

Clinton supporter on the street in Austin

Frances McNair
San Marcos teacher

What are you most interested in hearing about tonight?

The environment is very important to me. I am an environmentalist.



McNair

How do you feel about Clinton's ability to address environmental issues?

If you look back on the 90's, it was a good decade for clean air and clean water, and then the bush administration has been a disaster with all (his) anti-environmental policies. I think she knows exactly where we need to go with that.

Obama supporter on the street in Austin

Frank Lockwood
Lawyer from Hawaii

What are you most interested in hearing about tonight?

I think the most important issue in the debate is campaign finance reform.



Lockwood

How do you feel about Obama's ability to address campaign finance reform?

The fact that he hasn't taken any money from special interest groups or lobbyists is huge. That's never been done before. He's done it, and he's raised more money than Hillary. He's created a movement that's bigger than Hillary's.

DEBATE from page 1

democratic nomination.

CNN contributor and frequent columnist Roland Martin called the first part of the debate "extremely slow," but said it was clear that the moderators "wanted some punch" in the conversation.

"It really picked up steam when she began to talk about his speeches and his words," Martin said. "That was a very sharp exchange."

In the past few weeks, the Clinton campaign called attention to Obama's use of several sentences that are similar to those of Deval Patrick, the governor of Massachusetts, an Obama supporter and co-chairman of his campaign. Clinton called the use of the words, "Change you can Xerox," which did not go over well with the crowd.

"I was sitting on the second row, and I heard hissing," Martin said. "Nearly the entire audience started hissing when she made that comment."

With the exception of a few heated exchanges on health care and the aforementioned

issue, the candidates seemed committed to focusing their attention on the common goals of the Democratic Party.

The economy conundrum was discussed at length, with Obama and Clinton both pledging they are the one to turn it around and not Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona.

"I think that I will be very comfortable and effective in taking on Sen. (John) McCain over the fiscal irresponsibility of the Republican Party that he's been a part of," Clinton said.

Obama said the war is fundamentally at odds with repairing the economy.

"As John McCain says, he doesn't really understand the economy that well," Obama said. "It is clear from his embrace of George Bush's policies that he doesn't, and that's what I intend to change when I am president of the United States of America."

Although commentators stated earlier in the week that Clinton would have to make a strong showing in the debate to stay competitive, no one was willing to say if she managed to do that decisively.



David Poe/Lariat staff

George Lopez answers questions Thursday regarding the Democratic debate held at the University of Texas - Austin. Lopez said he doesn't believe (Sen. Clinton) did well enough in the debate to win over Texas.

"She may have done better in foreign policy," Martin said. "But he got the better of her concerning the speech comments. I didn't see a homerun for either candidate."

State Representative Chet Edwards D-Texas, who endorsed

Obama this week, said he thought there was a winner.

"It was mostly a respectful debate," Edwards said. "I think people saw two leaders that share many values, but I think Senator Obama's message about bringing change wins the day."

BLOOD from page 1

Marks said.

Marks said he is excited about working to get a low cost non-invasive technique for people with diabetes to use.

"It's the whole idea that it affects and betters life in the world. It's nice to be a part of something with an impact," he said.

The researchers are trying to keep with the idea of developing

appropriate technology, Marks said. This means that the technology is logical for the country to have.

For example, Marks said, it wouldn't be logical for a third-world country to invest in a new super computer.

"But this is something that could really make a difference," Marks said.

He said he believes it would be very effective in third-world countries because it would cut back on the use of needles, and

overall be a more sanitary way to administer the test.

While the two men work within the same department, they focus on different areas of the research.

"Randall's a genius at micro-waves, and my specialty is taking data and squeezing information out of it," Marks said.

Marks and Jean originally met in 2003 during their new faculty orientation and were discussing research opportunities shortly thereafter, Marks said.

"At Baylor each professor is

their own kind of entrepreneur," Marks said.

Professors create proposals and base their research upon what they're interested in.

This is one area the two men were both interested in, and their backgrounds just happened to compliment each other very well, Marks said.

Right now Marks and Jean are in the process of writing a proposal for research funding from the National Institutes of Health, which would help move their research to the next level.

Godspeed by Ben Humeniuk



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How SING acts stack up

ΔΔΔ

Christmas came twice this year for the Tri Delta women as they presented a colorful creation called **"'Twas the Day After Christmas."** Energetic elves filled the stage with sound and even brought Santa and the reindeer along. Loud and proud, from their great a cappella start to their flashy costumes, the Tri Deltas made our nice list this year.

ΑΤΩ

ATO showed a new kind of hospitality with **"Be Our Guest,"** a fun act set in a hotel lobby with the most enthusiastic bell boys you'll ever see. The energy stayed high even as they sang "going down ..." for a creative rendition of "Love in an Elevator." Don't check your luggage at this hotel though, because it's likely to get thrown around a bit.

ΑΧΩ

The women of Α-Chi-O took the audience back to a familiar place with **"Of Thee I Sing"** ... but maybe a little too familiar. The banjo duel and funny contests at the 4th of July extravaganza added some spice to the cook-out as they rehashed American anthems. And though the singing and dancing were nice, the patriotic theme is a little tired.

ΚΩΤ

KOT broke it down in **"From the Bayou to the Big Easy,"** with a perfectly synchronized routine, chock-full of energy and smooth Southern charm. The smoky start and stunning backdrop set the stage for an impressive performance and the most manly jazz hands we've seen yet. From country bumpkins to blues crooners, KOT hit all the right notes.

ΚΑΘ

The so-called "Blues Sisters" brought a peppy performance to the **"Theta's Blues House"** as the women touted neon outfits and tried to gain access to a Chicago-style blues club. The style, smiles and signature blues shades were a nice touch, but the only group singing any blues was the audience after the theme apparently got thrown by the wayside.

ΦΚΧ

Tap-dancing inmates took the stage in Phi Chi's **"Ain't No Chain"** and through their cells proved "you're never gonna break (their) faith." The striped prison garb added uniformity to their dancing, and bars didn't stifle the soloists. They rocked the cell block, but the monotony of prison life seemed to show through in the routine's lack of variety.

ΑΔΠ

With a unique concept and great set, ADPi had potential to show the audience a good time, but instead had them checking their watches. The theme, **"Racing with the Clock,"** got confusing and the multitude of clocks drowned out the actual performance. The soloists were nice and we enjoyed the clock mice, but not enough to save ADPi.

ΚΚΤ/ΚΣ

This co-ed group pulled out all the stops when they sailed into port and went out **"On the Town"** with this swingin' act. The '30s-inspired theme could've been cliché, but originality, liveliness and polished moves gave it a new spin. With the energy levels through the roof, they nailed every step and solo. The women were flappers, while the men literally flipped and gave the audience an infectious, truly entertaining experience.

ΦΓΔ

The Fiji's dove into their performance of **"In Our Yellow Submarine,"** and surfaced with a splash. The originality and enthusiasm was engaging and entertaining, to say the least. While other sets were sub-par, this one was just a sub — complete with periscope, singing sea men and a surprise guest. They even paid homage to *The Little Mermaid* with a rendition of "Under the Sea." No sea-sickness with this act, but your stomach might ache from laughter.

ΠΒΦ

They may not have been in Moody, but there was some **"Mischief in the Library,"** when Pi Phi took the stage. With giant books as props, they proceeded to disregard quiet hours, as well as their theme as they sang "Let's Dance On." The overall energy was high and the book nerds brought some much-needed humor to a dull subject.

ΣΑ

Though most would consider explorers and natives anything but **"A Perfect Match,"** Sing Alliance brought the two together in their act, complete with spear-carrying savages, pilgrims in short skirts and a giant totem pole. High energy and Disney songs made the performance fun to watch, but the lack of variety left the audience wanting a new discovery.

ΖΕΑ

The Zetas caused a traffic jam while **"Rockin' Down the Highway"** in creative cardboard cars and colorful costumes. Cab-bies, truckers and grannies battled it out for the right of way while dancing, singing and dodging human cones. The songs were right on track until they hit a bump in the road with "Hit Me Baby, One More Time."

ΣΑΕ

It may seem a little desperate to give the pizza delivery guy a solo, but for ΣΑΕ, **"Saturday Night's Alright"** when you've got a hoppin' party with penguins, white rappers and a gorilla who can do the worm. There seemed to be no strangers at this *Animal House*-style party, but the banana did seem a little out of place.

ΚΧΑ

KXA spent **"A Night on the Wild Side"** — in the jungle, actually. The set brought a little bit of the Amazon to Waco Hall as tigers and leopards and birds (oh my!) tried to shake the nerves and shake some tail feathers. The glow-in-the-dark gloves provided a unique spark to the performance as seemingly sweet sorority girls turned into scary predators.

ΣΧ

Sigma Chi reflected on days gone by, with an overused theme and an underplanned routine, **"Break on Through."** Donning tie-dyed T-shirts and protest posters, they sang some classic songs and even had a nice Johnny Cash tribute. But the absence of passion and preparation was obvious as their final soloist was a chicken ... literally.

By Amanda Robison and Bethany Poller

Entertainment editor and Assistant city editor

The Spring 2008 All-University Sing performances kicked off last night in Waco Hall, and we've got the play-by-play in case you missed it. And it will come as no surprise that two groups who placed in the top three in last year's Sing are our pick for 2008's best all-around act. Though there was some stiff competition, we think Kappa Kappa Gamma and Kappa Sigma's joint act, "On The Town," deserves the big prize, epitomizing everything Sing stands for: fun, unity and pure entertainment. Phi Gamma Delta's "In Our Yellow Submarine," will surely be a crowd favorite with some of the most creative (not to

mention hilarious) elements Sing has seen in a while. The acts that seemed to be the most appealing were from groups who thought outside the box and made the acts their own. The Tri Delta elves' spirit and KOT's country dance moves were excellent, and the Zetas hit the road and rocked the house.

Our only complaint would be that some groups' titles sounded promising, they proved to be misleading when groups strayed from the themes and left audiences a little confused. Performers gave it their all, however, and made the acts fun to watch.

Overall, the Sing performances this year will not disappoint, so don't forget to pick up tickets in the Bill Daniel Student Center before it's too late.



David Poe/Lariat staff
Photo illustration by Luis Noble

Shreveport, La. senior Rebecca Lilley performs as one of Santa's helpers in Tri Delta's "'Twas the Day After Christmas."

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Lady Bears four games from clinching Big 12 title

By Justin Baer
Sports writer

With only four games left in the regular season, every game has monumental meaning for the Lady Bears.

Baylor is tied with Kansas State University for first place in the Big 12 after the University of Oklahoma Sooners handed the Wildcats a 68-65 loss Wednesday night.

But the Lady Bears still have a date with No. 15 Oklahoma State University and an away game slated with Texas A&M University.

In a similar predicament from last season, the task is clearly defined. Win the rest of the games and clinch the conference title. Lose a game and there are three teams in the mix who are just as eager for a championship.

Coming off of its largest margin of victory over a top-10 team in school history, No. 9 Baylor (23-2, 10-2) will now travel to Ames, Iowa, as it takes on the Iowa State University Cyclones.

Baylor has lost its previous two games on the road. Add the

fact that the Cyclones average 9,144 fans per game, second in the Big 12 Conference, to the equation and the Lady Bears have another overwhelming challenge waiting for them at the Hilton Coliseum.

"It's always hard to play on the road. Especially with the fan support they have, it's kind of like ours," said Jonesboro, Ark., junior Rachel Allison. "It's just hard to play out there with the band and their student section into it in the back of your ear."

The game features the two reigning Big 12 Conference players of the week in Jessica Morrow and Kelsey Bolte. Morrow averaged 19.5 points and seven rebounds last week in a loss against the Longhorns and the 79-59 victory over the Sooners.

Meanwhile, Bolte, a freshman, averages 10.3 points per game and 5.4 rebounds per game on a Cyclone team that leads the Big 12 in 3-point shooting.

"You got to be out there making them drive to beat you," head coach Kim Mulkey said. "You can't give them open looks on the perimeter. They move

very well without the ball, so it's just not on-the-ball stuff. We can't get in a half-court game with them; they are very good at executing things."

Iowa State has had a roller-coaster of a season that features key wins at the University of Colorado and at Oklahoma State. However, the Cyclones also have vivid memories of losses like an 80-49 blowout at Kansas State and its most recent loss, a 60-46 defeat to Texas A&M University.

But as Mulkey said, Baylor has to prepare for the best the Cyclones have to offer. Although on paper the Lady Bears should defeat a team like the Cyclones, an upset in conference play is not a rare occurrence, especially since Iowa State has already accomplished the feat this season.

"When you go to Oklahoma State and win on the road, something we certainly weren't able to do, you're doing something right," Mulkey said.

Tip-off for Saturday's game is scheduled for 11 a.m. and will be televised nationally on Fox Sports Net.



Luis Noble/Lariat staff

Senior guard Angela Tisdale outplays player of the University of Oklahoma Sunday at the Ferrell Center. Baylor won, 79-59.

K-STATE from page 1

put the Sooners up one. Curtis Jerrells drew a foul on the other end but missed both of his free throws, sending the Oklahoma crowd into a frenzy and allowing the Sooners to take away with a crucial win.

For Baylor, it was back to the drawing board after collecting its sixth loss in seven games.

The team has continually touted its lack of focus as a key to the month-long slide, and it was ultimately that lapse in focus Tuesday that handed Oklahoma a win.

"It's going to be tough, but we've got five games left," Jerrells said. "And if we continue on our one-game season and take care of those five games, we should put ourselves in pretty decent shape."

The Wildcats are led by all-world forward Michael Beasley. The 6-foot-9 freshman is averaging league-leading numbers in rebounds and points per game and is an early consensus pick for Conference Player of the Year. A comparable freshman, Oklahoma forward Blake Griffin destroyed Baylor for 46 points and 30 rebounds in two games against the Bears this year. The good news is that Baylor's already faced him twice and Drew said that should aid Baylor's defensive game plan against Beasley.

The bad news? Beasley is an improved version of Griffin, and he's coming off his eighth weekly Big 12 award.

"The only thing you can say about him is he's the No. 1 pick in the (NBA) Draft," Drew said. "There's not many weaknesses in his game. He can do about everything."

Woods and Stricker advance

The Associated Press

MARANA, Ariz. — Tiger Woods barely broke a sweat. Steve Stricker went into overtime for the second straight day. They had only one thing in common Thursday in the Accenture Match Play Championship, which ultimately was all that mattered.

Both are still playing. One day after a stunning comeback to survive the opening round, Woods built a quick lead against Arron Oberholser and never gave him much hope in a 3-and-2 victory.

The thrills belonged to Steve Stricker, who made a 10-foot birdie putt on the 19th hole to extend the match, then beat Presidents Cup teammate Hunter Mahan with a birdie putt just inside 50 feet. It was the second straight day Stricker won in 20 holes.

It was the second straight year that Phil Mickelson was given a long weekend off. Fresh of a victory at Riviera, he couldn't make enough birdies to keep up with Stuart Appleby, who couldn't miss.

Men's golf team claims Rice Intercollegiate title

By Brian Bateman
Sports writer

After winning the Rice Intercollegiate Invitational, the Baylor men's golf team is preparing for a mid-week tournament.

"You know, tournaments are hard to win," head coach Greg Priest said. "I think it's definitely good to get a win, that's your goal."

The Bears scored 878 points to lead the field, with University of California at Davis at 880, the University of the Pacific at 884 and the University of Mem-

phis 887. Eight other schools competed, including Rice University, who finished No. 8, and the University of Nebraska, who came in No. 11.

Baylor held a three-shot lead going into the final round over the University of Memphis, but the University of California at Davis flipped positions with the Tigers, finishing just two shots behind the Bears.

Bill Allcorn, an Abilene junior, tied with senior teammate Wes Williams for No 12 overall.

"I thought that our guys handled themselves well," Priest

said Tuesday. "There was a little bit of pressure since all the scores were counted, but we played well."

The Bears played with just four players due to Jacksboro sophomore Colton Williams' withdrawal to attend a funeral.

Baylor scored just a 282 in the first round, the best start in the tournament's history.

"That first round Bill (Allcorn) played, he shot a 70," Priest said.

But Allcorn, who has struggled with consistency, had trouble in the later rounds.

"He's got a tendency to build a good shot, as of late, and then he's found a way to let it get away from him," Priest said.

But Allcorn was able to come back.

"It's good to start off a season with a win, especially being down a man," Allcorn said. "All our scores counted, which made us play harder."

Austin sophomore Jeff Gerlich noticed part of his game improved since the fall.

"My decision making has improved," he said. "I've been more consistent."

It was the second tournament victory of the year for the Bears, who look to create a streak in Houston-area competitions. The Bears will return to Houston for the All-American Golf Classic Monday and Tuesday in Spring.

The tournament field hasn't been announced, but Baylor will need to make adjustments no matter why they are playing, Priest said.

"This team is a pretty resilient team," Priest said. "We've continued to make mistakes, but we have found a way to bounce back."

2012: Baylor vs. Notre Dame scheduled at Superdome

By Joe Holloway
Reporter

The last time Baylor's football team played the University of Notre Dame, Bill Clinton was in the midst of the Lewinsky scandal, John Glenn was orbiting the Earth as the oldest person ever in space, and America had just enjoyed watching Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa slug out a record-breaking summer in pursuit of Roger Maris' single season home-run record.

It was 1998. The Bears, led by head coach Dave Roberts, were unranked and outmatched against the No. 16 team in the nation. Playing in front of more

than 80,000 fans on the road, Baylor lost 3-27.

Now it looks like the Bears will get a chance to go another round with the Fighting Irish. But, since the game is scheduled for 2012, it will be up to future players to win the bout.

Nevertheless, anticipation for the game has many people buzzing, especially from a recruiting perspective.

"It will give us national exposure," athletic director Ian McCaw said. "It will really help us from a recruiting standpoint."

Originally the game was supposed to be played in the Dallas Cowboys' new stadium in

Arlington. But due to changes in Big 12 television contracts, it will now be played in the Louisiana Superdome and broadcast on NBC.

"I think it's a good move," said Jason Howell, publisher for SicEmSports.com. "As far as recruiting, Baylor's been wanting to get more into Louisiana and they lost out on a couple of guys from there this year."

About an eight to nine hour drive from Waco, the Superdome is certainly a longer drive for Baylor fans than Arlington would have been. However, a good turnout is still anticipated.

"It's close enough to Texas

that people can make the trip fairly easy," Howell said. "Everybody that I've talked to seems to like it."

The Superdome, and the city of New Orleans itself, are certainly iconic images. Howell added that he thought the trip could provide those who choose to make it with a nice little vacation.

"It should provide a good atmosphere," he said. "I think it'll be a good deal for everybody."

McCaw seemed excited by the prospect of taking on the Irish in the Big Easy.

"New Orleans just seemed like a natural location," he said.

"Having a chance to play a program like that and being in a location that will give our fans a chance to enjoy that game and be a part of that event is great."

Though 2012 seems like a long time away, it's far from unusual to schedule games that far in advance.

"We just scheduled one for 2016," McCaw said.

But even with games of such a high caliber lurking in the years ahead, Baylor still has plenty of football to be played in the coming season and no one knows that more than McCaw.

"We're spending most of our time getting ready for 2008," he said.

Duke lacrosse players sue school, city for emotional distress

By Mike Baker
The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — More than three dozen current and former Duke lacrosse players filed a lawsuit Thursday claiming they suffered emotional distress during the furor over the now-dis-

credited rape case against three of their teammates.

The lawsuit accuses Duke University, the City of Durham and several school and police officials of fraud, abuse and breach of duty for supporting the prosecution of the case.

The lawsuit accuses the pri-

vate university of implying the highly ranked team was guilty by canceling its season after the rape allegation surfaced.

It also accuses Duke of ignoring, suppressing and discrediting evidence that proved the players innocent, and of idly standing by while players suf-

fered abuse and harassment on campus.

"This lawsuit is born out of Duke and Durham's sustained wrongdoing and callous conduct against the players," lead attorney Chuck Cooper said while announcing the lawsuit at a news conference in Washing-

ton, D.C.

The lawsuit also accuses former Durham County District Attorney Mike Nifong and his investigators of hiding and fabricating evidence and argues that the city of Durham should be held accountable for Nifong's actions.

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Saturday at 3:00 p.m.
Sunday at 3:00 p.m.**

WOMEN'S TENNIS



Saturday 11:00 a.m.

EQUESTRIAN



**FRIDAY
Baylor vs. Kansas State**

**SATURDAY
Baylor vs. Purdue**

MEN'S TENNIS



Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Stepping up to the plate

By Brian Bateman • Sports writer



File photo

As February draws to a close, the Baylor baseball team winds up for a long season — one the Bears hope leads them to Omaha.

Last year's young squad took half of the season to gel, but ended the year by making the Big 12 championship game. Their 35-27 record earned an NCAA tournament berth in Houston, where Texas Christian University eliminated the Bears, 10-5.

This season, the Bears expect much better.

"We've got a lot of talented players," head coach Steve Smith said. "I don't remember a year where the players are this far along."

Part of that improvement comes from the extra weeks in the new season format. In an effort to cancel out poor weather in the North, the first day of practice is capped on Feb. 1, and the first official game can be no sooner than Feb. 22.

But the extra time has given the Bears a chance to practice.

"We got a couple more inter-squad games in, so that's going to help us," Bulverde sophomore pitcher Kendal Volz said.

"We're tired of beating up on each other," Aurora, Colo., sophomore catcher Gregg Glime said.

In the infield, the Bears return every starter save one from last year. However, Raynor Campbell and Shaver Hansen switched positions at second and third base, a move better fitted to their talents, Smith said.

"All of the infielders are shortstops," he said. "When they all came in as freshmen, we were just trying to figure out where to put them. Raynor wound up at third, Shaver at second. I didn't want to start shuffling them around during the year."

Several costly errors at second base and a more natural fit at third brought Hansen to the hot corner.

"The key to all of this is Shaver," Smith said. "Third base is the toughest base to play. Not every shortstop can play up and still get to the ball."

While Hansen holds down third, Campbell will hold down the bench. Undergoing surgery on his thumb, Campbell's injury will keep him out for six or seven weeks.

"The injury's the only real disappointment that's been going on for the past few weeks," Smith said. "I guess if you're going to have something like that happen, it's better to happen at the beginning of the year."

Campbell was placed on the Louisville Slugger Freshman All-America team for his .474 slugging percentage and .321 batting average. The injury won't cause much of a drop-off on the defensive end, but his replacement, Chan-

dlar, Ariz., freshman Landis Ware, could have trouble filling his offensive production during that time.

McGregor sophomore Dustin Dickerson will guard first and Virginia Beach, Va., junior Beamer Weems will handle shortstop duties. *Baseball America* named Weems the top defender in the nation, and the Wallace Award, for the nation's top college player, added him to the preseason watch list.

"It's always an honor to get preseason awards, but it doesn't mean anything to the team," Weems said.

At catcher, the Bears will miss Matt Czimskey's team-leading .362 RBI, as well as his leadership. Glime spent time in 19 games last spring, including three starts, but he realizes he has a hole to fill.

"(Czimskey) was definitely a big player on our team, so I've got some big shoes to fill," Glime said. "I think (catcher) is really important as a leadership role."

Glime will be giving signals to the mound, where the Bears are stacked with talent. Volz returns with Van sophomore Wade Mackey, Castroville sophomore Willie Kempf and Mesquite senior Randall Linebaugh behind him. Added to the mix is senior closer Nick Cassevechia and redshirt-freshman Shawn Tolleson, who give the Bears what Smith calls "one of his deepest (bullpens) ever."

Volz struck out 65 batters last season in 68 innings, but managed just a 5.16 ERA. Cassevechia, Baylor's other Wallace Award watch list member, had 72 and a 3.12 ERA and 11 saves.

"I think all of us just matured and got better this fall," Volz said. "We got a lot of confidence. There are a lot of quality pitchers."

Tolleson, who underwent Tommy John surgery after an injury in 2006, will likely make his first collegiate start this weekend. A member of the nation's No. 1 recruiting class in 2006, he plans to work his way into the weekend rotation.

"It's taking me a long time to get back, but I'm ready to pitch," Tolleson said. "We've got a lot of good pitchers out there, and I'm going to try and compete for a starting position."

In the outfield, the Bears lost a quality player in center fielder Chase Gerdes, but Sugar Land senior Paul Miles has experience - and speed. Lorena junior Ben Booker will work in left field, while Channelview sophomore Aaron Miller will return from a broken arm to play in right.

Last year the Bears finished sixth in the Big 12 conference, but Baylor expects to end much higher. *Baseball America* ranked the Bears No. 15 in the nation, and the coaches picked Baylor to finish third in conference.

"There are some good teams in the conference, but I'd like to finish higher," Weems said. Some of those teams include No. 16 University of Texas, No. 6 University of Missouri and No. 21 Texas A&M University. All will prove difficult for the Bears throughout the season.

Baylor will begin out-of-conference play today when Purdue comes to the Baylor Ballpark. It will give the Bears a chance to finally get out and play.

"It's a lot different for us pitchers when the stands are full and there's a man in the box," Volz said.

Key starters

Name: Kendal Volz
Position: SP
Height: 6' 4"
Weight: 228 lbs.
Hometown: Bulverde
Classification: SO
SOs: 65
ERA: 5.2



Volz

Name: Nick Cassavechia
Position: CP
Height: 6'
Weight: 183 lbs.
Hometown: Dallas
Classification: SR
SOs: 72
ERA: 3.1



Cassavechia

Name: Beemer Weems
Position: SS
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 176 lbs.
Hometown: Virginia Beach, Va.
Classification: JR
HR: 9
RBI: 59



Weems

Name: Aaron Miller
Position: RF
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 210 lbs.
Hometown: Channelview
Classification: SO
HR: 4
RBI: 35



Miller

Name: Ben Booker
Position: F
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 197 lbs.
Hometown: Lorena
Classification: JR
HR: 2
RBI: 32



Booker

Name: Raynor Campbell
Position: 2B
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 182 lbs.
Hometown: Katy
Classification: SO
HR: 5
RBI: 29



Campbell

Big 12 Predictions

1. Texas — Year in, year out, the Longhorns compete for a Big 12 title. This season will be no different. One of the top offenses in the nation last year, Texas compiled 6.5 runs per game, which isn't hard when five players ended the season with better than a .300 batting average. For Texas to make the College World Series, the pitching will have to step up, which allowed 4.9 runs per game last year. Tomball outfielder Kyle Russell, Rockwall catcher Preston Clark and Round Rock outfielder Jordan Danks should set the mark to beat for the Big 12. Texas is the preseason favorite, but baseball is known for upsets. The Longhorns' April 11 weekend series at Missouri and the State Farm Lone Star Showdown in May will be essential.

2. Missouri — Missouri's rise has come suddenly and unexpectedly: 2007 was the first year the Tigers posted less than 20 losses since 1999. But the Tigers aren't content with just a 19-8 conference record; they are aiming for a College World Series appearance — and rightfully so. The Tigers will have to replace three infielders, especially Brock Bond, who left for the MLB draft. On the pitcher's mound the Tigers have one of the best arms in the nation. Aaron Crow pitched in 117 and two-thirds innings, struck out 90 batters and pitched two complete games. Mark your calendars for the weekend of April 11, when the Tigers go head-to-head against the Longhorns at Taylor Stadium for what might determine the regular season title.

3. Baylor — Eight underclassmen starters return from a 35-27 season, and with them they bring another year of experience. A solid infield returns, featuring both Katy sophomore Raynor Campbell and junior Beamer Weems, who led the team with 47 RBIs. Strong pitching will work wonders for the Bears, as closer Nick Cassavechia, who had 11 saves and 72 strikeouts in just 52 innings, returns with extra strength in front of him. If the Bears hope to push for the title, they will have to have consistent play from underclassmen. Pitching will carry the Bears through their out-of-conference schedule, but the Big 12 will cause problems if the Bears struggle.

4. Texas A&M — 13-13 in conference play doesn't usually equate with success the following year, but the Aggies look to change that assumption. A veteran group returns with nine players batting over .300, including senior infielder Blake Stouffer, who amassed 85 RBIs and a .668 slugging percentage on 102 hits. While the hot bats will carry over into 2008, a rotation on the mound could cause internal trouble. Texas A&M lost Kyle Nicholson and David Newmann to graduation. Each logged more than 100 innings on the field. While several good pitchers remain, the bullpen will be the question mark on the season. If the Aggies can solidify a weekend rotation, they will be in place to battle for the conference championship.

5. Oklahoma — Oklahoma is possibly the youngest team this year. Four of the top five offensive threats have graduated, as well as two important pitchers. But what does remain is a strong crew returning from an 11-16 season. Infielder Aaron Baker leads the returning squad with 50 RBIs. Oklahoma will have to find solid pitching if it wants to compete for the title, but competition for second or third is well within the Sooners' grasp.

6. Nebraska — Graduation took a bite out of the Huskers, leaving the team young but talented. Nebraska lost Andrew Brown, who was the offensive slugger. They will have to find a bat to make noise in the conference. In the circle, righty Johnny Dorn will have to make up for the loss of Luke Wertz and Matt Foust. His 10-3 record will help ease that transition. The Huskers are talented enough to jump on unsuspecting teams and pull an upset or two, but don't expect Nebraska to boast a Big 12 championship.

7. Kansas State — The Wildcats finished No. 7 in the Big 12 but failed to post double-digit numbers in the win column. But things might change this spring. Pitcher Daniel Edwards returns, collecting 11 saves and keeping opponents to just a 1.73 batting average last year. On offense, Tomball outfielder Byron Wiley returns with a .366 batting average, a .494 on base percentage and converting 14 of 15 steals. Kansas State should compete with the pack, but shouldn't rise or fall too far from No. 5.

8. Oklahoma State — A senior-laden 2007 team gave Cowboy fans a strong 42-21 showing, but unfortunately students eventually graduate. What is left is anyone's guess. Seven of nine starters are gone from the field, and the veteran pitching left with them. First baseman Rebel Ridling and Jordy Mercer will have to lead the 'Pokes if they want to compete in the Big 12. Mercer's role will have to extend to the mound. Establishing himself as the club's best closer, he will be called upon often to finish off opponents. Andrew Oliver and Aerick Taylor will have to mature quickly. Look for the Cowboys to finish much lower than last season's 16-11 conference record.

9. Texas Tech — Last season is one the Red Raiders would like to forget, ending the season dead last of the 10 teams playing baseball in the Big 12. Fortunately, there isn't anywhere to go but up. With a revamped coaching staff and FieldTurf installed at Dan Law field, Lubbock might be in store for a competitive squad. For the Red Raiders to become competitive with the middle of the pack, incoming transfers and freshmen will have to make their presence felt, as well as turning a 4-13 road record on its head. The Raiders will probably rise a few slots, but it's not something to get your guns up for.

10. Kansas — The Jayhawks came within one game of .500, going 28-30 last year, thanks in part to redshirt-senior outfielder John Allman's performance last year. Kansas returns most of 2007's starters, but holes in the infield will probably make their presence felt early. The Jayhawk faithful will hope for a stronger bullpen, which averaged only a 4.47 ERA. If that doesn't improve, Kansas will have to attend to business at the plate. Don't expect much from the depleted Jayhawks but a few, scattered "Rock Chalk, Jayhawk" cheers.