's a guy who's going to go out and win every match. That's not what he needs to do. He needs to go out and improve and appreciate

the level of completion he's playing and make that a real positive."

Frantzen enters with a 12-6 record overall. Junior Will Little has been playing at an exceptionally high level, boasting a 12-4 record overall, including 5-0 in dual and 7-4 on tour. Junior Johannes Schretter currently sits at 14-8 overall and Bendeck 10-9 overall.

Knoll said his expectations remain high for his team this weekend, but when it's all said and done, it's about continuing to grow and get better moving forward in the season.

"What's great about this tournament is you get such great competition in a condensed period of time. We're going to play a tough match, tough match, tough match, and it's going to teach us a lot," Knoll said. "That's the best thing about making this tournament. Winning it is great, but it's more about the process of getting better."

Baylor (6-1) earned the No. 12 seed in the tournament and will take on No. 5 Stanford at 5 p.m. Friday.



Ryan Barrett | Multimedia Journalist

**CONTINUING TO GROW** New Haven, Conn., freshman Roy Smith returns a hit against UNLV Saturday Jan. 27 in Waco. The Bears defeated the Runnin' Rebels 4-0.



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# Dishin' and Swishin'

## Men's and Women's Basketball Highlights



Baylee Versteeg | Multimedia Journalist

**FASTBREAK** On Jan. 22 Senior guard Manu Lecomte dribbles past Kansas State junior guard Barry Brown, Jr. to make a basket, putting the Bears ahead. Baylor lost 90-83.



Baylee Versteeg | Multimedia Journalist

**TURNOVER** On Dec. 2, 2017 Senior guard Manu Lecomte lunges for a ball as it is knocked out of bounds, causing a Wichita State turnover. Wichita State won 69-62.



Baylee Versteeg | Multimedia Journalist

**POWER MOVE** Junior center Kalani Brown makes a power move past K-State defense to make a layup to put the Lady Bears ahead. Baylor beat Kansas State 75-50 on Jan. 28.



Baylee Versteeg | Multimedia Journalist

**GUARD** Junior guard Jake Lindsey takes on University of Kansas junior guard Sviatoslav Mykhailiuk in an attempt to make it to the hoop. Baylor beat Kansas 80-64 on February 10.



Ryan Barrett | Multimedia Journalist

**LAYUP** Senior forward Nuni Omot attempts a layup as senior forward Jo Lual-Acuil Jr. holds Oklahoma State back. Baylor beat Oklahoma State 76-60 on Jan. 15.



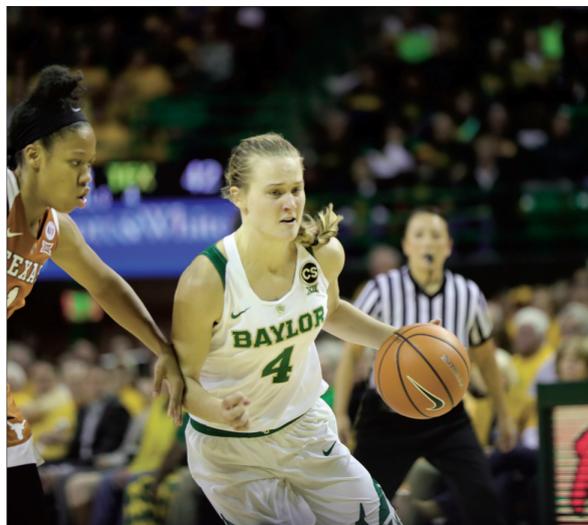
Baylee Versteeg | Multimedia Journalist

**SWISH** Senior forward Jo Lual-Acuil Jr. makes a layup against a tough Kansas state defense as they double up on him. Baylor beat Kansas State 90-83 on January 22.



Ryan Barrett | Multimedia Journalist

**JUMP SHOT** Senior forward Dekeiya Cohen makes a jump shot while being defended by Oklahoma State junior forward LaTashia Jones. Baylor beat Oklahoma State 77-64 on Jan. 31.



Ryan Barrett | Multimedia Journalist

**DRIBBLE** Senior guard Kristy Wallace beats University of Texas sophomore guard Alecia Sutton down the court during a fast break. Baylor beat Texas 81-56 on Jan. 25.



Will Barksdale | Multimedia Editor

**THREE-POINTER** Sophomore guard Natalie Chou makes a three-point shot against Kentucky senior forward Chayla Cheadle. Baylor beat Kentucky 90-63 on Nov. 30, 2017.



Josh Aguirre | Multimedia Journalist

**FOUL** Senior forward Dekeiya Cohen attempts a layup and is fouled by University of Oklahoma senior center Vionise Pierre-Louis. Baylor won 74-65 on Feb. 5.

## SPORTS TAKE

# U.S. snowboarding transcends age, experience in Olympic competition

**MOLLY ATCHISON**  
Print Managing Editor

Of the sports included in the 2018 Winter Olympics, snowboarding has been one of the most exciting and rewarding for the United States. So far, men's slopestyle, women's slopestyle, women's halfpipe, men's halfpipe and men's snowboard cross have all finished, and there's still five events left in the category.



The U.S. has won gold in four of the five completed events, but what is perhaps the most impressive part is the wide age gap in the participants. The two men's winners, Redmond Gerard and Shaun White have a 14-year age gap, and the women, Chloe Kim and Jamie Anderson have a 10-year gap between them. Team U.S.A. has an incredibly diverse team, and each placing member has had ample reason for their success.

17-year-old Summit County, Colo. native Redmond Gerard has dominated the slopes since he was just two years old, and continued to do so on an Olympic level on Feb. 11 in the men's slopestyle final, bringing home the first U.S. gold with a come-from-behind upset, finishing with a score of 87.16. Gerard delivered more than anyone expected, and pulled off his tricks (including a ridiculous triple cork 1440 at the finish) with a unique flare only he could offer. Although this might have been the most entertaining adventures Gerard has given us yet — complete with a hilariously shamble-y pre-run story about late nights and missing jackets — Gerard has been conquering slopes since his 2015 Snowboarding World Cup debut in New Zealand.

Gerard has always had a flare for the dramatic, using his incredible balance to pull off backside moves that even the most experienced boarders would cringe at, such as the switch backside 1260 he threw in on the slopes last week. Perhaps the only boarder who could compete on Gerard's level this run was Canada's Mark McMorris, who's talent for big backwards tricks earned him second place in this year's Olympic games. Not only does he bring major chops to the Olympic stage, but Gerard

also brings a level of youthful humor to a team that has been dominated by veterans for years.

Not to be out shined by, well, anyone, 31-year-old Shaun White earned his third Olympic gold this year in the men's halfpipe event. Prior to the games, many argued that White had lost his edge, being one of the oldest members of the U.S. snowboarding team — he proved everyone wrong by absolutely slaying his event. White took on the halfpipe with a characteristic elegance and ease, and instantly, all the competition went away. When he hit his first two tricks, the world held its breath, because he had never attempted a double cork 1440 and a cab double cork 1440 together, and the last time he attempted the cab he crashed and burned. After successfully landing those two, he finished off with a slick trick, and proceeded to throw a fit at the bottom after earning a 97.75, and subsequently the gold. White's antics at the bottom may have been slightly overdramatic, but when it's the third Olympic gold medal you've won, I think there's a bit of



Associated Press  
**SNOWBOARDERS TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT** 17-year-old Chloe Kim finishes in 1st and takes gold after her halfpipe run Tuesday.

room for over-celebration.

The two snowboarding masters who truly stole the show, however, are the women. Chloe Kim is also a 17-year-old halfpipe boarder, but the California native's raw skill put her as a frontrunner from the very start. Earlier in 2018, Kim placed first in the X-Games, and has been a finalist there since 2015, when she matched White's record of a straight 100 halfpipe run.

In these Olympic games, there was no competition for Kim on the pipe, and she drew a strong fan base as well, including the local South Korean community. Kim's family are first generation immigrants from South Korea, and she still has a large extended family presence in the area. With a support group in the area, it's not surprising Kim came in first, but her McTwist and her flawlessly executed frontside moves might have helped a bit. And like her male counterpart Gerard, Kim's animated social media presence and her relatable humor has made

Last, but certainly not least, Jamie Anderson took the stage in the women's slopestyle. Anderson, a 27-year-old from South Lake Tahoe, CA, made history this year, being the first female snowboarder to win two gold medals in any category. Anderson, who's talent for taking calculated jumps landed her in first. Only such an experienced snowboarder would be able to correct for the strong winds that blasted many of the slopestyle competitors, causing contestants to fall all over the place.

Perhaps due to the wind, or simply an off day for women's slopestyle, Anderson managed gold with only an 83.00 run, comparatively low for a slopestyle event. Anderson, who played it safe during her run, still managed to execute some impressive tricks, and more importantly, landed them despite weather conditions. Her experience in the field, including her impressive X-Games record and her first Olympic run, gave Anderson a leg up, and allowed her to adjust her tricks in the air.

With five events to go, including difficult group events such as cross and speed-based events like slalom, the U.S. snowboarding team faces some strong competition. However, where other teams are carried by heavily experienced boarders, the U.S. team has a variety of old and new, and their selections for each event have proven solid so far. Sometimes, experience can save the day, but never underestimate the fresh-faced and fearless approach of young blood on the Olympic circuit.

## SPORTS TAKE

## Olympic hockey mediocre without NHL players

**KALYN STORY**  
News Editor

For the first time since 1994 the NHL did not send its players to the Olympics. This was a decision based largely on money and is negatively affecting NHL players, hockey fans and the sport as a whole.

Before the 1998 Winter Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the NHL agreed on a deal that would bring NHL players to the games with their costs and insurance covered by the IOC. As reported in the National Post in 2016 the IOC had paid for the travel, insurance, accommodations



and other costs for NHL players in previous Olympics, but refused to continue to do so for 2018. The NHL also cited reasons such as not wanting to pause the season or risk injuries to players as reasons for not participating in the games.

Covering insurance was an obstacle for the IOC; insurance for NHL players cost the organization \$7 million during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, according to the New York Times.

The NHL has been said to be a business first and a sport second, and that has never been more clear than in its decision to not participate in the 2018 Games and it is time for that notion to change.

The National Hockey League Players' Association put out a strong statement against the decision in April.

"The players are extraordinarily disappointed and adamantly disagree with the NHL's shortsighted decision not to continue our participation in the Olympics," the statement

said. "Any sort of inconvenience the Olympics may cause to next season's schedule is a small price to pay compared to the opportunity to showcase our game and our greatest players on this enormous international stage."

The United States Olympic Committee responded to the decision with a statement posted on its website: "We're disappointed that the N.H.L. has decided not to participate and feel for the players who were looking forward to the Games. That said, we're confident U.S.A. Hockey will build the best-possible team to compete and win in Pyeongchang."

One of the most outspoken proponents of playing in the Olympics is Russian star Alex Ovechkin. Originally, Ovechkin said he would leave the Washington Capitals to play for Russia even if the NHL did not break for the Games. However, he has since said he would stay with the NHL this season.

"I see the news this week and I am very disappointed that IOC, IIHF and NHL put me and all NHL players in this position when some of the best players in world do not have chance to play in the Olympic Games," Ovechkin said in a statement released in April. "This is not just about me but all the NHL players who want to play and have a chance to win Gold for their country. Our countries are now not allowed to ask us to play in the Olympics. Me, my teammates and all players who want to go all lose. So do all the fans of hockey with this decision that we are not allowed to be invited. NHL players in the Olympics is good for hockey and good for Olympics. It sucks that will we not be there to play!!"

ESPN asked several players in March 2017 if they wanted the NHL to participate in the Olympics and players overwhelmingly said yes, they want to play.

Duncan Keith of the Chicago Blackhawks and two-time Canadian Olympic gold medalist told ESPN there is no better hockey to be part of than at the Olympics.

"As a player, the level of hockey there, when you're in a one-game-takes-all and you're on Canada playing the U.S., there's no better hockey you're going to be a part of," Keith told ESPN. "As a competitive guy, I want to be part of those games. And obviously I want to represent my country again and bring home the gold. On top of all that, it's good for hockey to have the best players in the world at the Olympics. Otherwise, what is it, really?"

Although pausing the season to participate in the Olympics may not be the best immediate financial decision for the league, it is the best decision in the long run. The appeal of playing for one's country can be an intensely powerful thing, and not just for the athletes. If the average fan is given the choice between watching Team USA face off against Canada or a meaningless game 40 of an 82-game season, even for their favorite NHL club, the league may struggle to hold viewers.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman was a big proponent of getting NHL players to participate in the 1998 Games. In an interview with the New York Times in 1997 Bettman stressed the importance of exposer during the Olympics. He related the potential benefits of the NHL going to the Olympics to the international fame the NBA received after the Dream Team participated in the 1992 Olympics.

NHL players participating in the Olympics puts over a hundred of the world's elite hockey players on an international scale, playing with pride for their countries. Bettman said NHL players in the Olympics would give the world a compelling hockey tournament of high magnitude, without them the quality of the game plummets.

The future of the NHL's participation in the Olympic Games is unclear. The NHL's refusal to participate so far only applies to 2018. In the NHL's statement announcing that they would not participate in the 2018 Games they

said the the IOC made it clear that the NHL's participation in the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing was contingent on its participation in PyeongChang.

China, the most populous nation in the world, used to be one of the poorest nations in the world, but this is no longer the case. China is finally reaching a level of economic development that would allow hockey to exist and thrive in China, making the NHL very interested in sending its athletes to China.

The question going forward is: will the IIHF and by extension, the IOC cave and improve the quality of the 2022 games by allowing the NHL to participate?

Only time will tell, and the answer likely depends on the success of the NHL-less 2018 Olympic tournament. If no one cares about or watches the 2018 Olympic hockey tournament without the best players in the world, the IIHF will want to increase its revenue by allowing the NHL to participate in 2022.

But if the 2018 games are a business success and if the IIHF determines that the additional profits of allowing the NHL to participate in the Olympics are not worth the headache of collaborating with the NHL, we may not see NHL players in the Olympics for the foreseeable future.

The NHL has missed its shot at sending players this year, but they need to do whatever it takes to get players back in the tournament as soon as they can.

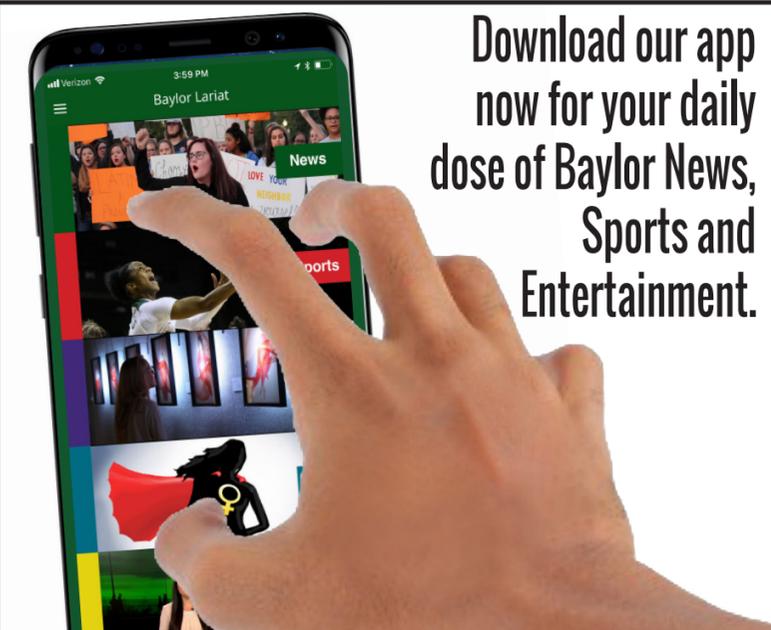
Each country should send its best athletes in every sport to the Olympics. Sometimes that is going to be professional athletes, sometimes it will be a mix, but professional athletes should not be denied the opportunity to compete for their country.

Ovechkin said it best, there is nothing like the Olympics, but until the NHL allows its athletes to participate, Olympic hockey will be sub-par.

# The Lariat

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**Sports**

**BASEBALL** from Page C1

Langeliers said of his expectations for himself. "We've been getting after it all fall and all spring in the weight room and on the field, so the big expectation is just to go further than we did last year."

Baylor was eliminated from the 2017 Houston Regional after dropping two games to Texas A&M and Houston. But with key players like Bradford, Langeliers and preseason All-American senior closer Troy Montemayor returning, the expectation is to pick up right where they left off.

"Now that we have that experience and the leadership, we just have to finish," Montemayor said.

One of the best finishers in the nation, Montemayor racked up 12 saves last season in addition to a team-best 2.10 ERA. He will anchor a strong Baylor bullpen that includes senior set-up men Joe Heineman and Drew Robertson. Sophomore lefty Ryan Leckich will also take on an increased role after appearing in just seven games in 2018.

Also on the mound, sophomore righty Hayden Kettler, junior Kyle Hill and sophomore transfer Jacob Ashkinos are all expected to have a shot at making the weekend rotation. Rodriguez said the competition was exactly what he hoped to see in the fall.

"They did exactly what they're supposed to do. They came out, they competed, they've really transformed their bodies to look like professional pitchers," Rodriguez said of the trio. "It's a good problem for a coach to have. It means I get to use all of them, which is great."

Senior right-hander Alex Phillips will be another name in the mix of pitchers. He gave the Bears a 4-3 record in eight starts in his first season back from an arm injury.

New to Big 12 baseball this year will be the addition of two 15-second pitch clocks that will be installed at Baylor Ballpark. With no runners on base, pitchers will have 15 seconds to begin their windup, otherwise a ball will be called. If the batter is not in the batter's box inside the allotted time, a strike will be called.

Though the pitching staff will be a strength for Baylor this season, it is the wealth of returning position players that will provide depth and experience for Rodriguez's team.

"We've got some names in our lineup that people look at and have to go 'Oh my Lord,'" said fourth-year junior outfielder Richard Cunningham on the Lariat's sports podcast "Don't Feed The Bears." "You've got Shea Langeliers, you've got Davis Wendzel, you've got All-American closer Troy Montemayor. You look at our lineup and say 'that's someone we do not want to run into.'"

Wendzel, a sophomore third baseman, had a terrific second-half of the 2017 season, boosting



Photo Illustration by Jessica Hubble | Multimedia Editor

his total batting average to .301 and hitting eight home runs along the way. The power-packing duo of Wendzel and Langeliers will be a force in the middle of Baylor's lineup.

The Bears also boast an athletic outfield that brings back two of their three starters in Cunningham and junior T.J. Raguse, providing speed and a knack for getting on base to the top of the batting order. The pair combined for nine stolen bases last year. McLennan Community College transfer Cole Haring will also see action in the outfield for Baylor.

Up the middle, junior second baseman Josh Bissonette flashes a talented glove in a smooth defensive unit with senior shortstop Tucker Cascadden and freshman Nick Loftin, who is projected to contribute right away.

"I think he has an opportunity to come in and do something real special," Rodriguez said of Loftin. "He's a freshman who I really have high hopes for."

At first base will be the platoon of sophomore catcher/first baseman Andy Thomas and senior

utility man Tucker Johnson, who will serve as the Bears' top pinch-hitting options off the bench as well.

Also back this year is senior outfielder Levi Gilcrease, mostly used as a defensive replacement in late-game situations in 2017 thanks to his cannon for an arm.

Baylor will face a tough schedule in 2018 that includes road trips to UCLA, Memphis and a packed Frisco College Classic tournament that features games against California, Texas A&M and Louisiana Tech.

The Bears get to play Big 12 favorites Texas Tech and TCU at home this year, but will travel to take on Oklahoma in Norman, Okla., and Texas in Austin.

Due to travel complications, Baylor will no longer open with Purdue. The Bears will now open the new year with a three-game series against Houston Baptist this weekend in Waco. First pitches are scheduled for 6:35 p.m. on Friday, 3:05 p.m. on Saturday and 1:05 p.m. on Sunday.

**This Weekend in Sports:**

**Today**

**Baseball vs. Houston Baptist**  
**6:35 p.m. at Baylor Ballpark**  
Lariat Radio play-by-play will be available during the game.

**Saturday**

**Women's basketball vs. Kansas**  
**1 p.m. in Ferrell Center**  
Lariat Radio play-by-play will be available during the game.

**Women's tennis vs. Ole Miss**  
**1 p.m. at Hurd Tennis Center**

**Baseball vs. Houston Baptist**  
**3:05 p.m. at Baylor Ballpark**

**Men's basketball vs. No. 7 Texas Tech**  
**6:30 p.m. in Ferrell Center**  
Lariat Radio play-by-play will be available during the game.

**Sunday**

**Women's tennis vs. Miami**  
**1 p.m. at Hurd Tennis Center**

**Baseball vs. Houston Baptist**  
**1:05 p.m. at Baylor Ballpark**  
Lariat Radio play-by-play will be available during the game.

**SOFTBALL** from Page C1

struck out 11 in the Lady Bears' 8-0 opening win. She also pitched an inning of relief, striking out the side while allowing an unearned run.

Behind Rodoni will be junior Regan Green and McGlaun, who both got victories in their opening starts against Northwestern State, but Moore expects both to elevate their games this weekend.

"I want to see them working ahead in the count, fewer three-ball counts, just probably relax a little bit more especially with Regan Green. She's got a game under her belt, relax a little bit more. Clearly we felt that everything that was lacking is something she's shown before and she can do. So it's just a matter of getting comfortable for her," Moore said. "[McGlaun's] got to get the off-speed. She throws as hard as most anybody we'll see this weekend and the ball goes down well. But if you time it, you're just going to let that speed help you to hit the ball a long ways. Off-speed is the key to keeping the hitters'

timing off, and she's got to develop that."

With some familiarity from a coaching standpoint and ranked opponents in the other dugout, Baylor will learn a great deal about itself and the team it can be moving forward.

But with all the team's experience, including that of senior third baseman Caitlin Charlton, the Lady Bears aren't afraid of a challenge—they embrace it.

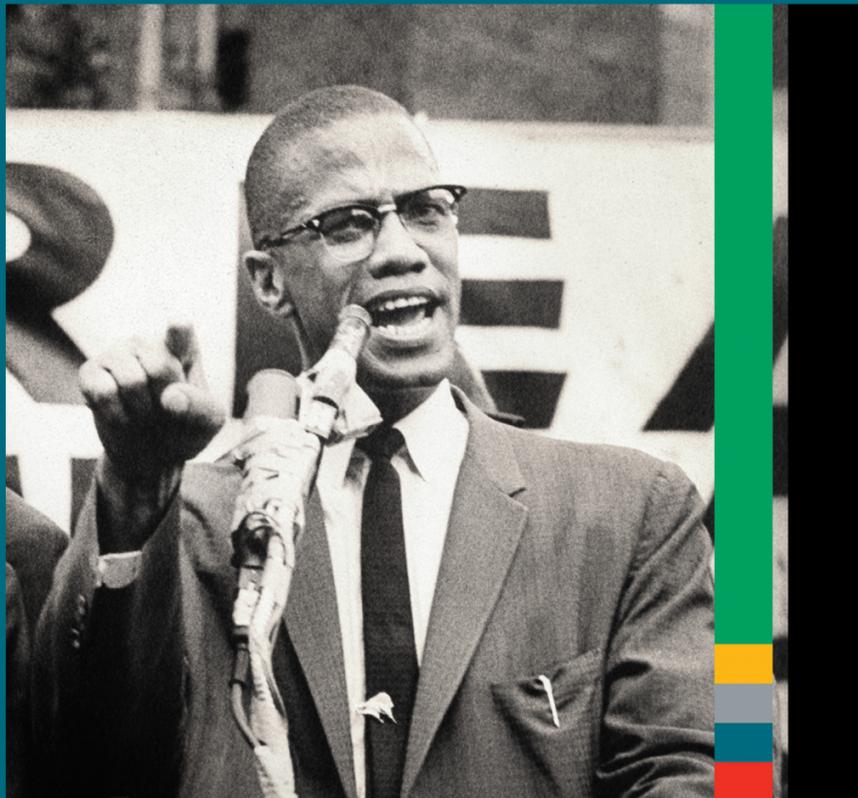
"It's always good to play those top ranked teams. It shows you where you're at, what you need to get better on and it's just great to have some good competition," Charlton said.

Regardless of the competition, the expectation remains the same—win every game.

"We're looking to win all our games there, hopefully go out, have a strong showing and come out undefeated after this weekend," McGlaun said.

No. 11 Baylor (3-0) will meet No. 24 McNeese State (4-1) at 4 p.m. Friday.

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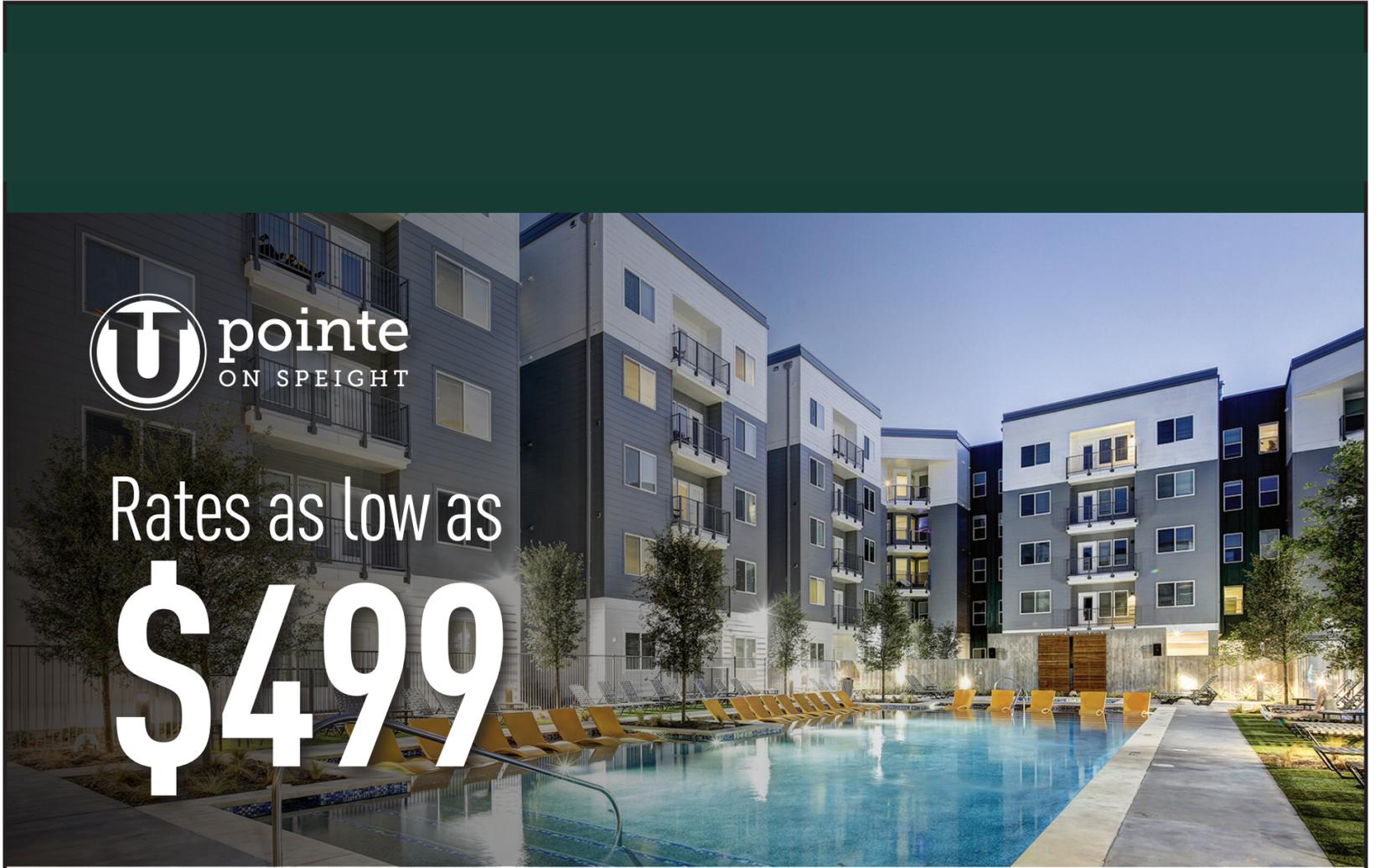
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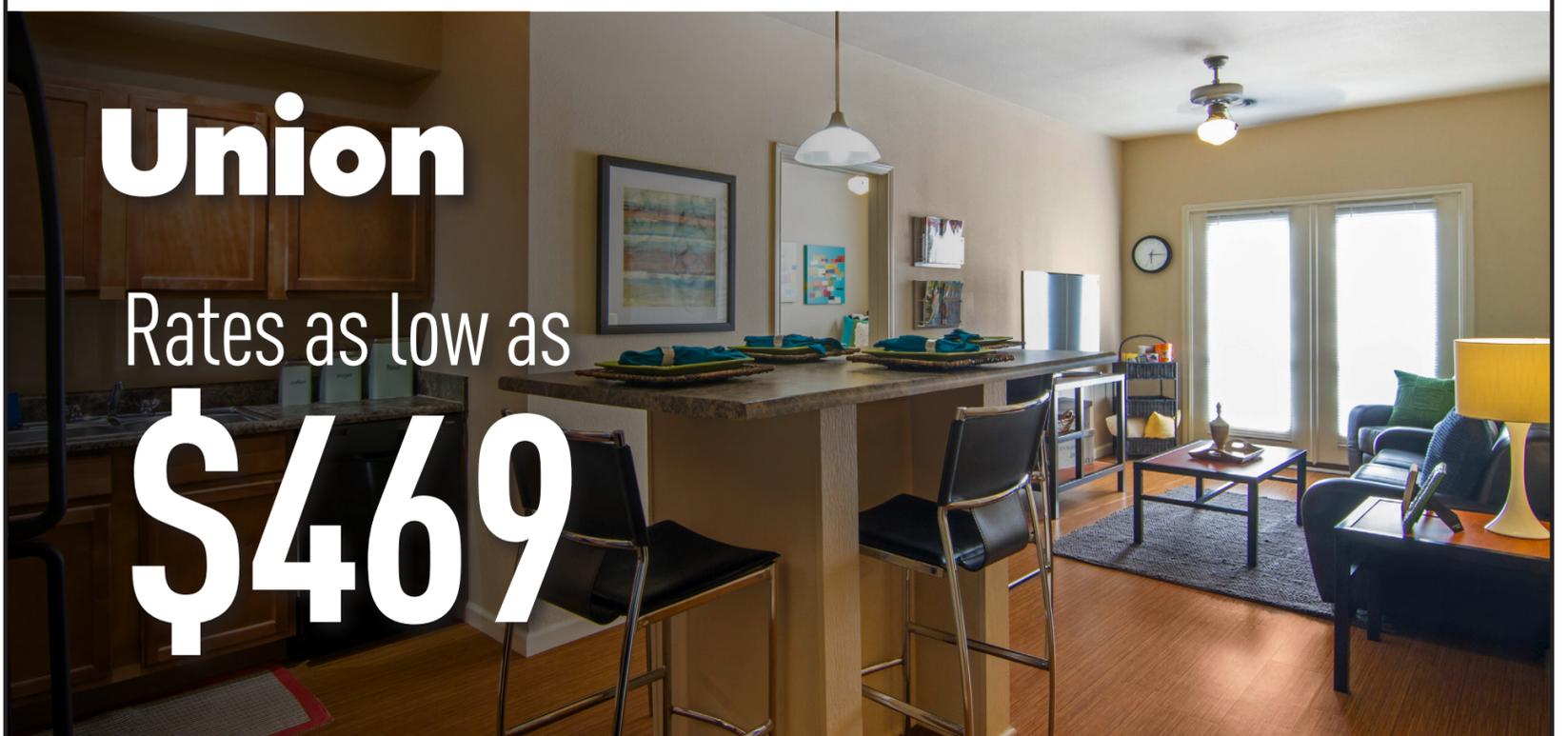
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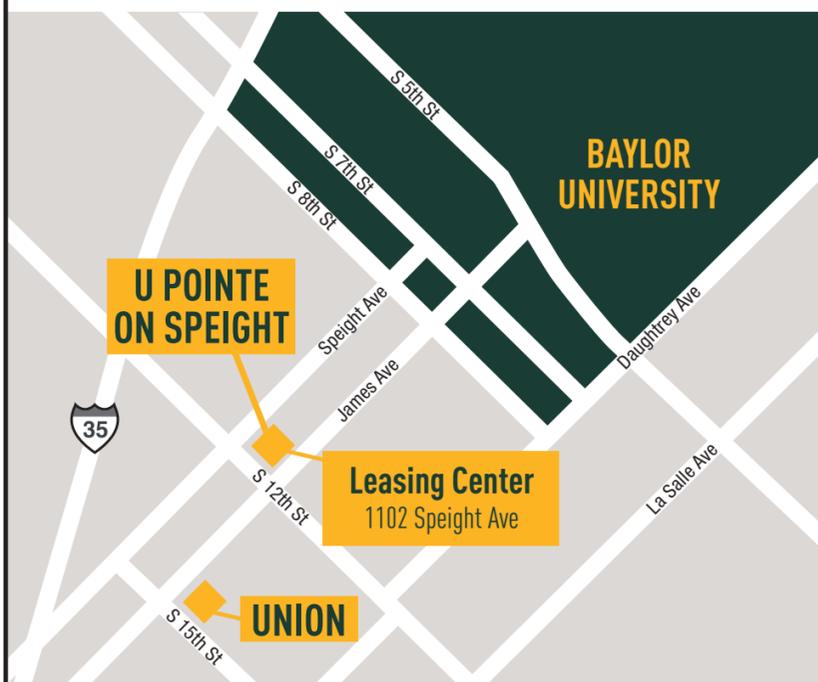


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