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Clark's awful lyrical skills plague latest album

By AMY GONZALES
CONTRIBUTOR

Drifting into the shade of blues and folk, Guy Clark's portrayal of country music has a unique sophistication. Clark's dramatic acoustics and strong lyrics overall give his album a sullen style.

An album that is completely overpowered by a magnificent guitar drowns out all efforts put forth by Clark as a songwriter.

Clark's "Somedays the Song Writes You" has lyrics pertaining to an outlook on life, which many would never realize due to the brilliant guitar.

Overcrowded tracks that have the sole purpose of making the listener overflow with emotion will



SENIOR MCGUIRE

Guy Clark's latest album, "Somedays the Song Writes You" hit shelves on September 2.

likely put them to sleep instead.

Clark takes country to an entirely different level in his follow-up album by including

folk-sounding music that is by far the only thing that gives the CD worth.

Clark's genius lyrics, while they are relatable to the everyday person, should have been left unspoken for the sole reason that such music dubbed into the background are great alone.

Lyrics based on how people live their lives and how people should live their lives are completely left unjustified seeing as its quite easy to get swept away by instrumental part and are quite easily left ignored.

Music that is forgettable and unintentionally made background music, by listeners, tends to leave little to the imagination.

Eager to set forth with a masterful album Clark fell short to anyone wanting to broaden his or her music taste.

The lyrics are geared to be country, yet drift in the norm of blues in every track. Sad lyrics that are intended to make a person feel the depth of life are well-written, but they would be better off created as poetry. Clark's is brilliant as a songwriter and is nonexistent compared to his acoustics.

Meant to be wondrous in dropping and a best seller, Clark's new album would have been better off as an instrumental CD. Extraordinary in sound the music has a combination that would work only in parts but not as a

whole.

The album by far was totally over done. The powerful lyrics on the album needed to be sung a whole lot louder than they actually are and music that needed to be played down gave the overall set up of the album a sloppy feel.

Clark's album fell short of the innovative country that we know today.

Any music hunters that buy the album on a whim should be ready to be let down since Clark was unable to mesh his skills as a songwriter, as well as a musician. Clark lacked the finesse and the creativity needed to ensure that his album didn't seem as it was just put together overnight.

Clark set forth on a mission to puy together an all-around great album and fell short drastically; needing to tone down his greatness, he landed flat on his face with an overpowering and dramatic album that is overwhelmed to the ear. His old-fashion rhythm can in no way keep up with today's country music.

Stuck in the past and only capable to satisfy the needs of his lifetime fans Clark is far from captivating the "now" generation.

Guy Clark's album deserves some credit, but only because of his intellect on the guitar.

Grade: C+

Post Grad captures audience but misses its mark

By ADEOLA ARO &
LAURA REMSON
STAFF WRITERS

"Post Grad," directed by Vicky Jensen, surprised us in a good way.

It wasn't exactly what we expected. We planned for mediocre performances, predictable punch lines and a happily ever after ending.

After an up-and-down, roller coaster type plot, the guy gets the girl, along with everything else either of them ever wanted. The movie was that and more.

We found ourselves relating to the main character, something many recent college graduates will feel too.

Ryden Malby (Alexis Bledel of "Gilmore Girls"), has the perfect plan for her life: make good grades in high school, get a scholarship to a great university and land the perfect job with a reputable publishing company.

With all of the steps but the last complete, she graduates from college.

Then, in an unlucky turn of events, she does not get the job she has planned her whole life around.

co-star Adam, the "Friday Night Lights" star Zach Gilford, find themselves as "post grads," living at home. All around them, their friends are landing fantastic jobs at notable companies.

Adam gets into Columbia for law school but wants to play guitar for his band, while Ryden is scraping the bottom of the barrel for any job that will hire. Following numerous unsuccessful interviews, Ryden finds herself in the one place worse than living at home — working for her dad.

On top of that, she is left without a mode of transportation. Her father, played by Michael Keaton, is an entrepreneur of sorts, with plans to sell products out of his home while he tries to fix Ryden's car.

Also at home are her neurotic grandmother, played by the acclaimed Carol Burnett, who thinks she is moments from death and carries an oxygen tank with her at all times, and her mother, the hilariously sarcastic Jane Lynch.

The easy favorite in this movie is Ryden's younger brother, Hunter. His behavior problems are just the beginning of the comedy that surrounds this clumsy kid. To say that he's "different" would be an understatement.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alexis Bledel and Zach Gilford star in "Post Grad." Ryden Malby (Bledel) has just graduated college. Unable to find a job, she is forced to move back in with her parents, much to her chagrin.

After being found in a compromising position with the

Brazilian neighbor, Ryden realizes that finding a job is priority No. 1.

The most interesting part of this movie is how relatable it is.

Grade: B-

What you should be reading...

McCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

We asked three book-industry experts to recommend two must-read books for the fall.

Kathryn Popoff, vice president for adult trade- merchandising at Borders Books:

Fiction: "The Hour I First Believed" by Wally Lamb. "His books always make you think about them for months after you finish reading them."

Nonfiction: "Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution" by Thomas L. Friedman. "It's really topical and addresses hot-button issues everybody should be well-versed on."

David Callanan, site merchandiser for the Amazon.com Online Bookstore:

Fiction: "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo" by Stieg Larsson. "This crime thriller has enough twists and turns that you don't want it to end."

Nonfiction: "The Irregulars" by Jennet Conant. "A fascinating look at young-readers author Roald Dahl's early life as a British spy in pre-World War II Washington. His spy ring encompassed (James Bond creator) Ian Fleming and Bill Stephenson _ code name Intrepid, one of the most well-known spymasters of the 20th century."

Sara Nelson, editor-in-chief of Publishers Weekly magazine:

Fiction: "The Hour I First Believed" by Wally Lamb. "It's been 10 years since he last published. It's a great American novel, with sweep and size and personality."

Nonfiction: "The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family" by Annette Gordon-Reed. "She explores the connection between Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemings (and the families that resulted)."

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Sony unveils lower PS3 price to mitigate stress on consumers

By YURI KAGEYAMA
AP BUSINESS WRITER

TOKYO (AP) -- Sony Corp. slashed the price of the PlayStation 3 around the world in a move that analysts said is likely to boost sales of the game console while not adding much to its money-losing earnings.

The Japanese electronics maker introduced a revamped, slimmer version of the PlayStation 3 on Wednesday, raising its hard drive to 120 gigabytes from 80, and lowering the price by about \$100 worldwide.

Sony cut the price of the current model to the same price as the new model - \$299 in the U.S. from \$399, and in Europe to 299 euros from 399 euros, but kept it unchanged in Japan at 39,980 yen (\$420).

Shawn Layden, president of Sony Computer Entertainment Japan, the company's gaming unit, told reporters the new model will go on sale in Japan Sept. 3 for a lower price of 29,980 yen (\$315).

Sales of video games and consoles have been hit by the

global slowdown, and speculation had been rife about a PlayStation 3 price cut.

The price reduction is coming ahead of the critical year-end shopping season, when game makers rake in most of their sales for the year.

Sony desperately needs a boost. The maker of Bravia flat-panel TVs and Cyber-shot digital cameras lost 98.9 billion yen (\$1 billion) last fiscal year, its first annual red ink in 14 years. It is forecasting an even worse 120 billion yen (\$1.3 billion) loss for the fiscal year through March 2010.

Sony has sold more than 23.7 million PlayStation 3 machines around the world since the machine went on sale in 2006, but their sales have fallen behind rivals.

Nintendo Co. has sold 52.6 million Wii consoles worldwide, although the Wii has cost \$250 in the U.S. and 25,000 yen (\$260) in Japan since its 2006 launch. Executives have repeatedly denied any price cut is in the works.

Microsoft Corp., the U.S. software company, has sold more than 31.4 million of the Xbox 360 machines globally. The main Xbox 360 model costs \$300 in the U.S. and 29,800 yen (\$310) in Japan, about the same as the new PS3, but Microsoft offers cheaper models.

Hirokazu Hamamura, gaming expert and president of Enterbrain in Tokyo, which publishes game magazines, expects fans to welcome what he sees as a solid price cut coming well ahead of the holidays.

"Sony is returning to basics to communicate the fun of the PS3, and so you can feel a sense of crisis and a determination to turn things around," he said. "Sony is up against Microsoft gaining market share in the U.S. and Europe, and the Wii, which has been such a big hit."

Sony has promised to make the PlayStation 3 one of its core products in achieving a turnaround from the battering it took from the global financial crisis.

Kazuharu Miura, analyst with

Daiwa Institute of Research in Tokyo, said the price cut will be a plus for sales but came earlier than he had expected, eroding more than 10 billion yen (\$105 million) in operating profitability from Sony's bottom line.

Sony said it is planning to sell 13 million PS3 machines in the fiscal year through March 2010, better than the 10 million for the financial year ended March 31. The price cut is likely to have been figured into that projection.

"From what we have seen with the original PlayStation and the PlayStation 2, a price cut is very effective in boosting sales," he said. "There will definitely be an impact."

Consumers are waiting for good games to play on the machines, analysts say, and some news is expected in Japan at next month's Tokyo Game Show.

Console sales for the rest of the year will have to be strong for the video game industry to end 2009 on a high note.

John Riccitiello, the CEO of U.S.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sony Computer Entertainment Japan President Shawn Layden shows off a new PlayStation 3 during a news conference in Tokyo, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2009. Sony Corp. has cut the price in Japan for PlayStation 3 to 29,980 yen (\$317). It said Wednesday that the remodeled version of PlayStation 3 will go on sale in Japan on Sept. 3.

video game publisher Electronic Arts Inc., called Sony's decision a "bold move done precisely at the right time."

He praised Sony for not waiting to make the announcement until right before Christmas or Thanksgiving, when, especially in a tough economic environment, consumers will likely be

bombarded with an onslaught of messages from companies selling everything from DVDs to TVs to cell phones.

Doing the price cut in the middle of August instead, "really stands out," he said in an interview. He added the price cuts will be a boost not only to Sony but also to the overall gaming industry.

Grace Takes the Blame: U2's Approach to the Gospel

By ANDREW ROBERTS
CONTRIBUTOR

As someone who came to U2 first as a music lover and not as a Christian, I initially ignored the way that they immersed their message in the Christian Gospel. I saw it mainly as a tool of convenience. It added to the epic feel of it all. Eventually, though, I found something else—something I had missed before.

In his new book, *We Get to Carry Each Other: The Gospel According to U2*, Greg Garrett, a Baylor professor offers an analysis of the band's spiritual message.

In his Introduction (don't skip it), he gives a short history of the quartet from Dublin. Garrett does

an admirable job of putting U2's relationship with Christianity in context, which is no simple task. Their road with Jesus appears marred with contradictions and missteps, but the author contends that they have all pointed in the same direction.

Before continuing, a few caveats. First, this book was written for U2 fans. It does not pose as a defense of U2, and believe me, if you hate Bono, this book will not change your mind.

While it isn't necessary to be a card-carrying member of the U2 fan club to enjoy this book, a basic appreciation of the band's music is recommended.

Also, while I won't say one must be a Christian to take something

away from this book, a working understanding of Christian doctrine is necessary. The author assumes his readers have a certain level of spiritual comprehension.

With that, here are my thoughts on the book.

The Gospel According to U2 is primarily an attempt to put the many-pronged message of U2 in one place. Garrett is a very adept synthesizer of information, seemingly connecting Bono's lyrics with passages from scripture and Church fathers. With plenty of references to the likes of N.T. Wright, Anne Lamott, and even a Forward by Brian McClaren, the book will appeal especially to Emergent types -- alas, I am not one of you. The multitude

of quotes may overwhelm some readers at first, but it gets easier as the book goes on.

The book is divided into three chapters, each taking on U2's spiritual message from a different angle. The first juxtaposes U2's brand of spirituality with Orthodox Christianity, and puts the words of songs like "Yahweh" and "40" side by side with the words of the Psalmists and St. Augustine.

The second and strongest section of the book deals with U2's ecclesiology. More cohesive and single-minded than the others, it shows U2's message to be primarily one of redemption. The last chapter is on social justice - but more on that later.

Garrett's thesis is summed up

in the title. Taken from "One," the words, "We get to carry each other" form the centerpiece of the book. As he puts it in the book's final pages, this shared responsibility among humans is a Christian's way of participating "in the life of God." The final few pages were easily the most powerful in the book.

There was another message, however, that rang hollow for me. For Garrett, much of his love for U2 comes from their commendable commitment to social justice. Throughout the last chapter, I often found myself thinking "yes, but..." and I'm not sure why.

I think it has something to do with the reasons I came to love U2. It wasn't my flirtation with

liberation theology or exposure to the great suffering in the world that did it for me. It was the song "Grace" and a dark, empty highway.

I think that's why this book didn't resonate with me as much as it could have. Garrett and I love the same thing for different reasons. It's no fault of Garrett's. In fact, it says a lot about why U2 matters to so many people.

Fans of U2's music and message will enjoy Garrett's book. Whether you agree with every point he makes or not, it will be sure to get you pulling out your old records and experiencing them like new once again.

Grade: B+

Bromance Tops Blockbuster Rental Charts

McClatchy-Tribune News Service (MCT)

RENTALS

These are the Top 10 renting DVD titles at U.S. BLOCKBUSTER stores for the week that ended Aug. 16:

1. I Love You Man
2. 17 Again
3. Obsessed
4. Race to Witch Mountain
5. The Soloist
6. Fast & Furious
7. Knowing
8. Watchmen
9. Coraline
10. Push

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These are the Top 10 Selling DVD Titles at U.S. BLOCKBUSTER stores for the week that ended Aug. 16.

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2. 17 Again
3. Obsessed
4. Fast and Furious
5. Race to Witch Mountain
6. Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
7. Coraline
8. Ferris Bueller's Day Off
9. The Neverending Story
10. Watchmen

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Fine arts offer free events

By BRADLEY PARKER
CONTRIBUTOR

As students kick off this semester, they’ve a lot to look forward to: a football team on the rise instead of the fall, a fresh slate for GPA to help your parents forget about last semester, and a healthy portion of free entertainment provided by the Art and Humanities Department and the School of Music.

Between the free concerts put on by the School of Music to the free exhibitions put on by the Department and the theatrical productions put on by the Theatre Department, there’s something, free, for everyone. Take a look at some of the highlighted events for this fall:

For more information about the music school visit www.baylor.edu/theatre.

School of Music

(All events at Jones Concert Hall in the Glennis McCrary Music Building)
Sept. 5: Baylor Symphony Orchestra.

Sept. 29: Distinguished Artist Series, American Brass Quintet.
Oct. 11: Baylor Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble.
Oct. 27: Baylor A Cappella Choir.
Nov. 3: Baylor Women’s and Men’s Choirs.
Nov. 11 and 19: Baylor Jazz Ensemble.

Best of all, everything listed above (excluding the plays) is completely free. When placed beside the prospect of a \$9 movie ticket, students should jump at the chance to see their peers perform the fine arts at the highest of levels.

If all else fails, these events are a great reason to put off studying for a night and enjoy the great fine arts departments here at Baylor.

For more information about the music school visit, www.baylor.edu/music

Art Department

Sept. 16: Rudy Pozzatti, internationally acclaimed master print

maker.
Sept. 23: Lee Edwards, masterfully crafted collages.

Oct. 8: Willie Ray Parish, nationally renowned sculptor.

All three artist’s work will be featured in the Martin Museum of Art’s Gallery II Exhibition which runs from Sept. 3 to Oct. 8.

Baylor Theatre
Oct. 1 to 11: The Drowsy Chap-erone, “A heartfelt love letter to musical comedy takes audiences on a colorful romp through the Roaring Twenties with the shy but lovable “Man in Chair” as their tour guide.”

Nov. 5 to 7: Horton Foote American Playwrights Festival- Featuring The Marcy and Zina Show and Craig Wright’s The Unseen.

Dec. 1 to 6: Fuddy Meers by David Lindsay-Abaire- “An award-winning dark comedy that follows (one woman’s) search for self amidst a sideshow of colorful characters.”

For more information about the art department visit, www.baylor.edu/art.



The Glennis McCrary Music building is one of the many locations where students can get involved in the Fine Arts this fall.

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5 Looking like you’ve seen a ghost

10 Psi base

14 “Iliad” or “Odyssey”

15 Not a soul

16 Greek war god

17 Scope of a thorough search

19 Rod’s companion

20 Sweater wool

21 Mythical city of gold

23 Ottoman governor

24 Nightmare street of movies

26 One having a little lamb

27 Scope of a thorough search

33 Planetary shadow

36 Thinks (over) carefully

37 Partner of a tournament “am”

38 Chat

39 Roman senators’ attire

40 Immense

41 Previously

42 Pine product

43 Headquartered

44 Scope of a thorough search

47 Walking on __: elated

48 Doo-wop horn

49 Play segment

52 Gloria Steinem, notably

57 Home beverage counter with a sink

59 One with burning pants?

60 Scope of a thorough search

62 Very dry

63 Up in arms

64 Bad day for Caesar

65 Lottery-like game

66 Dressed like a superhero

67 Keeps after taxes
- Down
- 1 Post-op treatment

2 Offer one’s view

3 Word with bank or back

4 Canyon phenomenon

5 Historical records

6 Instant lawn

7 Digger’s creation

8 Carbon compound

9 Renegotiated contracts

10 Paved

11 Vicinity

12 Physician Walter for whom an Army hospital is named

13 Norway’s capital

18 Venue for games

22 Has title to

25 Champagne and orange juice cocktail

27 Bug

28 Made trenches

29 Spiral-horned antelopes

30 Numbered work

31 Encourage

32 __ the line: obeyed

33 Brigham City’s state

34 Wise men

35 Stain

39 Fabulous

40 Solo played by Harrison

42 Jockey strap

43 Put in cartons

45 Arrangement of locks

46 Acted sleepy

49 Put up with

50 West Point undergrad

51 Rapunzel feature

52 Anti-aircraft fire

53 Emerald Isle

54 Common street name

55 “Nobody doesn’t like __ Lee”

56 Mouth, in slang

58 Duplicate

61 Had lunch

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Wendy’s

No spotlight wanted

Epperson, Baker strive for 'discreet' excellence

By CHRIS DERRETT
SPORTS WRITER

Few students recognize them around campus, and fewer congratulate them for their on-the-field performances. Yet on fourth down, all eyes are on them, expecting a performance no less than satisfactory.

It is a familiar situation for junior punter Derek Epperson and the special teams unit, whose job of maintaining field position goes unnoticed in the stat books but is always manifested in the final score.

"I'd rather fly under the radar and have nobody know who I am," Epperson said about the general lack of attention. "I'm just trying to improve on my performance and play to the best of my ability."

Epperson has strived to fill the huge shoes of Baylor's former three-time All-American punter Daniel Sepulveda. Not only is the 6'3", 235-pound Epperson nearly identical to Sepulveda in stature, but his 41.7 yard career average and various award nominations predict a similarly successful career.

"It's always hard to come in and replace a legend," Epperson said, "It's daunting, but I just kind of learned to not think about it so much."

Under special teams coordinator Dino Babers' direction, the punting unit held opponents to 2.6 return yards on average last season. Babers credits this to Epperson's strength and accuracy as well as the coverage.

"He's a heck of a punter. Any time you have a person with a leg like that and as much experience as Derek, you're going to have an impact on the football game," Babers said.

Last year that leg earned Epperson All-American consideration and semifinalist status for the Ray Guy Award, given annually to the nation's best collegiate punter.

Another crucial member of the special teams unit, return specialist Mikail Baker, plays his final season determined to help change Baylor's recent history of Big 12 futility.

"Every time I touch the ball I'm thinking touchdown. If each person does his job I don't see why we can't



FILE PHOTO

Derek Epperson swings back for a punt against Oklahoma State University in 2008.

be the No. 1 kickoff return team in the nation," Baker said.

With his 24.7 yard average and ever-present ability to score, as he did for a 93-yarder against Iowa State last year, Baker poses a dangerous threat.

Meanwhile, junior Kryss Buerck moves from cornerback to receiver and punt returner, where mistakes can cost the team severely.

"I'm comfortable at receiver because that's where I played growing up," Buerck said, "As a punt returner you have to catch the ball and get the offense on the field."

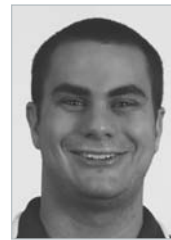
He relies on his high school receiving experience and 4.5 40-yard dash speed to haul in punts under pressure and generate yardage.

Handling Baylor's kickoffs and field goals is sophomore kicker Ben Parks. Though Parks began his freshman season hearing groans following a missed extra point, his season's six field goals were a vital contribution, including a 42-yarder that broke a scoreless tie against Texas A&M University.

One area that troubled the Bears last year was kickoff coverage, where they ranked 11th among Big 12 teams in average net kickoff yardage. Babers feels his unit improved upon coverage and expects a collectively strong performance in 2009.

"We're putting a lot more emphasis on it," Babers said, "We just want to make sure that our kicking game, punt return and kick return teams are some of the best in the Big 12."

The Baer necessities: With key athletes returning, 2009-2010 should be successful



Justin Baer
Sports Editor

It is an eminent time to be a supporter of Baylor athletics.

The athletic program finished 33rd in the nation in the 2008-2009 NACDA Directors' Cup Standings for its third-highest finish in school history. With an abundance of talent returning and gifted athletes beginning their Baylor careers, athletic director Ian McCaw has the Bears and Lady Bears on the cusp of all-around superiority.

The class of 2012 created a standard of athletic excellence for freshmen. Robert Griffin and Kendall Wright are on their way to making Baylor football respectable once again. Meanwhile, Logan Verrett and Whitney Canion were the most devastating freshmen pitchers in the Big 12 in their respective sports.

Along with the talent on the field, Baylor's facilities are reaching elite status. Thanks to generous donations, the Simpson-Higher Athletic Complex opened last spring, and the Allison Indoor Practice Facility witnessed its first practice this summer. Now according to McCaw, Baylor boasts not only the newest facilities in the Big 12, but also the finest.

While the 2008-2009 season saw its successes, this year is poised to be one of Baylor's finest since its inception in the Big 12. Below are 10 things to keep an eye out for this year:

10. Paladino's path

Cody Paladino became the first golfer in men's program history to earn an individual bid at the NCAA Championships. Two weeks before the NCAA Regional Tournament, Paladino finished in last place at the Big 12 Tournament. Now the Kensington, Conn., native will be called upon to lead a young squad that must recover from the departures of Colton Williams and Bill Allcorn.

9. Going streaking

The men's 4x400-meter relay had its 42-race winning streak snapped at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in June. Quentin-Iglehart Summers graduated, but with LeJerald Betters anchoring a squad comprised with returnees Marcus Boyd and J.T. Scheuerman, the Bears are bound to spring a new streak.

"While the 2008-2009 season saw its successes, this year is poised to be one of Baylor's finest since its inception in the Big 12."

8. Baseball's pitching prowess

True, the Bears lost pitchers Kendal Volz and Aaron Miller to the MLB Draft. But Craig Fritsch turned down a pro contract from the Detroit Tigers after the Round Rock native was selected in the eighth round of June's draft. Fritsch was undoubtedly the Bears' most dominant pitcher from the middle of April onward going 3-0 with a 0.90 ERA. Fritsch will likely be the Friday night pitcher for head coach Steve Smith. Willie Kempf, Shawn Tolleson and Logan Verrett will all battle for the final weekend spots, but look out for incoming left-hander Josh Turley to be in the mix.

7. December madness for volleyball

In 2006, head coach Jim Barnes welcomed a talented trio of incoming freshmen: setter Taylor Barnes, middle blocker Anna Breyfogle and outside hitter Katie Sanders. The three are now seniors, and Jim Barnes has strung together a solid supporting cast to compete in the most powerful

volleyball conference in the nation. The Bears haven't reached the NCAA Tournament in Jim Barnes' tenure, but that streak is about to end.

6. Canion's cannon

In her first collegiate season, left-handed pitcher Whitney Canion conquered the Big 12. The Big 12 Pitcher and Freshman of the Year shattered Baylor's single-season strikeout record with 376 K's in 253 innings pitched while posting a 1.80 ERA. Canion marched the Bears to the NCAA Super Regionals, and with her development of an effective off speed pitch this season, Canion could be unhittable.

5. Tennis teams continuing dynasty

The men's and women's tennis teams have marked their place in Big 12 history. After each captured its eighth-consecutive—and fifth-consecutive conference championship respectively in 2009, there won't be much obstructing either team's path to repeat once again this season. Senior All-American Denes Lukacs headlines the men's tennis team's returnees. Meanwhile, Lenka Broosova and the Lady Bears are eyeing a National Championship with the entire women's tennis team returning for the upcoming campaign.

4. Men's basketball rebounding losses

The winningest senior class in men's basketball history has departed. Curtis Jerrells, Henry Dugat, Kevin Rogers and Mamadou Diene were a cornerstone to Baylor's turnaround, but now the quartet is gone, how will Scott Drew's squad respond? After losing in the NIT Championship game last season, Tweety Carter and LaceDarius Dunn will be called upon to mitigate the burden. Incoming freshman Nolan Dennis is a quick and powerful

guard that the Bears snatched from the University of Memphis after John Calipari left, and University of Michigan transfer Ekpe Udoh has beget a defensive presence in Baylor's front court.

3. All-American(s)

The last time the Baylor football team had multiple selections to an All-America team was in 1989 when linebacker James Francis and strong safety Robert Blackmon earned the honors.

Can the Bears accomplish the feat again? Strong safety Jordan Lake, linebacker Joe Pawelek, defensive tackle Phil Taylor and punter Derek Epperson all have an adequate chance to receive such honors. While Robert Griffin has All-American talent, two former Heisman winners and a Heisman finalist return at the quarterback position.

2. Griner's debut

Brittney Griner awed the world of YouTube with clips of her dunking since her sophomore year in high school. Now the No. 1 recruit in the class of 2009 joins head coach Kim Mulkey and the Lady Bears.

Soaring at 6-foot-8 inches, Griner possesses an 86-inch wing span and will cause fits in the paint for Big 12 offenses. The rest of the No. 1-ranked recruiting class joins a seasoned crop of veterans in what could be the beginning of a women's basketball dynasty.

1. No more bowling strikes?

The enthusiasm surrounding Art Briles' football team has erupted—and rightfully so. The Bears return nine starters on both defense and offense and bring a bevy of talent to compete for respect in the toughest division in the country. Griffin has fascinated the Big 12 with his speed and is poised to be the player that snaps a 14-year bowl drought.



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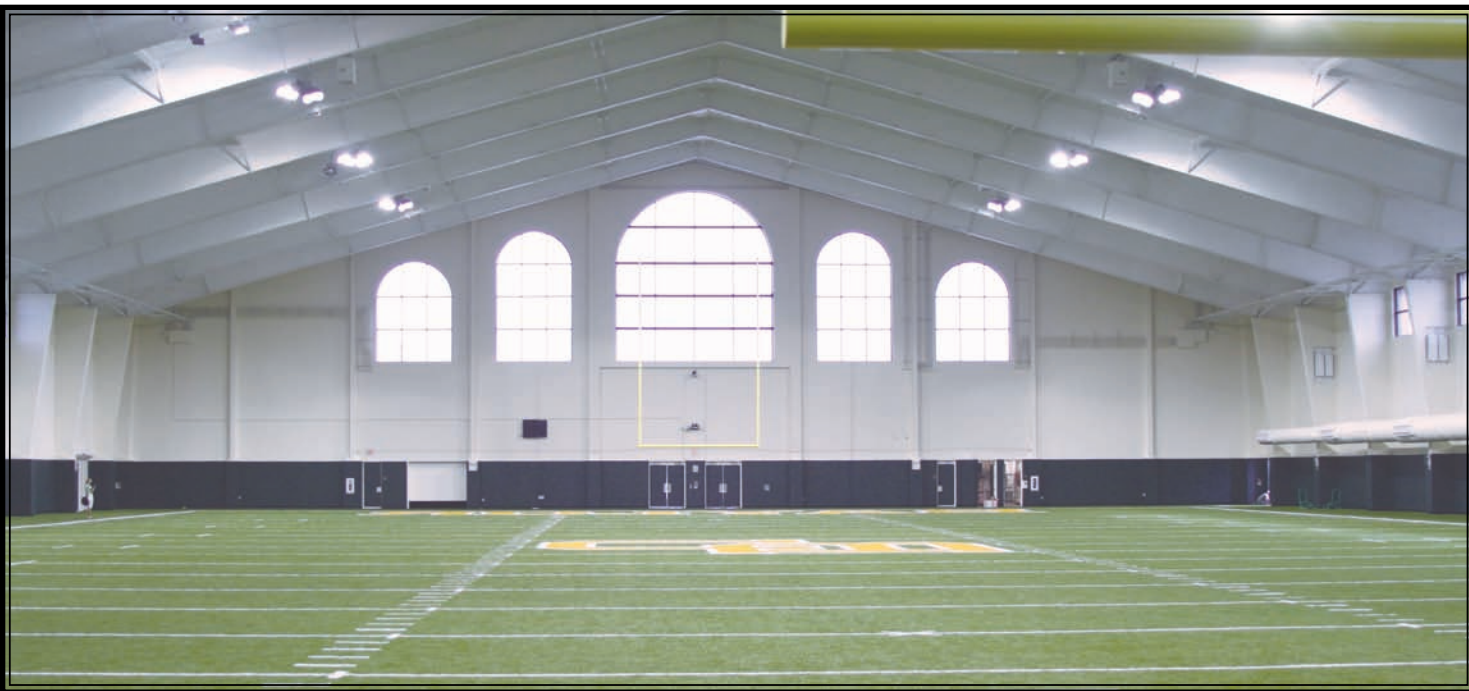
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PHOTOS BY JED DEAN AND SHANNA TAYLOR

The Jay and Jenny Allison Indoor Practice Facility was an \$11-million amenity added to the Alwin O. and Dorothy Highers Athletic Complex this summer.



Liv-IN it up

With temperatures eclipsing 100 degrees, indoor practice facility provides refuge from Texas heat

By BILLY COLLINS
CONTRIBUTOR

Maybe it's the red brick walls, or maybe it's the way the spires and domes of the Baylor Sciences Building reflect off its massive, arching front windows. Whatever it is, there is something distinctly "Baylor" about the Jay and Jenny Allison Indoor Practice Facility.

Nestled toward the back of the Alwin O. and Dorothy Highers Athletic Complex, the indoor practice facility waited all summer to shelter returning football players from morning temperatures that regularly reached more than 100 degrees.

"The first practice in here, everyone was flying around - going from 100 degrees outside to 75 or 80 degrees in here," junior defensive tackle Phil Taylor said. "Everyone had a great practice."

Taylor transferred to Baylor from Penn State University where 100-degree summers remain as much a mystery as zero-degree winters in Waco. And while his previous team had access to a similar indoor practice facility, Taylor said it had to split time among a number of other squads.

"Down here, it is for us," he said.

"The perception now is to compete with the best."

Ian McCaw
Athletic Director

Taylor's right. The indoor facility, along with the rest of the new athletic complex, belongs to Baylor alone. Since reporting on August 6, the football team has put the complex's facilities to good use, including its two full-sized practice fields behind the Simpson Athletics and Academic Center.

And when the Texas weather proves too hot for two-a-day prac-

tices, head coach Art Briles runs his team indoors, continuing practice where it left off.

"We never miss. Whatever schedule we're on, we're staying on it," Briles said.

The indoor practice facility is one more element helping Briles and his staff as they attempt to furnish a team to meet the expectations set by last year's football season.

"The pluses, the advantages, all the positives that come out of it," Briles said, "they're endless."

"From saving our football fields to saving our legs to saving our energy to protecting our bodies to making sure we can do what we want to do when we want to do it - they're endless," he said.

The indoor practice facility has also helped the team move away from a preseason mind-set and toward a more focused demeanor, Briles said.

Briles isn't the only one who sees the endless possibilities of the new facilities.

Ian McCaw, Baylor's athletic director agrees.

"Not only do we have the newest, but I think we have some of the best facilities," McCaw said. "We really feel like we have the right coach in the right place."

Yet while McCaw, Briles and the student-athletes all wait for the coming season with anticipation and angst, they also see the potential the practice facility will have on future seasons and the image of Baylor University.

"It's had a tremendous impact on recruiting, and it really integrates the entire football program with our campus," McCaw said.

Not only does McCaw believe the facility competes with the best of the Big 12, but also the athletic director believes feats like this for the Bears could elevate the program into the national spotlight.

"I think with the facilities and with Coach Briles is a change in the perception of Baylor football," McCaw said. "The perception now is to compete with the best."

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Memphis won't remove banners until after appeal

By TERESA WALKER
AP SPORTS

No banners are coming down anytime soon. Not the 2008 Final Four banner nor the one honoring three seniors for an NCAA-record 137 wins.

Memphis isn't giving up any of its 38 victories without a fight.

The NCAA announced Thursday that Memphis must vacate the 38 wins and the national championship game appearance from the 2007-08 season as punishment for using an ineligible player believed to be NBA star Derrick Rose. Memphis didn't wait even an hour before declaring plans to appeal what school president Shirley Raines called unfair penalties.

"If the appeal fails, the banners come down," Memphis athletic director R.C. Johnson said.

Memphis has 15 days to notify the NCAA of its intent to appeal a punishment that came down 16 months after the Tigers lost the national title game in overtime to Kansas. Then there's a 30-day window to file arguments why the best season in school history should remain on the books.

"We did everything we could to determine the student-athlete was

eligible and that the rules were being followed," Raines said.

School officials refused to detail that argument but Memphis will point to flaws in the NCAA Eligibility Center — the clearinghouse that approved the athlete before he was admitted and again when the university pointed out a grade change in high school. Johnson noted the center was lauded for doing a "great job" during the NCAA call announcing the penalties.

The NCAA said the infractions committee pressed Memphis officials during a June hearing about why steps weren't taken in November 2007 to bench the ineligible player and avoid problems. Asked Thursday what will happen in the future if a player's eligibility is in doubt, Johnson made the school's position clear.

"If they've gone through the clearinghouse and cleared university admission requirements, then they will participate," he said.

If upheld, then this will be the second time that Memphis and now Kentucky coach John Calipari have had Final Four appearances vacated. Memphis also lost the 1985 Final Four under then-coach Dana Kirk, while Calipari's

1996 trip with Massachusetts was erased.

"We would rather obviously that not happen," Johnson said.

Raines thanked Calipari for cooperating with the investigation and noted he was not involved in any allegations. Calipari said he was "very disappointed and disheartened by the NCAA's findings" in what will be his last comment until Memphis' appeal ends.

Memphis finished 38-2 in 2007-08, setting the NCAA record for wins in a season. The infractions committee said it struck hard because the ineligible player was used the entire season. Rose played in all 40 games, starting 39.

The NCAA report did not identify the ineligible player by name, though descriptions of the athlete involved lead to the conclusion it could only be Rose. He was the lone player who was there just that season — a fact noted by the governing body of college sports. Rose went on to be selected by the Chicago Bulls as the No. 1 pick in the 2008 draft and later won the NBA rookie of the year award.

The player was accused of having another person take his SAT exam in Detroit so he would be eligible as a freshman after failing the

ACT three times in Chicago.

Memphis was alerted to questions over the test and investigated. The player told officials he took the test. But SAT officials later conducted their own investigation and said letters were sent to the player in March and April 2008, the second three days after Rose and the Tigers lost to the Jayhawks.

The player did not respond to either letter, so the agency notified the player, the university and the NCAA's eligibility center they were canceling his test in May 2008.

Rose issued a statement through his attorney Thursday and said "it is satisfying to see that the NCAA could find no wrongdoing on my part in their ruling."

"I think it is important for people to understand that I complied with everything that was asked of me while at the university, including my full participation in the university's investigation of this issue, and was ultimately cleared to play in the entire 2007-08 season by the NCAA clearinghouse and the university."

Memphis already has paid \$85,000 and must return money received from the NCAA tourna-



SUE ORGOCKI | AP PHOTO

Former University of Memphis head coach John Calipari speaks with guard Derrick Rose during a time out in 2008.

ment to Conference USA while also being prevented from receiving future shares doled out in the conference's revenue-sharing program — a total loss estimated at \$530,000 on top of the \$85,000 already paid by the school.

If Memphis loses the appeal, Johnson said approximately \$300,000 in bonus money Calipari earned from that season would be paid back.

Former Duke star Greg Paulus set to lead a different school in a different sport

By ARTHUR STAPLE
McCLATCHY NEWS

When Greg Paulus took an official visit to Syracuse, his hometown school, back in April, it was no ordinary tour. Paulus wasn't a 17-year-old kid getting wooed by big-time coaches who wanted to show off the new locker rooms.

Paulus was different. A big-time athlete, still, but a 21-year-old who had finished four years at Duke, playing for Mike Krzyzewski in the storied basketball program.

Paulus, the Gatorade national player of the year in football in 2005, was looking to try his hand at the first sport he excelled in, with one year of NCAA eligibility left and a chance to play football professionally, something a 6-foot



TED ROBINSON | McCLATCHY NEWS

Greg Paulus goes for a steal against a Cornell University player.

guard with intangibles but not elite skills could not do in basketball.

So he got a different sort of tour, one that new head coach Doug Marrone had to devise on the fly

for this different sort of recruit.

"It was more about how we watch film. How he broke down the reads from his high-school playbook. How he processed the plays from our book we gave him," Marrone said. "From there, it was really only about, 'Can this guy do it, physically?' All the other questions were answered that day."

And now, after only nine practices, the performance questions have been answered. On Tuesday, Marrone named Paulus the Syracuse starting quarterback.

So when the Orange takes the field for the season opener on Sept. 5 against Minnesota, Paulus will lead his new team.

"I haven't played in a few years,

so I'm not going into this thinking I have it all down," Paulus said. "I feel fortunate and blessed to have this opportunity. First, to have played Duke basketball for four years, and now to play football here, in my hometown."

Paulus is not exactly going from one elite program to another. He was the poster boy for Duke-haters during his time there, a stretch in which the Blue Devils never got deeper into the NCAA Tournament than the Sweet 16, a slump by their standards.

But now, at the school which he spurned for basketball to head to the ACC, he's got one year to make himself a pro prospect while the Orange try and rebuild from the ground up. Syracuse won 10 games the last four seasons under

Greg Robinson, now the defensive coordinator at Michigan; Marrone, a Bronx native and Syracuse alum, has inherited barely anything from the previous regime.

So Paulus didn't exactly beat out Donovan McNabb for the starter's job. He merely came in after sophomore Ryan Nassib was named starter in the spring and took the spot.

"My job is to win football games," Marrone said. "We like all our quarterbacks here. Greg gives us the best chance to win now."

For Paulus, the one-year experiment has lots of pluses. He is in a graduate broadcast-journalism program at the Newhouse School of Communications to further his hopes as a sports announcer. The Packers invited him in for a work-

out in the early spring, so a decent season might get him a shot at the NFL. He also wants to coach, either football or basketball, at some point.

"If I can do anything in (one of those three) categories, I'd be really excited about it," Paulus said. "(The starter's job) is one of the goals I wanted to accomplish. Now, it's on to the next one."

If anything, Marrone has a mature athlete who's handled life in the spotlight already.

"When you hear people talk about the quarterback position, it's not always about skill first," Marrone said. "You talk about leadership, those type of characteristics. Greg is a highly competitive, veteran, Division I athlete. That's going to help us a lot this year."



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Powerful Big 12 South provides imposing foes for Bears

A lot has changed in Baylor football throughout the past few years. However, the one thing that has remained constant is the division the Bears find themselves in: The Big 12 South.



Kevin Tamer
Sports Writer

Despite Baylor's improvements in the offseason, its goal to reach its first bowl game since 1994 will be hindered by the competition it faces week in and week out. The Bears are in the midst of a division in which second-year head coach Art Briles and many sports outlets have called "the toughest division in college football."

"It's going to be tough for Baylor in general because people are getting ready for us, they are getting ready for somebody they know has a good football team," Briles said.

The Big 12 South features three teams in the USA Today preseason coaches' poll: The University of Texas at No. 2, The University of Oklahoma at No. 3 and Oklahoma State University at No. 11.

"It's tough, but at the same time it's what you sign up for," free safety Jordan



BO RIDER | McCLATCHY NEWS

Heisman winner Sam Bradford tosses the ball against the University of Kansas. Bradford led the Sooners to the BCS National Championship game.

Lake said. "When you come into the Big 12 you know you are playing the best each week. It's something you want as a competitor."

Longhorns players and fans painfully remember the tie breaking fiasco that kept them out of the Big 12 title game last season. Texas returns record-setting quarterback and Heisman contender Colt McCoy. Even though Texas lost receiver Quan Cosby, it returns Jordan Shipley after he was granted a sixth year of eli-



STEWART F. HOUSE | McCLATCHY NEWS

Colt McCoy throws a pass against the University of Oklahoma in the 2008 Red River Rivalry. McCoy completed an NCAA record 76.7 percent of his passes in 2008.

gibility.

After another disappointing loss in the 2008 BCS Championship game, the Sooners seek redemption in the 2009 season. Even though the Sooners lost five players to the 2009 NFL draft and four of their offensive linemen, they return the talented running back tandem of DeMarco Murray and Chris Brown.

In addition, arguably the best tight end in the nation, Jermaine Gresham, skipped the NFL draft to play one more season in Norman.



SUE LORGOCKI | AP PHOTO

Zac Robinson evades a University of Oklahoma defender. Robinson is a three-year starter for the Cowboys.

Commonly referred to as the "dark horse" of the Big 12, Oklahoma State is set to prove it can hang with Texas and Oklahoma.

With quarterback Zac Robinson, wide receiver Dez Bryant and running back Kendall Hunter, it is time to take the Cowboys seriously. The offensive trio ranked among the top 10 nationally in offense, scoring, rushing and pass efficiency last year. If their defense is able to improve and make key stops in big games, the Cowboys offense will be able

to do the rest.

Texas Tech University's quest for their 10th-straight bowl game will certainly be tougher this year due to the losses of quarterback Graham Harrell and receiver Michael Crabtree. However, don't write off the Red Raiders just yet. History has proven coach Mike Leach's offensive system is quarterback friendly, which will allow new quarterback Taylor Potts the chance to be a successful replacement to Harrell.

The big question in Lubbock is whether Tech's defense will be able to regroup after the loss of two safeties and Brandon Williams.

Unless something miraculous happens, it looks like it will be a long year in College Station. The Aggies are coming off a season in which they went 0-5 against division rivals and ranked 11th or 12th in the conference in 12-different categories.

The Aggies will have to rely on junior quarterback Jerrod Johnson to lead the young offense against talented Big 12 teams. Texas A&M is loaded with talent in the backfield with Cyrus Gray and Christine Michael, but questions surrounding the offensive line need to be answered before either back can maximize his potential.

If the Aggies are hoping to earn a bowl bid, they will have to capitalize on their soft non-conference schedule.

Tamer's 12

Each week sports writer Kevin Tamer will piece together power rankings for the Big 12.

1. Texas

Texas hasn't forgot about the tiebreaker that kept them out of the Big 12 title game last season. Colt McCoy is back and the Longhorns are set to give the polls no questions about where they stand at the end of the season.

2. Oklahoma

Heisman winner Sam Bradford and senior tight end Jermaine Gresham return to Norman with hopes of securing another Big 12 title. However, this year OU must

learn to win after losing four offensive linemen that allowed just 13 sacks last year.

3. Oklahoma State

Things are looking up in Stillwater. The Cowboys return three of the league's most dynamic offensive players: quarterback Zac Robinson, running back Kendall Hunter and wide receiver Dez Bryant. However, if they want to be taken seriously they must prove they can hang with the juggernauts of the Big 12 South.

4. Nebraska

The Huskers hope to keep their 2008 late season's dominance rolling into this year. Nebraska must rally behind junior quarterback

Zac Lee and their defense to win key road games at Kansas and Missouri.

5. Kansas

The Jayhawks' quest for making three- straight bowl games for the first time in history will rely on the performance of the defense stopping the powerful offenses it will face in the Big 12. The good news is the Jayhawks return eight starters on offense, including quarterback Todd Reesing and wide receiver Dezmon Briscoe.

6. Missouri

The Tigers offense must overcome the loss of Chase Daniel, Chase Coffman and Jeremy Maclin. Sophomore Blaine Gabbert

takes the job at quarterback, but the Tigers success will depend on improving their defense, which ranked No. 117 nationally in pass defense and gave up 286 yards per game last year.

7. Texas Tech

Replacing Graham Harrell and Michael Crabtree won't be easy, but coach Mike Leach has a history of successful rebuilding and plans to groom Taylor Potts into an elite quarterback in the Big 12. Tech hopes to attend its 10th-straight bowl game.

8. Baylor

Will this be the year the Bears finally break their 14-year bowl drought? If so, the Bears must

overcome their relentless Big 12 South schedule. The good news, Robert Griffin is back at quarterback and will be better than last year.

9. Colorado

It is unlikely the Buffaloes will live up to coach Dan Hawkins expectations of "10 wins and no excuses." However, Colorado might have an upset in it if it can take advantage of playing Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska at home.

10. Texas A&M

The Aggies have improved from last year, but fans shouldn't expect the return of the "Wrecking Crew" days. Sophomore Jerrod Johnson returns at quarterback

and has two talented targets in Jeff Fuller and Ryan Tannehill.

11. Kansas State

Even with the return of coach Bill Snyder, it won't be likely the Wildcats will contend in the North this season. The Cats have to overcome the loss of quarterback Josh Freeman and turn around a defense that allowed 479 yards per game last season.

12. Iowa State

The Cyclones enter the 2009 season with a 10-game losing streak that dates back to September 2008. However, the presence of new coach Paul Rhoads and the return of 10 starters on offense should propel them to a few wins.

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New, old mixture gives Rangers recipe for playoffs

BY JIM REEVES
McCLATCHY NEWS

This is the way Ron Washington dreamed it, the way he knew it could be, should be, during those frustrating early days in Texas when he didn't know from one day to the next whether he'd have a job or be back out on the baseball street.

But this was how he'd lived it in Oakland, when the Athletics were winning, and it was what he was trying to communicate to his Texas Rangers when he became their manager.

Don't worry about tomorrow ... and when you get there, don't worry about yesterday, either. Just live the moment.

That's why there's this feeling in the Texas clubhouse, one that gets stronger every day, that the Rangers are no longer playing for the future. Their future is now.

"Why not us? That's what one of the coaches asked this spring," Washington said.

It's a heck of a question, isn't it? Why not the Rangers?

I don't know if the Rangers are going to win, if they can hold onto the wild card spot or if they might even catch the Angels in the season's final six weeks. Washington doesn't know, either.

What he knows is that if his players simply play baseball as they've learned to play it and enjoy it this season, then the rest will take care of itself.

"They just go out and play the game the way it's presented. They're not thinking about what should happen; they're just letting it happen," Washington said. "They have a lot of confidence, and that helps, but they go out and play the game the way it should be played."

"Whatever the game asks them to do, they try to do it and, when you do that, you get blessed. We've been blessed because we're doing that. We're not having any thoughts about playoffs and all that, we're just trying to play every game the best we can, and at the end, if we do that, then there you are."

It's the same kind of philosophy those Johnny Oates teams of the mid-'90s, the ones that won three division titles in four years, played by, too, and there are a lot of similarities between this team and the one that finally broke through with the Rangers' first championship in 1996.

Oh, sure, that one had more veterans and fewer kids, but the attitude was the same.

"What we had in the '90s, we

had one mind-set, 25 guys, five coaches, all going in the same direction," said Mark McLemore, a staple of all three of those championship teams and now an analyst for Fox Sports Southwest. "Over the last 10 years here, I haven't seen much of that, if any. This year's different. I think the guys really understand what it takes to get the job done every day and that it's a marathon, not a sprint."

Those Rangers teams didn't have one leader, they had a multitude of leaders, from McLemore, to Will Clark, to Mickey Tettleton, to John Burkett and on from there.

Despite their youth, these Rangers have leaders, too. There's Michael Young, of course, and Marlon Byrd, Andruw Jones and Kevin Millwood, Omar Vizquel and Eddie Guardado.

"I saw this building last year, just the chemistry part, and the chemistry part will take you a long way. I really believe that," Guardado said. "It starts here, in the clubhouse. We've got a great group. Everybody gets along, pulls for each other and you see that out there, between the lines."

"Even after a loss, you see our veteran players, Michael, Byrdie, Jonesy, going up to one of the young guys, saying, 'It'll be all right.' That goes a long way, and

when they do those things, then you see the kids step up."

There are those who point to the Rangers' outstanding record against the league's best teams, like the Angels and Red Sox, and draw the conclusion that they don't play with the same intensity against the teams they should be beating more easily.

"I don't think intensity has anything to do with it," Washington said. "Those guys leave their heart out on the field every night. We're learning, we're getting there. There's no difference in approach."

"Every day we're trudging into territory we've never been in before."

Nor does Washington believe that the Rangers will panic or feel pressure as the pennant races heat up. That's not how they play the game.

"They're having fun and when you're doing that, you don't have time to think about that stuff," Washington said. "As long as we catch that rock and those guys continue to pitch, if we don't make it there, it's just because we didn't make it."

In other words, don't make it more complicated than it is. Play the game right and take what it deals you.

"You bring something you



RODGER MALLISON | McCLATCHY NEWS

Third baseman Michael Young congratulates teammates after powering a two-run home run.

learned from the day before to today. You don't get ahead of yourself," Washington said. "It's not always the best team that wins, it's the team that plays the best."

"That's the attitude they have. They just come and try to play better than the team on the other side of the field."

Sounds so simple, yet it's something we haven't heard in what, 10 years or so?

SPORTS BRIEFS

Volleyball recruiting class honored

Baylor's volleyball freshmen class was ranked 14th in the nation by PrepVolleyball.com. The incoming class includes 2008 Texas Gatorade Player of the year Torri Campbell, Zoe Adom and Kiley Sherman. In addition, Baylor signed Elizabeth Graham, a junior middle blocker transfer from Texas.

Taylor receives preseason honor

Baylor defensive tackle Phil Taylor was named Big 12's Preseason Newcomer of the Year. Taylor, a transfer from Penn State, sat out the 2008 season in accordance with NCAA transfer rules but will have two years of eligibility remaining. In addition to Taylor, linebacker Joe Pawelek, defensive back Jordan Lake, and punter Derek Epperson were selected to the 2009 Media Preseason All-Big 12 football team.

Football team to don new jerseys

The Baylor football team will hit the field in 2009 with new uniforms designed by Nike. The change in uniforms gives the Bears a total of 12 different uniform combinations they can choose from this season. The change in uniforms gives the Bears three jersey colors to choose from (Green, white, Vegas gold), two different colors in pants (Vegas gold, white) and two helmets (Vegas gold, white).

Men's tennis succeeds in classroom

The Baylor men's tennis team was named an All-Academic team by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). In order to be eligible for the award, the squad must have a team grade point average of 3.20. The Bears exceeded this requirement by breaking an all-time Baylor record with a 3.46 GPA for the spring semester.

Merchandisers unsure about projected Vick jersey sales

BY SAM WOOD AND BONNIE COOK
McCLATCHY NEWS

There is no Vick at Dick's.

A spokesman for Dick's Sporting Goods said Wednesday that the chain will not stock Michael Vick's Eagles jersey until company officials "evaluate the reaction of Eagles fans."

Meanwhile, the NFLShop, the league's merchandising arm, is offering several styles of Vick's gridiron apparel, including a customizable jersey for dogs.

Vick, the former star quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons, was released from a federal prison in May after serving 18 months on a dogfighting conviction.

The three-time Pro Bowler signed with the Eagles Aug. 13 and has polarized the team's fans

and triggered a storm of debate across the country since.

Vick will begin playing with the team after a four-game suspension handed by the NFL.

"Right now we don't know how much of a demand there is for the jersey," Dick's chief marketing officer, Jeff Hennion, said in a prepared statement. "If there is a demand for it, we'll sell it."

Mitchell Modell, owner and CEO of Modell's Sporting Goods, said he initially had reservations about selling Vick jerseys. But it didn't take long to see there was "pretty high demand" for No. 7's sports apparel, especially at his Philadelphia-area stores.

"We weren't planning on selling it until the customers started coming into the stores demanding it," Modell said. "As long as the

customers are coming in, we'll sell it. We're in the business to serve our customers."

The day after his arrest on dogfighting charges in July 2007, the NFLShop.com removed Vick's Falcons jerseys and other collectibles from its Web site. Reebok, the manufacturer of Vick-emblazoned apparel, suspended sales soon after.

On Wednesday, Vick Eagles jerseys in dark green, white or black were offered by the NFLShop site for \$79.99, \$109.99 and up.

"We anticipate sales of No. 7 jerseys will be among the top-20-selling player jerseys for the month of August," said the NFLShop's Brian McCarthy.

The NFLShop is also selling an Eagles jersey for dogs that could be customized with the No. 7 and

VICK on the back for \$39.99.

"Just as you could with any other player, you can buy a customizable jersey for a dog with anybody's name on it," said league spokesman Greg Aiello.

Aiello said there are some names that the NFLShop would not accept "Badnewz," the name of Vick's former kennel, among them.

"But just to have Michael Vick's name on the back is not an issue," Aiello said. "Vick is working with the Humane Society and speaking out for the proper treatment of animals, so we don't see a problem."

Outside Dick's Sporting Goods in the Metroplex Shopping Center in Plymouth Meeting, a woman who declined to give her name said she would not even take a Vick jersey if it was free.

Another woman from the Main Line at the store said she is "absolutely not going to watch the Eagles" and would never buy the jersey. She said she owns two cats and a year-old pit bull named Ace, who she said is loving and friendly to children.

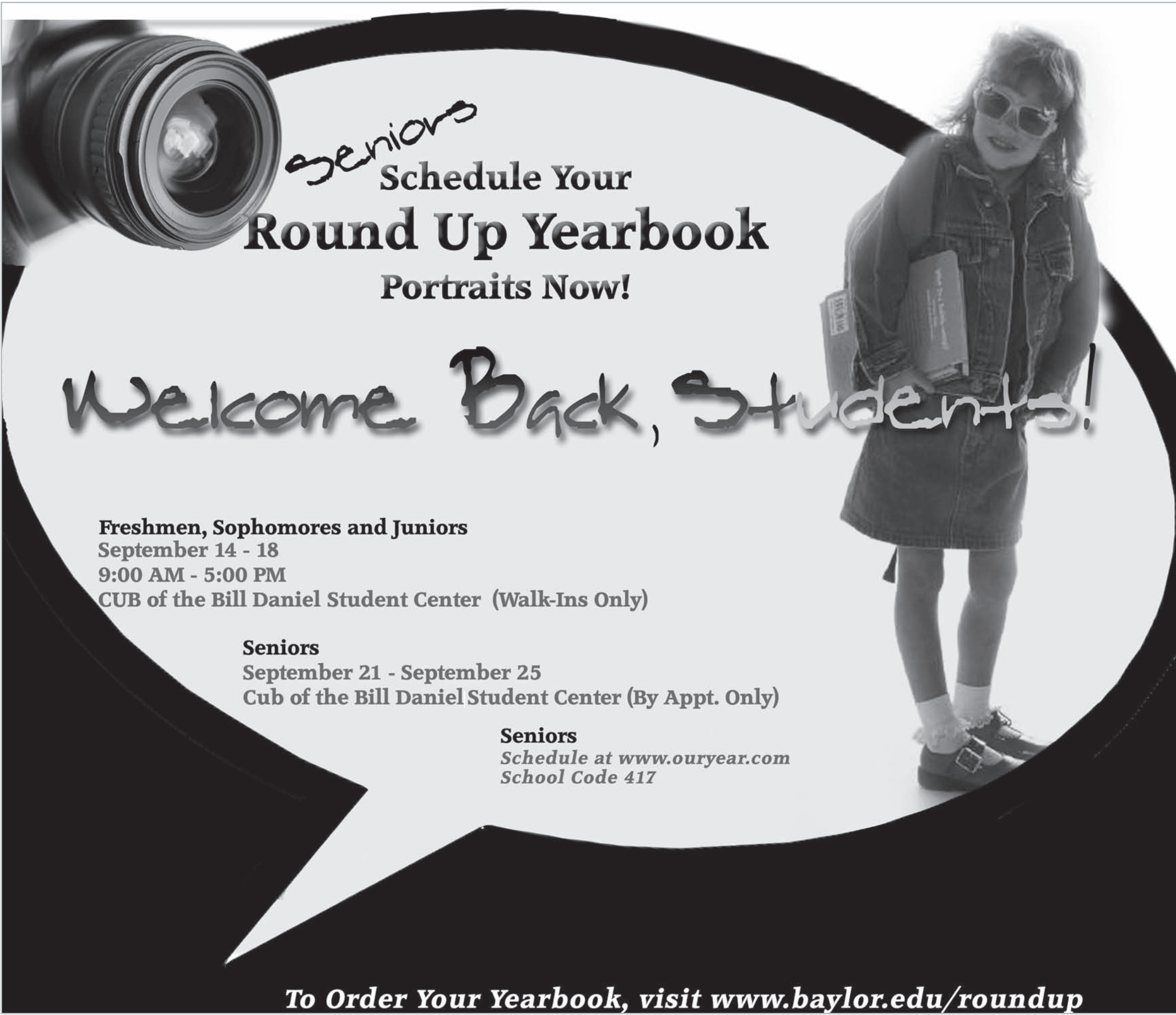
"My opinion is, Vick did his time and he deserves a second chance, but not as a role model to kids," she said.

Joe Parham, 61, a tailor from Chestnut Hill who said he has prospered despite being involved in a gang as a boy, said he would definitely buy a Vick jersey. If Dick's didn't have them, Parham said he would go elsewhere to buy one.

"I don't think they think that people do change," Parham said. "Nothing stays the same."

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Griffin expects better results in year two of Briles' regime

By Justin Baer
Sports Editor

In his first year as Baylor's head coach, Art Briles's offensive-minded philosophy gelled with the Bears. Powered by freshman Robert Griffin, Baylor's offense turned heads en route to a 4-8 season.

Despite finishing below .500 for the 14th consecutive season, the Bears suffered three losses by a combined 11 points to establish enthusiasm for Baylor football.

In 2007, then head coach Guy Morriss was in year two of his pass-heavy spread offense. While passing records were shattered, the Big 12's familiarity with the offense and a lackluster receiving core proved to be costly.

Briles brought a drastic improvement to the running game and balanced Baylor's offense. With Griffin at quarterback and running back Jay Finley producing a breakout season, the Bears ranked third in the Big 12 with 195.2 rushing yards per game.

"He molds the offense around the talent we have," Griffin said. "The offense will never be the same every year. We have added some plays and taken some plays out."

In a league dominated by high-octane offenses like the University of Oklahoma, Texas Tech University and the University of Texas, Briles is eager to watch his offense progress in year two of his regime. With nine starters returning, Briles has high expectations for this year's team.

"The excitement is more focused on are we improving, are we understanding and are we aware of where we need to be as a football team," Briles said. "We are past the preseason hype and more on the reality that we are getting ready for games."

Quarterbacks

The Bears offense revolves around Griffin. The freshman All-American captured the national spotlight during the season and has Baylor faithful buzzing about snapping a 14-year postseason drought. The Copperas Cove sophomore befuddled opposing defenses with

his electrifying speed and canny decision making on his way to becoming the Big 12 Offensive Newcomer of the Year in 2008.

As the youngest starting quarterback in the country, Griffin indulged the college competition and sprinted for 843 yards and 13 touchdowns while passing for 15 touchdowns and 2,091 yards.

Griffin has garnered attention from not only the Big 12, but also the nation. Critics argue he will have a tougher go his sophomore season, but the 6-foot-4, 205-pounder vehemently disagrees. "The Robert Griffin I was last year is not the Robert Griffin I am this year," Griffin said. "Teams are going to prepare differently and think they are ready, but they're not."

Fifth-year senior Blake Szymanski is an ample suitor to relieve Griffin. As a starter in 2007, Szymanski took advantage of a pass-heavy offense and notched several school passing records including touchdowns, completions and yards.

Running backs

Shadowed by the spotlight of Griffin, Jay Finley emerged as a solid companion to Griffin in the backfield in 2008. The Corsicana junior found his stride toward the end of 2008 finishing the final two games with a pair of 100-yard performances. He concluded the campaign with 865 rushing yards and averaged 5.8 yards per carry, while notching seven touchdowns. With all eyes on Griffin, the elusive, yet powerful runner could quietly eclipse 1,000 yards rushing this season.

"It's not just me in the backfield, he can definitely pull his weight," Griffin said. "But if you go out there and put up your stats, no one

is going to complain."

Former Waco High standout Jarred Salubi impressed the coaching staff in the spring and will alleviate the burden on Finley of being an every-down back. A shifty running back, the redshirt freshman was a state champion sprinter for his high school track team.

The Bears inherited Terrance Ganaway from the University of Houston. Ganaway is expected to fill the niche vacated by the graduated Jacoby Jones as a short-yardage and goal line back. While playing for Briles as a true freshman in 2007, the six foot, 240-pounder bruised for six touchdowns and 550 yards.

Wide receivers

The 2009 group of receivers is arguably the position with the most depth on the squad. Kendall Wright had a superb freshman season leading the Bears in catches, yards and touchdown receptions.

At 5 feet 11, the inside receiver lacks ideal size, but he carries an aggressive demeanor to fight for any catch along with a 40-inch vertical leap. With the ball in his hands, the athletic Wright is a perpetual candidate to scamper to the end zone.

Lining up across Wright as the inside receiver, senior Ernest Smith possesses strong hands and is a consistent option for Griffin. A bout of mono sidelined Smith in spring ball, but Briles expects Smith to be fully recovered.

"He is a great team player, and a guy that can ignite both sides of the ball," Briles said. "He is a guy we are very proud that he wears the green and gold and expect a big year out of him."

The wideout position is saturated with competition.

Senior David Gettis is the lone veteran expected to generate waves as an outside receiver as Lanear Sampson and Terrance Williams exhibited promising play in spring ball.

The redshirt freshmen have secured playing time with Sampson being the early candidate to start over Williams, however Williams is threatening Gettis for playing time.

A quartet of true freshmen is battling to see the field this fall. Willie Jefferson stands 6 feet 6 six inches tall and is a threat for red zone opportunities. Skyler Scott, Josh Gordon and Darius Jones have

also had impressive practices so far according to Briles.

Returning to the receiving core is former converted cornerback Krys Buerck. As a true freshman in 2007, Buerck had 23 receptions and 280 yards.

Tight end Justin Akers is paired with a solid frame and soft hands. The former Deer Park standout gives Griffin a reliable check down option at tight end. The former inside receiver bulked up, but still has speed to create mismatches.

Offensive line

Anytime one of your linemen gets drafted No. 2 overall in the NFL draft, you're bound to regress. The Bears offensive line aims to minimize the damage of former All-American left tackle Jason Smith's departure, while filling the vacancy of Dan Gay's spot at right tackle is also a formidable task. Fortunately for the Bears, a talented group joins an already proven unit.

Anchored by Allen senior All-American candidate J.D. Walton, the starting line is physically mature. Walton has started all 12 games the past two seasons, and his veteran leadership will be invaluable to the front unit.

"I learned a lot of things from Jason last year- the way he led us, and the things he did during practice," Walton said. "I try to model that a lot, because the way he did it was second to none."

Another three-year starter, James Barnard, will reside next to Walton at right guard. Meanwhile, John Jones and Jake Jackson are each vying for playing time at left guard.

Cameron Kaufhold leads the pack for a starting nod at right tackle, but Chris Griesenbeck has the ability to step in.

The overbearing task of replacing Smith weighs on the burly shoulders of Danny Watkins. Watkins, a former fireman turned junior college All-American, transferred to Baylor and according to Walton, has done a commendable job of succeeding Smith.

"He is doing a great job," Walton said. "He has bought into it. He knows what he has to do and knows what shoes he has to fill."

Key Returners



Robert Griffin
Quarterback



Kendall Wright
Wide receiver



Jay Finley
Running back



J.D. Walton
Center

Baylor's leading rusher excels as sidekick



FILE PHOTO

Jay Finley scampers for a touchdown last season against Northwest Louisiana State University.



SHANNA TAYLOR | LARIAT STAFF

Finley catches a pass during fall training camp. Finley was the leading rusher last season for the Bears.

By Kevin Tamer
Sports Writer

With all the hype over quarterback Robert Griffin, some tend to forget about the other player who shares the backfield with him. That player is running back Jay Finley and he led the Bears offense in rushing last season.

Finley, a 5-foot-11, 205-pound running back from Corsicana, quietly rushed for 865 yards and seven touchdowns in 2008 to lead the Bears. He finished the season ranking fifth in the Big 12 with 72.1 rushing yards per game. While his numbers were impressive, they are meaningless to Finley.

"I worked hard for it, and I am happy about it," Finley said. "But that was last year. I kind of forget about it."

While Finley may have forgotten about last season, Texas A&M and Texas Tech's defenses probably haven't. Finley ended the 2008 season with a bang, rushing for 116 yards in a victory against Texas A&M, then followed it with another impressive 105 yards against Texas Tech.

Despite Finley's accomplishments, it is no secret Griffin tends to steal the spotlight. However, Finley says it doesn't bother him and applauds Griffin's ability to bring attention to Baylor.

"You have to play a role, and that's what I do," Finley said. "I know I am a running back, and I know everyday I

am going to go out there and give it my all. The exposure Robert Griffin gets, I welcome it for him."

Both Finley's and Griffin's jobs will be slightly tougher this year due to the loss of offensive linemen Jason Smith and Dan Gay, who are both on NFL rosters. However, Finley is confident that his new linemen will be able to create holes for him this season.

"You have to play a role, and that's what I do"

Jay Finley
Running back

"You can't replace (Jason Smith). He was the No. 2 overall pick in the draft. It's hard to replace someone like that," Finley said. "But Danny Watkins is a great player, he has picked up the slack. The line looks real good."

Much of Finley's success has stemmed from the arrival of head coach Art Briles and his coaching philosophy that emphasizes a stronger running game.

In previous seasons under former head coach Guy Morriss, Finley and other running backs were being used more as receivers and pass-blockers than as rushing threats. However, when Briles arrived in Waco, that all changed. The Bears finished the season with an average of 195.8 yards-per-

Playing with numbers

91.2
Percentage of offensive production returning in 2009 (4,121 of 4,517 yards)

209
NCAA Bowl Subdivision record set by Robert Griffin for most passes completed without an interception to start a career

20
Number of wide receivers listed on Baylor's roster this season

Penn State transfer eminent to team, Briles says

By Chris Derrett
SPORTS WRITER

Baylor defensive tackle Phil Taylor makes his Big 12 debut as a Bear this season, but the 6-foot-4, 355-pound Penn State transfer is hardly a rookie to overcoming challenges.

Taylor spent his 2006 and 2007 season with the Nittany Lions before head coach Joe Paterno dismissed him from the team for charges stemming from an on-campus fight.

Looking for an opportunity to turn away from trouble, he followed Penn State's safeties coach Brian Norwood to Baylor where Norwood serves his second year as the Bears' defensive coordinator in 2009.

Already, Big 12 media representatives have taken notice of Taylor's potential and expect great things from him.

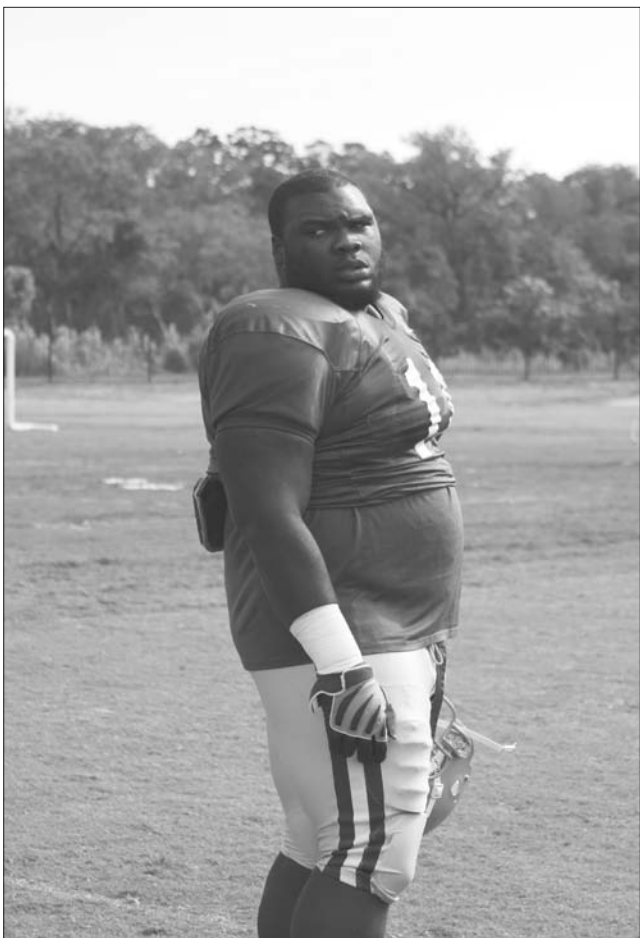
"I feel honored to be the Big 12 Newcomer of the Year," Taylor said, "We are at 180-degree turnaround from last year on the defensive front."

Head coach Art Briles firmly believes Taylor will be a key role in the Bears' bid for their first bowl game in 15 seasons, a season that could steer Baylor toward the kind of bowl success enjoyed in the 1980's and early 90's.

"[Taylor] has to be a guy that is completely dominant every time he puts number 11 on," Briles said, "They need to know who he is, who he is representing and how he is going to play."

Last year Baylor ranked 103rd in pass defense and 85th in total defense. The team also had 54 tackles for loss, placing 109th in the nation.

Because Taylor requires double team coverage, senior linebacker Joe Pawelek thinks Taylor's size and strength pro-



JED DEAN | LARIAT STAFF

Phil Taylor prepares for a drill during fall camp. Taylor was voted by Big 12 coaches as the preseason Newcomer of the Year.

vide additional defensive pressure that the team wants.

"He is a huge presence on the inside- literally. People aren't going to be able to double team the linebackers, and that will definitely free us up," Pawelek said.

As the last line of defense, senior safety Jordan Lake also appreciates any help the defensive line provides in slowing down opponents.

"Phil has been a huge help, when you have someone 350 pounds and runs like they're 220," Lake said, "He is someone anchoring the defensive line."

For Taylor to cause the damage his teammates are counting on, physical speed and quick-witted awareness are crucial. Briles constantly keeps Taylor working on both in practice.

"He helps me understand things. He always says fly to

the ball. He makes practices tough, but it helps in the long run," Taylor said.

Taylor realizes he lines up against some of the best linemen in collegiate football in the Big 12, not to mention the backs behind them.

It is a challenge, but as an athlete who found a way back to football after a mistake, Taylor embraces the chance to take on the best.

"We have got some high caliber-offenses," Taylor said about the conference, "I get to go against the Heisman quarterback. But we are going for all of them."

Other than his impressive physique, Taylor also brings something that no other teammate has yet to claim- bowl game experience.

His five tackles helped the 2007 Nittany Lions to a 24-17 Alamo Bowl victory over Texas A&M.

Baylor defense's mindset: Change perception of Big 12

By Justin Baer
SPORTS EDITOR

Throughout the years, the Big 12 has been notorious for piecing together prolific offenses and subpar defenses. In 2008, the conference boasted six of the nation's top-12 offenses, while the University of Texas's 51st-ranked defense was the Big 12's best.

With Brian Norwood entering as defensive coordinator in 2008, the Bears converted to a 4-3 scheme. Its impact sent rippling effects. After finishing 110th in the nation on defense in 2007, Baylor jumped to No. 85 nationally in 2008, surrendering 393 yards per game.

Eight starters return on defense, including first-team All-Big 12 members Jordan Lake and Joe Pawelek. According to Pawelek, the familiarity in itself will improve the defense.

"It helps that we aren't trying to learn the defense so much, as we are trying to fine tune different coverages and different blitzes," the San Antonio native said.

Head coach Art Briles emphasized the most pertinent element of this year's defense is a newcomer-defensive tackle and Penn State transfer Phil Taylor.

The preseason Newcomer of the Year played for two years under Joe Paterno before being dismissed from the team for involvement in an off-campus fight.

"He has got to be a guy that is completely dominant every time he puts on the No. 11 jersey," Briles said. "When he jogs on to the field, he needs to make a difference."

Defensive Line

The Bears finished 112th in the nation last season on third-down conversions with a 51.9 percent success rate. The Bears hope with Taylor on the field, that number will vastly improve.

"We know third-down conversions hurt us last year, and we can't leave Big Phil out there for a lot of plays like that," linebacker Antonio Jones said jokingly. "Our motto is to finish strong."

Alongside Taylor, fifth-year senior Trey Bryant returns at defensive tackle. Bryant started 11 of 12 games last season as nose tackle, and will be the prime beneficiary of Taylor's arrival.

Former defensive end Jason Lamb has converted to defensive tackle and will platoon with Bryant for playing time.

Sophomore Tracy Robertson replaces the departed Leon Freeman at weakside defensive end. Gary Mason, Jr., will split time with Robertson. As a former high school basketball standout, Mason possesses athleticism to penetrate offensive lines.

Meanwhile, Zac Scotton gained experience as a weakside defensive end in 2008, starting three of his final five games.

Taylor mentioned as a whole, the defensive front has taken large strides to improve this year.

"On the front, I noticed a lot of things, and during the spring and summer we have had a 180-degree turnaround from last year," the Clinton, Md., native said.

Linebackers

Led by Pawelek, the linebacker core is a veteran unit. Pawelek leads the team with 34-career starts. Jones and Antonio Johnson have combined for 22 starts.

Pawelek, a 2008 third-team All-American, attested he had a knack for being in the right place at the right time by finishing seventh nationally with six interceptions in 2008. The San Antonio native also led the conference with 10.7 tackles per game and beheld the honor of being the nation's lone player to finish top 10 nationally in tackles and interceptions.

"Having Joe in the middle to get the calls to those front seven is huge," Pawelek. "I let him control the front seven while I get the back four," Lake said.

Neighboring Pawelek, Johnson and Jones return as outside linebackers after finishing third and fourth respectively on the team in tackles. The Bears own the luxury of retaining all second-string lineback-

ers also. Earl Patin and Chris Francis are more than capable of stepping into the rotation. While Elliot Coffey saw time behind Pawelek last season.

"Any time you go from season-to-season and have all six guys coming back, it definitely helps us out," Pawelek said. "We are focusing on getting better."

Secondary

The punishing Lake is the feature of the secondary after garnering first-team All-Big 12 accolades last season.

The free safety finished second on the team with 97 tackles and snatched three interceptions. Known for his violent tackles, Lake has found himself as a Thorpe Award candidate this season.

"It's exciting, and it's an honor to be nominated for the Thorpe Award," Lake said. "At the same time, football is the ultimate team sport. Without victories, those accolades mean nothing."

Fifth-year senior Jeremy Williams returns as a 'hero' safety, and former wide receiver Mikail Baker has switched sides to provide depth at safety.

Junior college transfer Byron Landor was a touted recruit from Blinn College but was just cleared to play. However, Briles said he expects Landor to make an impact in the secondary.

Fans believe, the cornerbacks enter the season with the most to prove. Antareis Bryan and Tim Atchison have combined for six-career starts.

Despite previous vacancies in the starting lineup, Atchison believes the duo is more than prepared to face the talent of the Big 12.

"A lot of people say we are young, in our own way we all have our own kind of experience. I feel like if we go out and take care of our responsibilities.

Junior Clifton Odom will man the nickel spot, and freshman Chance Casey was a state champion in track in high school, who Atchison believes has the opportunity to play in 2009.

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