



The mission of the Mercer University Athletic Department is to develop well-rounded student-athletes academically, athletically and socially. The program is committed to integrity, sportsmanship and equal opportunity for all students and staff.

# Mercer University **BEARBACKER NEWS**

*Jim Cole, President*

*www.mercer.edu/athletics*

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## **From the Desk of Bobby Pope**

October will be a busy month for Mercer Athletics. The soccer and volleyball teams move into the important conference portions of their schedules while cross-country will have several meets capped off by the conference championships in Buies Creek, N.C., hosted by Campbell University. In addition, both the men's and women's golf teams have their seasons under way.

Other highlights for the month include the annual fall BearBacker Golf Tournament to be played at the Houston Lake Country Club Oct. 5 and Mercer Madness on Oct. 14, which marks the start of basketball practice. A full schedule of events is planned for Mercer Madness, beginning at 6 p.m. in the University Center. As opposed to previous years, practice can officially begin at 7 p.m. instead of 12 midnight.

How About Wesley Duke making the Denver Broncos' 53-man roster? He was expected to make the practice squad but defied all the odds and is a full-fledged member of the NFL team. His presence gives Mercer more representation in the NFL than a lot of schools that sponsor football. We are extremely proud of Wesley and look forward to him having a long career.

Memberships continue to come in for the BearBackers. If you haven't already joined, we hope you will give it strong consideration. Support for the Send a Child to a Game and Toby's Kids Club is also picking up steam.

Thanks for all of your support. We look forward to seeing you at an Athletic event soon.

Sincerely,  
Bobby

## **Volleyball Needs Strong Finish**

The volleyball team needs a strong finish if they are going to advance to the conference tournament for the third consecutive season. They start October with a 4-12 overall record and an 0-2 conference record. With the exception of matches at Savannah State, Oct. 11, and Wofford, Oct. 29, all the remainder of their action comes within the conference.

All-Conference performer Julie Darty, who leads the team in kills, suffered an ankle injury prior to the team's match at Florida Atlantic and will be out until the middle of the month.

The tough pre-conference schedule should prove beneficial as the team tries to earn the post season berth.

## **Kelley Bretscher Named Secretary For A-Sun SAAC Committee**

Softball player Kelley Bretscher has been elected secretary of the Atlantic Sun Conference Student Athlete Advisory Council. The junior from Alta Loma, Calif., was elected during the group's annual fall meeting held Sept. 16-17 in Jacksonville, Fla.

## **Mercer Madness October 14**

Mercer Madness, the official kickoff of the basketball season, is set for Oct. 14 at the University Center. The night's activities begin with a carnival from 6-7:30 p.m. From 7:30 until 8:10 p.m., The Playground All Stars, a touring basketball group, will be playing a team made up of faculty, staff and students. A pep rally is on tap from 8:10 until 8:45, and then Mercer basketball takes the spotlight from 8:45 until 10 p.m. During that time, both the men's and women's teams will be introduced, and there will be competitions between team members, including three-point shooting and a slam dunk competition. Fireworks will complete the night, starting at 10:15 p.m.

If you plan to attend, please let us know, so that we can put you on the guest list.

## **From The Links**

The fall golf season is under way for both the men's and women's teams. The men already have two tournaments under their belt. They finished 4th of 10 teams in the Reynolds Plantation/Gulf Coast Classic played at Port Armour. Mercer sponsored this event after the University of South Alabama was unable to get a course because of Hurricane Katrina. The Bears finished at 871, seven strokes over par, and 10 strokes behind first



## Basketball Schedules Announced

Both the men's and women's basketball schedules for the coming season have been announced.

The men play seven of their first 8 games on the road with a meeting Dec. 1 against Savannah State in the University Center as their only home game prior to the New Year. They open the season in Statesboro against long-time rival Georgia Southern Nov. 22 and then, following the Savannah State contest, they are on the road to open the conference season at Campbell, Dec. 3, and Gardner Webb, Dec. 5, before traveling to Big 12 powers Oklahoma State, Dec. 18, and Colorado, Dec. 22. Following the Christmas break, they take part in the Dr. Pepper Classic at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, Dec. 29-30. The Bears play 18 of their final 19 regular season games against conference opponents, starting at home with Jacksonville, Jan. 2, and North Florida, Jan. 4. The Jacksonville game will begin at 6 p.m with North Florida set for 12 noon as a businessman's special. The only non-conference game the remainder of the season comes at Savannah State, Feb. 13. The Bears homecoming game is Feb. 10 against Stetson and will be carried live by Comcast Television. The A-Sun men's tournament is set for March 2-4 at Johnson City, Tenn.

Like the men, the women also play a grueling non-conference slate, as well as a difficult 20-game, A-Sun schedule. They open the season against ACC-foe Wake Forest in Winston Salem, N.C., Nov. 18, before opening the home season against Big West-foe Cal Poly, Nov. 21. Then it's off to the Oneida Bingo and Casino Holiday tournament over Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 25-26, hosted by Wisconsin-Green Bay.

The Bears play Vermont the first night. Pacific is also entered in that tournament. Like the men, they open the conference season at Campbell, Dec. 3, and Gardner Webb, Dec. 5. Following a break for finals, they play at Southern Mississippi, Dec. 15, before returning home to meet the University of New Orleans Dec. 19 in a game originally set for the Crescent City, but was moved to Macon because of Hurricane Katrina. After a break for Christmas, they play at Florida A&M, Dec. 29, which is their last non-conference game before resuming league play at home in a 3:15 p.m. start against Florida Atlantic on Jan. 2.

The women's tournament will be played March 9-11 at Dothan, Ala.

## Cross-Country Shows Improvement

The cross-country teams were successful in September. In women's competition, Mercer placed 3rd of 5 teams in the conference preview at Campbell. They were 3rd of 15 in the Mercer-Atlanta Invitational and 1st of 14 schools in their division at the Great American Cross Country Festival. Deborah Jones led the Bears at the pre-conference and the Mercer Invitational Finishing 8th with a time of 15:42 and 20th at 14:16, Valerie Detrick was sixth at the Great American at 19:47.

Daniel Tanui paced the Mercer men in all three events finishing 10th in the first race where Mercer was 4th of 5 teams. He had a time of 16:36. In the Mercer Invitational, when Mercer was 6th of 16, he was 22nd, posting a time of 17:53. In the Great American, another sixth place team finish among 15 schools, he was 6th with a time of 26:26.

### *Compliance Corner*

**Who is a Prospect?** Any student who has started classes for the 9th grade, or earlier if he/she has received any financial assistance or other benefits from an institution that is not normally provided to prospective students generally, is considered a prospect.

place Southern Mississippi. Michael Gregory was 7th in the individual competition at even-par 216.

In their second tournament, the Bears were 8th of 14 teams in the Cardinal Intercollegiate, hosted by the University of Louisville. They finished at 879, 22 strokes back of the winning total posted by Marquette. Andrew An was low man for Mercer at 1-under-par 215, which placed him in a tie for 13th. The men have two tournaments scheduled in October as they take part in the Sonic-UTC Invitational in Chattanooga Oct. 17-18 and the Sam H. Hall Invitational, hosted by Southern Mississippi, Oct. 31-Nov. 1.

On the distaff side, Mercer was 8th of 18 teams in the Seatrail Intercollegiate at Sunset Beach, N.C., posting a 36-hole score of 620, 30 shots back of champion Western Carolina. Ashley Harris was 16th with a score of 152. The Mercer women play three times in October: at the Wachovia Great Smokes Invitational, hosted by Western Carolina, Oct. 1-2; the Jacksonville State Lady Gamecock Fall Golf Classic, Oct. 11-12; and at the Taco Bell Invitational at East Carolina, Oct. 21-23

### *Just For Kicks*

Both the men's and women's soccer teams have moved into the second half of their seasons. The men ended September on a three-game winning streak with victories over Appalachian State, Berry and Lipscomb. They start October with a 4-5 overall record and a 1-0 record in Atlantic Sun Conference play. All-Conference players Del Olaoye and Vicente Arze have been the Mercer leaders with 17 and 15 points, respectively, and Cliff Wilson is just a point back with 14. The Bears remaining schedule features all conference games with the exception of meeting with Georgia Southern and Winthrop.

The Mercer women stand at 4-8 overall and 1-2 in the A-Sun as they try to earn a spot in the conference tournament. Like the men, they have played a demanding non-conference schedule meeting the likes of South Carolina, Florida State and Alabama.

In conference action, they defeated Gardner Webb 2-1 and lost a 1-0 thriller to Campbell and a 5-3 decision at East Tennessee. All-Conference performer Catie Marshalek is the leading scorer on the team with nine points while freshman Meghan Castaldo has contributed eight. The remainder of the schedule is all against conference opposition leading up to the A-Sun Tournament to be played Nov. 3-5 at Boiling Springs, N.C.