

Topper Tracks

Spring 2008

Following athletics at St. Edward's University

COACHES CORNER

Amy Coulter, softball head coach



Amy Coulter arrived on the hilltop in 2001 as a softball assistant coach. It didn't take long for her to start a winning tradition on the softball field.

Now entering her sixth year as head coach, she has posted a 170-127

overall record. In 2007, Coulter led the team to a 43-18 record and its first national ranking. The team also won its second-consecutive Heartland Conference championship and appeared in the NCAA regional tournament for the second time.

What do you like about coaching?

I enjoy developing relationships with my student-athletes. My focus is working with our athletes on the mental game and team-building activities.

What strategies do you use?

I am a very offensive-oriented coach. We spend a lot of time teaching the six-step hitting approach to build and develop our student-athletes into top-notch hitters. I also create game-like practices. I believe the more you can put your team in live situations, the better prepared they are during games. We also spend a lot of time getting to know each other outside of the softball field. This builds a special bond between the players and coaches and puts some fun into what we do in our program.

Any highlights from the 2006-2007 season?

Last season was a very special year for the softball program. We won the Heartland Conference title for the second consecutive year and captured several national rankings. We finished the season ranked 17 nationally.

What are your goals for the upcoming 2007-2008 season?

I'd like to see us win 40-plus games and keep the team GPA above 3.0. We'll do that by focusing on winning every inning and by working harder than our opponents. I'd also like to see us win the regional tournament, followed by a national title.

SEASON NEWS

WRAP-UP

Under sixth-year head coach **Jennifer White** and seventh-year assistant coach **J.J. Riehl**, the women's basketball team finished third in the Heartland Conference and advanced to the finals of the conference tournament for the first time in school history. The team finished strong, winning 10 of its last 16 games.

The men's basketball team finished with a 23-7 record, a third-straight Heartland Conference title and the team's third-straight trip to the NCAA Regional Tournament. Head Coach **Ryan Marks** was named Heartland Conference Coach of the Year for the third-consecutive season.



Men's basketball head coach Ryan Marks

UPDATE

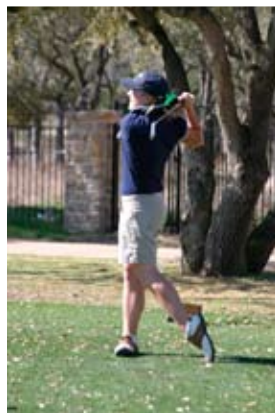
The softball team is off to another tremendous start, posting a 31-11 overall record. The Hilltoppers also have a 13-3 record in Heartland Conference play, which should take them to a second-place finish. Team members have garnered Conference Player of the Week honors on eight occasions this season. The team is ranked 20 in the nation.

The baseball team is currently in first place in the Heartland Conference, clinging to a one-half game lead over rival St. Mary's. The Hilltoppers have tallied a 25-10 overall record and 23-7 record in conference play. The team is ranked 21 in the nation.

The men's golf team is currently ranked fourth in the nation by GolfStat. The team has won three tournaments and finished second in three other tournaments. The Hilltoppers will host the South/South Central Super Regional May 5-7 at Grey Rock Golf Club.

The women's golf team is currently ranked 13 in the nation by GolfStat. The team has tied for first in one tournament and has finished in the top five in six of its nine tournaments this season.

Playing one of the nation's toughest schedules in Division II, the men's tennis team has compiled a 6-9 record. The team has taken on nine nationally ranked teams, two Division I teams and the defending Junior College National Champions throughout the season. The team is currently in second place in the Heartland Conference.



Women's golfer Jacqueline Struck

The women's tennis team has registered a 4-10 overall record. This season, the team has played seven nationally ranked teams and two Division I teams. The team is currently in second place in the Heartland Conference.

Can't make it to a game or want to follow the Hilltoppers on the road?

Fans can now listen to full-game live audio broadcasts for every team sport. Catch all the action as it happens from the convenience of your computer. Visit www.stedwards.edu/sports to find out what team is playing today.

SAAC UPDATE

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee — SAAC — promotes student-athletes on campus, as well as in the community at large. Members encourage community service and promote camaraderie among different sports. Here's what the St. Edward's University SAAC has been working on the past few months.

Copperfield Math Night 2008

As part of its mission to promote community service, the St. Edward's University SAAC, along with 90 student-athletes, took part in the Copperfield Elementary Math Night on Jan. 31. Activities included playing math games with students from Copperfield Elementary, as well as signing autographs, raffling door prizes and refreshments. The evening ended with a thank-you banner being presented to the St. Edward's University student-athletes for their involvement, as well as an invitation to return again next year.

Make-a-Wish Foundation

The St. Edward's University SAAC, along with the rest of the Heartland Conference member institutions, continues to fundraise for the Make-a-Wish Foundation. This year's fundraisers have included a student-athlete mixer and several Half-the-Pot drawings, where the winner takes home half the money raised from raffle ticket sales. SAAC has raised more than \$600 for Make-a-Wish Foundation.



Members of the women's soccer team at the Copperfield Math Night

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 5–7: NCAA Division II Men's Golf Regional Tournament

June 7: Hilltopper Athletics Fundraising Golf Tournament

UPDATE

PATRICK COLGAN: PITCHING TO WIN

Senior **Patrick Colgan** has been named Collegiate Pitcher of the Year for the Round Rock Express Winter Baseball Banquet. He was honored at the banquet on Feb. 6. Major League Hall-of-Famer Reggie Jackson was the keynote speaker.

The *Austin-American Statesman* chose Colgan, an Austin native, for this award after a stellar 2007 season. Colgan, who also was named to the Rawlings/American Baseball Coaches Association All-America First-Team, led St. Edward's with a spotless 12–0 record and a 1.97 earned-run average. He also was tops on the Hilltopper squad with 85 strikeouts in 86.2 innings of work. The southpaw had seven complete games and three shutouts, while also combining for another shutout.

Opposing batters only hit .199 against him. In conference play, he was even better, going 9–0 with a 1.67 earned-run average.



Patrick Colgan (center) with Hall of Famers Reggie Jackson and Nolan Ryan

HILLRAISERS: WE'VE GOT SPIRIT



Members of the HillRaisers cheer on the basketball teams.

The next time you're rooting for the Hilltoppers, don't be alarmed if you're surrounded by a wall of students clad in identical blue shirts cheering their hearts out. They're the HillRaisers, the university's official student spirit group.

The HillRaisers were born when lead coordinator **Vincent Powell, '08**, attended Student Life's LeaderShape. During the week-long program, participants were challenged to discover ways they could lead on campus. Powell decided St. Edward's could use a little more spirit.

Along with events director **Jessica Burkemper, '08**, Powell assembled a small group of like-minded students to spread spirit throughout the campus. The group

started by printing T-shirts that students could wear to home athletic events. The HillRaisers try to have a presence at all home athletic events, and members of the executive board volunteer to work spirit stations, where they offer face painting and sell the T-shirts for \$5. The HillRaisers recently started spreading spirit off the hilltop with bus trips to away games at rival schools.

In addition to cheering on the Hilltoppers, the HillRaisers try to instill school spirit around campus. For a one-week period in September, the group handed out dress-code violations; any student caught in a T-shirt or hat from another university was issued a ticket good for 15 percent off a St. Edward's University shirt or hat at the university bookstore.

So how do spirited students join the HillRaisers? According to Powell, they show up five to 10 minutes before a game and purchase a T-shirt. "The whole student body makes up the HillRaisers," he says. "There are no membership fees. We just want people to show up and cheer."

Burkemper agrees: "We just want students to be excited about being Hilltoppers."

GROWING A GOLF PROGRAM



Women's golf head coach Jennifer McNeil

When women's golf head coach **Jennifer McNeil** arrived at St. Edward's in 2003 as the assistant coach, the program was in its first year. Following a rough start — a last-place finish in the Heartland Conference — McNeil and her players were determined to improve the program.

With McNeil at the helm for the 2004–2005 season, the program started to evolve.

In 2006–2007, the team won the Heartland Conference championship and made its second straight appearance in the

NCAA West Regional, missing the national tournament by three strokes. The team also enjoyed a program-high ranking of seventh in the nation. How did this happen in less than five years? With a lot of hard work and dedication from the players, says McNeil.

“We're on a mission to get to the national tournament and compete. It's our biggest motivation,” she says.

The program's success owes to continual player improvement as well. In the inaugural season, the team had one player on scholarship. By the 2006–2007 season, there were eight players on scholarship. As a result, McNeil says the team is stronger from top to bottom.

“I look for recruits who could beat my current players,” she says. “If I don't go after players who can find a place in the lineup, I'm doing a disservice to the team.”

As the program and players have consistently improved, the team's expectations for their performances have changed, too. In 2003, the team's goal was to place in the top three at tournaments. Now, players are disappointed if they don't take the top spot. Each time they play, the team tries to break 300, up from their previous goal of 340.

McNeil looks forward to the Spring 2008 season and its post-season possibilities. She also wants to raise awareness of her players' outstanding accomplishments. Because the team plays in tournaments across the country, the campus community doesn't always get to share in the excitement of a winning golf program.

“The players work hard to represent St. Edward's with dignity and class,” says McNeil. “I'm very proud of them.”

HONORS ROUNDUP

Below is a list of awards that the Hilltoppers have received since the fall issue of *TopperTracks*.

Men's Soccer

Team: National Soccer Coaches of America Team Academic Award

Kevin Klaus: Third-team All-America

Men's Basketball

Taylor Land: College Sports Information Directors Association Academic All-District

Baseball

Patrick Colgan: Baseball America Preseason All-America, Round Rock Express Winter Banquet Collegiate Pitcher of the Year

Bradley Goldsmith: Baseball America Preseason All-America; rated the number-three prospect in Central Illinois Collegiate League

Softball

Robin Becker: St. Mary's Classic All-Tournament Team

TOPPER BACKERS

The corporate partner program for St. Edward's University Athletics

Topper Backers, the university's corporate partner program, offers opportunities to market Austin-area businesses at home athletic events, which draw students, faculty, staff and fans from all over Austin. Thanks to our 2007–2008 Topper Backers:

- Austin Airport Clarion Inn & Suites
- Cannoli Joe's
- Carino's Italian Grill
- Chick Fil-A
- Comfort Suites Austin Airport
- Holiday Inn Express
- Juan's Mexicali Cafe
- Marriott Austin Airport South
- Opal Divine's
- Pluckers
- Rockin' Tomato Pizza Company
- Taco Shack

DANIEL PIERRE: ROAD TO RECOVERY

Senior **Daniel Pierre** recently returned to the court after sitting out the 2006–2007 men's basketball season due to an injury. He sat down with *Topper Tracks* and shared his thoughts on his recovery.

What caused the injury?

It wasn't anything specific. I think it was just wear and tear from playing basketball that caused the herniation of two discs in my lower back.

What was the recovery like?

It was difficult because I couldn't play for six months. Those six months included a lot of physical therapy, which was difficult at times. The support from my family, my team and the St. Edward's University community really made me work harder toward getting back on the court.

What support did you get from your teammates?

In the beginning of the season, I felt like I couldn't help the team at all and it made me feel useless. This wasn't the case. The team still looked to me to be a leader, and I provided vocal support throughout the season.



How does it feel to be back on the court?

It's an amazing feeling to be back on the court with the team because playing with them completes me. Missing a season was difficult, but it made me a hungrier player, who wants to do whatever it takes to win a third conference championship and make it to the NCAA tournament again.