

NTCC Softball heating up as conference play begins

By Adam Roseberry
Staff Writer

Spring has sprung and so has the Northeast Texas Community College Eagle's softball squad. After starting the season 3-7 the Eagles have hit their stride, winning nine out of their last 12 contests to stand two games over .500 with a 12-10 overall record.

The slow start to the season for the Eagles was hardly a surprise as more than half the team was made up of inexperienced freshmen, but the young athletes have really kicked it into high gear lately.

"I just think it was just getting everybody on the right track, freshmen getting their feet wet," head coach Josh Freeman said. "I think just getting everybody at bats and getting everybody on the same track has led to us playing good ball lately."

Freshman right handed pitcher Bralynn Henderson in particular has shone for the Eagles, posting a 2.63 earned run average in 61 innings of work.

Henderson is averaging over a strikeout per inning and struck out an impressive 15 batters in a 5-4 NTCC win over the Hill College Rebels on March 6th, the most strikeouts at NTCC in at least a decade according to her head coach.

"She takes the rock at the beginning of the day and does her best and she's come in and

done fantastic," said Freeman. "She throws strikes and she attacks hitters. That's what we want out of pitching."

That's not to say pitching is the only side of the game firing on all cylinders for the Eagles. Three Eagles currently hold batting averages above .300, including catcher/third baseman Hannah Boettcher (.336), outfielder Haley McAlexander (.364) and middle infielder/first baseman Raelyn Kinard (.409). Middle infielder Carson Zachry leads the team in home runs with seven, while Boettcher is not far behind with five long balls of her own.

When asked if the recent success is sustainable, Freeman left no room for doubt.

"Definitely," said Freeman. "We're going to see tougher competition going through conference [play] and [continuing to play at a high level], that's the goal."

The road to the postseason won't be easy for the Eagles as they begin Region XIV East play in the coming weeks. Only the Eagles conference record will matter for regional postseason qualification.

"We haven't started conference [play] yet, and it's just conference record," said Freeman "[We'll need] 13-14 wins, we gotta be above .500. If you think about it, there's 7 teams [in the Northern Conference of Region XIV] so we gotta be above .500 [to qualify for the Region XIV Tournament]"

The Eagles will face each of the other



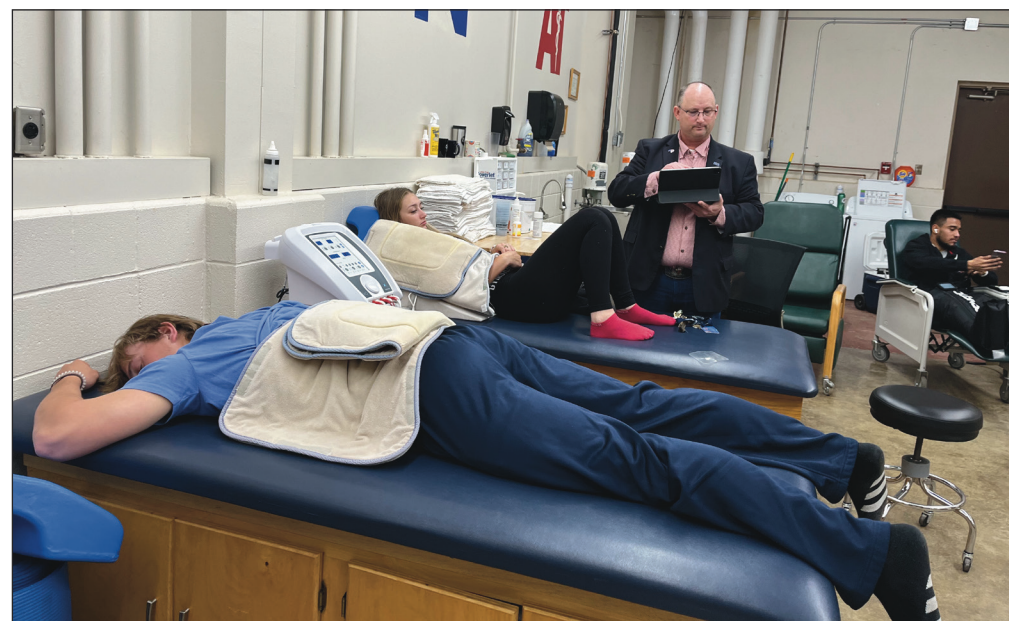
JUSTIN HARGROVE | COURTESY PHOTO

Outfielder Jalissa Alvarez attempts to beat the throw by sliding into third base against Southern Arkansas.

six teams in their conference four times in the coming months. NTCC will continue conference play next week, traveling to Navarro and Bossier Parish to round out the month of March before returning home to

face Trinity Valley Community College on April 5th.

For more information on NTCC softball, visit the official website of Eagles Athletics at ntcceagles.com.



ABIGAIL BARNARD | STAFF PHOTO

Athletic Trainer Justin Hargrove, center, treats Eagle athletes Anthony Capobianco, Daphne Bogenschutz, Carlos Quinones.

Athletic trainers receive recognition for their work

Special to The Eagle

Northeast Texas Community College would like to recognize all the area athletic trainers who go above and beyond to take care of the athletes they serve.

March is designated as National Athletic Training Month and this year the slogan is "There's an AT for that."

Certified and/or Licensed Athletic Trainers are most notably seen working with professional or collegiate teams.

We are fortunate here in Texas to also have many athletic trainers working with high schools and middle schools along with college and professional teams.

Nationwide the Certified/Licensed Athletic Trainer is being utilized in many more "non-traditional" settings as well.

Today you can find athletic trainers employed by the military, corporations and industrial companies, hospitals, physical therapy clinics, fire departments, and many

more settings as we have proved our worth and other groups are recognizing that "There's an AT for that" also works in their setting.

Athletic trainers have expertise in emergency management, evaluations of injury, rehabilitation of injuries, and many other areas of healthcare and are invaluable members of the healthcare profession.

Here at Northeast Texas Community College, Athletic Trainer, Justin Hargrove MS, LAT, ATC is assisted by two student athletic trainers, Taylor Money and Amiaya Washington to help take care of the Eagle Athletes.

Within our local community college service area we also would like to recognize Alex Fellows of Mount Pleasant ISD, Kristen Nugent and Tyler Nugent of Pittsburg ISD, Averil Nelson of Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD, and Tracy Coleman works in an off the field/front office capacity with Major League Soccer (MLS) for all the great work they do to care for their athletes.

Column

Madness in March

Look out for the little guys

By Adam Roseberry
Staff Writer



Roseberry

The world's largest and most lucrative collegiate sporting event is at hand.

Each year 68 division one college basketball teams face off to whittle the swollen field down to a single champion.

Millions of viewers take in the spectacle each year, on television and in person. It's the single largest cash cow for collegiate sports.

But why? Why is a tournament of 68 college teams with college kids playing the most watched sports playoffs in the nation not named the NFL?

Something about March Madness causes people to tune in. It transforms the casual viewer into a faux bracket guru who swears they have the perfect bracket.

Some students use their spring break and off time watching college basketball games even though their school didn't make the tournament.

Is it the fantastic buzzer beaters? The tight games? The raw emotion collegiate athletes show as they draw ever nearer to their ultimate goal?

The answer is all of the above, of course. But there's something more, something that grabs the fascination of every warm-blooded American.

When a little known team goes on a "Cinderella run" viewers cannot help but root for the underdog

March is the month of the underdogs. Almost anyone can make the swollen 68 team bracket field.

Teams like the Loyola-Chicago Ramblers in 2018

and last year's St Peter's Peacocks, whose Cinderella run took them all the way to the Elite 8.

St Peters has a total listed undergraduate enrollment of 2,134. For reference, Northeast Texas Community College has a listed undergraduate enrollment of 1,906.

There's a simple reason schools you've never heard of in any other sport rise up in March.

They either aren't a division one school in other sports or, as in the case of St Peters and Loyola Chicago, simply do not offer some sports, like football.

Let's compare the big three collegiate sports in America- Football, baseball and basketball. In division one college football there are 129 teams which compete for the championship each year.

Out of these 129, four teams make the playoffs at the end of the year, or about 3.1 percent.

In division one college baseball there are more than double the teams of football as 299 teams compete for 64 playoff spots. Approximately 21 percent of division one baseball teams make the NCAA tournament each year.

But NCAA basketball blows even baseball away, with 358 teams and a 68 team tournament field.

The smaller teams in the NCAA Tournament each year are determined

by Automatic Qualifier (AQ) bids. With AQ bids, the winner of each conference championship is guaranteed a spot in the madness.

There are 31 AQ bids for conference championship winners while the remaining 37 slots are doled out to "at-large" teams, or teams that did not win their conference championship but have performed well enough throughout the season to justify a tournament appearance.

The larger size of division one college basketball is both a blessing and a curse. While more teams have the opportunity to make the "Big Dance", there are many teams vying for only a few spots.

The competition is fierce- but the reward is oh so sweet. Forget the emotional and competitive rewards getting into the tournament give a team- Each team that even competes in March Madness receives hundreds of thousands of dollars for their conference, and each round they advance brings hundreds of thousands more.

That doesn't even account for the publicity the school receives simply for playing on the biggest stage in college sports.

You can tune in to CBS and the various Turner Sports Networks (TNT, TBS, and TRUtv) to catch every game of March Madness. Perhaps another undermanned, underbudgeted, underdog team will rise up and capture the fascination of a nation. It's the month of Cinderellas. Time to see if the slipper fits.

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Northeast Texas Community College's

Work4College application is now open for summer 2023! The deadline to apply is April 14th, 2023. Prospective candidates will need to submit an unofficial transcript, a reference letter, and an essay explaining why the W4C program would benefit them.



ntcc.edu/work4college
Contact Mason May for more info
mmay@ntcc.edu or (903) 434-8246

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TOWARDS
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