

Chasing the Dream

National Champion senior Larry Wade reflects on his collegiate career, runs after NCAA title and Goodwill Games glory

By MICHAEL FERGUSON
Staff writer

Larry Wade can be seen every day before practice, kneeling to pray before he sets foot on the track. Praying not for success and glory, but simply for strength and support from God. Success and glory, however, are usually the results of the efforts of the senior All-American from Elgin, Texas.

Born and raised in Giddings, Larry Wade has always had the desire to compete in track and field. "Ever since I was a little boy, I wanted to compete in the Olympics," Wade said. However, he did not realize his potential to compete at another level until high school. "I didn't really realize that I could actually get a scholarship doing this until my junior year in high school," Wade said. "That's when I decided to focus more on running than anything else."

After moving to Elgin, Wade finished his college career at Elgin High School. While in high school, Wade finished second in the Texas Relays and won the AAU National Championship in the 110-meter hurdles. When it came time to choose a university, Wade turned to his family for support. "My dad went to A&M for a while, and he was really happy with the track program and the academic standings here," Wade said. "I wanted to stay in the area, when A&M offered me a scholarship, I just jumped on it."

Since his freshman year at Texas A&M in 1994, Wade has put together an astonishing list of credentials. The four-time All-American won the Southwest Conference Championship in the 110-meter hurdles in 1995 on his way to a second-place finish at the NCAA outdoor championship.

In 1997, he won the Big 12 Conference Championship before finishing third at the

"I think he's as good as anyone right now, and he's the guy to beat."

Abe Brown
Track Coach

NCAA outdoor meet. This March, he finished off his final indoor season as the National champion in the 55-meter hurdles. Wade holds the Texas A&M record in both the 110 hurdles and the 55 hurdles, as well as five of the six fastest times in school history in the 110 hurdles.

However, Wade's individual success pales in comparison to what he brings to the team. Hurdles Coach Abe Brown mentioned how Wade's presence has benefited some of the younger hurdlers.

"They know they have a chance to run

with the best and learn from the best," Brown said. "He's been a good role model and a good leader for those young people coming along."

"He really lends a strong character to our team situation."

Though Larry Wade has put together impressive career statistics, the coveted national championship in the outdoor season still remains an unrealized dream—the only missing piece in the puzzle of perfection.

After laying off several weeks at the beginning of the outdoor season due to nagging injuries, Wade has come out blazing, winning his first two meets and appears to be in prime condition for his run at the title.

According to Coach Ted Nelson, Wade's national championship in the indoor season may take some of the burden off of Wade in the outdoor season.

"Going into the national indoor meet, he had never won a national championship, so that put a little extra pressure on him," Nelson said. "I think that pressure is off now that he's got that national championship."

"It's harder to get that first one sometimes, and sometimes it's easier to get the second one."

Currently, Wade is concentrating on earning his degree in May and finishing his collegiate track career on a positive note.

Yet, after finishing so close in both 1995 and 1997, Wade knows the national outdoor championship is within reach and would be the perfect ending to a storied career.



BRANDON BOLLOM/THE BATTALION

Elgin native Larry Wade earned All-American honors each year at Texas A&M on his way to school records in both the 110-meter hurdles and the 55 hurdles.

"My dream ending would be to win the NCAA title, go on to win the USA Championships, and to make the USA Goodwill Games team," Wade said.

Brown certainly likes Wade's chances for the duration of the season.

"Larry is on top of his game," Brown

said. "I think he's as good as anyone right now and he's the guy to beat."

Nobody in the country has figured out a way to beat Wade this year. If that trend continues, bringing home the national championship will no longer be a dream, but a reality.

Penn Relays await Aggies

Prestigious relays host best competition that will face A&M

By MICHAEL FERGUSON
Staff writer

This weekend, the Texas A&M Track and Field Team will travel to Pennsylvania to compete in the 104th running of the Penn Relays.

The relays always boast some of the best competition in the nation and a format that produces winners in events known as the "Championship of America."

Last year, the Aggies fared very well in the Penn Relay Carnival, winning the men's 4x100-meter relay, the women's shuttle hurdle relay and the men's 110-meter hurdles, with Larry Wade taking home first prize.

This year should be no different in the addition of several key freshmen as well as the development of many of last year's underclassmen.

The Penn Relays are notorious for large crowds and the three-day total, which is rare to the sport of track and field. Coach Ted Nelson mentioned the crowd support at the relays.

"It's a gem of a meet as far as spectators are concerned," Nelson said. "When you put 45,000 people up there and they're screaming every time you run, it's something that track people don't experience very much in the states."

"It's a gem of a meet as far as spectators are concerned."

Ted Nelson
A&M Track Coach

Coach Abe Brown spoke about his affection toward the relays.

"I've been going to Penn now the last eight years, and they seem to just get better and better every year," Brown said. "Penn has a format that I really enjoy. They have these events that they call Championship of America, so when our kids win these events, they feel like they're the best in the nation."

Last year, this held true as the men's 4x100-meter relay team went on to win the national championship after winning the Penn Relays.

The meet will consist of some of the best high-school competition in the nation and several foreign teams, in addition to the collegiate competition.

After the Penn Relays, the Aggies will return home to begin preparation for their next meet on May 2, in New Orleans, La.

Athletes earn right to work; A&M allowed jobs four years too early

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (AP) — Division I athletes may hold part-time jobs, the NCAA board of directors ruled today.

"It definitely passed," Bridgit Niland, head of the NCAA's student-athlete advisory committee, told The Associated Press.

The board, which consists of college presidents and holds ultimate power in the NCAA's new structure, met in Indianapolis and adopted the recommendation made last week by the NCAA management council.

The new rule takes effect Aug. 1, and a formal announcement was expected later in the day.

For the first time in decades, athletes at the roughly 300 Division I schools will be able to hold part-time jobs, even if they are arranged by their school's boosters. They cannot make more than \$2,000 every year.

"This really shows the optimum the NCAA can operate at if it chooses to," said Niland, a former runner at the University of Buffalo. "It was a piece of legislation that was really thought through. They really did consider the welfare of the student-ath-

lete instead of just saying they were."

Opponents of the rule fear the potential of abuse in which some athletes will be given money without working. Many are also worried that high-profile recruits will now demand jobs with scholarships.

"It's going to be a disaster," Kansas State basketball coach Tom Asbury said.

A similar right-to-work rule was adopted by majority vote of the NCAA's Division I schools in January 1997 in the last days of the association's old governance structure.

The board of directors, in its first important act as the NCAA's new governing body, suspended it just as it was about to take effect last August.

Under provisions adopted by the management council, the right-to-work rule will permit Division I athletes to earn a maximum of \$2,000 per year over and above the value of a full scholarship. It would also allow athletic department staff members or boosters to help line up jobs, which are two reasons many view the rule with alarm.

Many fear that allowing boosters

to line up jobs for athletes will lead to cheating. Another concern is that some schools will have advantages in recruiting. There are more job opportunities in Miami or Los Angeles, for example, than in Knoxville, Tenn., or Stillwater, Okla.

"Another fear of coaches is that those who want the extra money may be many of the same ones who need the extra time to study," said Chuck Neinas, the retired executive director of the College Football Association who now heads a sports consultant firm. "Many coaches wanted to establish a minimum grade-point average of 2.5 before a student-athlete could work. But the NCAA said no."

Supporters of athletes' rights were furious at last year's delay.

"We never wanted athletic departments to have to become job-placement counselors for us. This was just to give us an opportunity to find a job if we could," said Niland, who headed the student-athlete advisory committee at the 1997 convention. "But what happened is that old fear of abuse. That's the reason for this delay."

Women's Tennis Team travels to Nebraska for Big 12 showdown

By KATIE MISH
Staff writer

The Big 12 Women's Tennis Tournament starts today in Lincoln, Neb. The women, seeded fifth, meet with No. 12 seed Missouri.

The last time the Aggies played Missouri, they walked away with a victory.

Another win in today's match could bring the Lady Ags up against the No. 4 seeded Baylor Bears, who handed the Aggies a 6-0 defeat in this season's match-up.

The Bears have since lost their No. 1 singles player, Barbara Navarro.

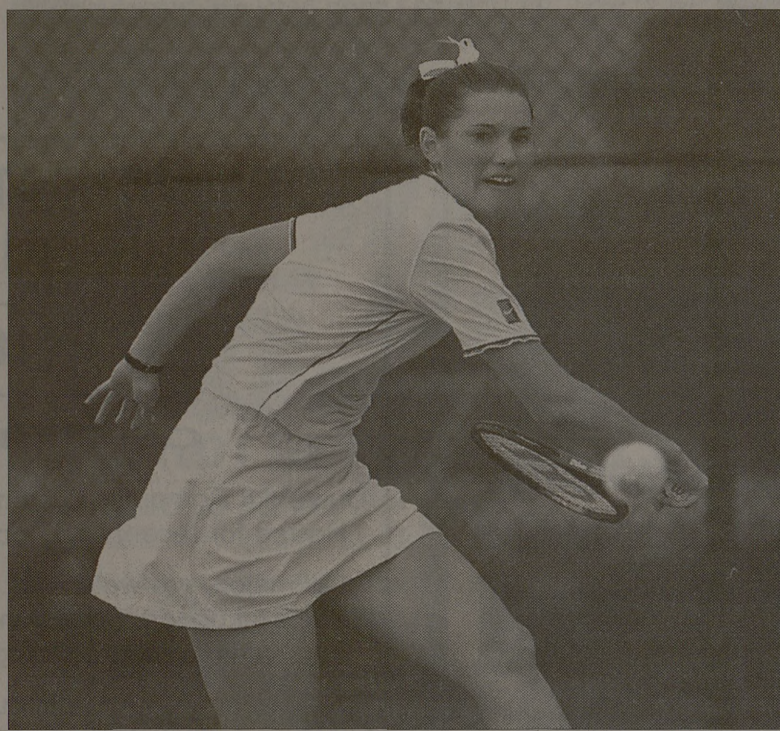
Three of the Aggie netters will receive awards during pre-tournament ceremonies for their Big 12 play.

Senior Monica Rebolledo has captured the No. 4 singles title, after a 10-1 win against Big 12 opponent, sophomore Kathryn Scott, 9-6 in the Big 12, has received the No. 5 singles title.

Freshman Eva Marcial, 8-3 in Big 12 play, has been awarded the No. 6 singles title.

Coach Bob Kleinecke said the team is just looking to play well in the tournament. He said the Aggies are disappointed to be seeded fifth, but said they are looking beyond that, and are ready to play.

"We knew going into the match against Kansas that no matter how we did, we would most likely



RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Aggie netter Kathryn Scott will lead the Texas A&M charge into the Big 12 Tournament after receiving the No. 5 singles title and going 9-2 in conference.

end up with the fifth seed," Kleinecke said. "It's disappointing, but we've just got to look past that, and look to the tournament to do whatever we can."

Rebolledo, the record holder for singles wins at A&M, said the team just wants to play at the highest level of their ability and give it their all.

"We're hoping to go out there and play our best," Rebolledo said. "We want to give 100 percent. If we play

Baylor again, we want to beat them, because we lost to them earlier in the season. The same goes for Texas and Kansas. We just want to get the wins."

Senior netter Vanessa Rooks said the Aggies are really excited for the challenge and have been working hard to prepare for the tournament.

"We have to put the Kansas match behind us, even though we're excited," Rooks said. "It's time for us to think about the first round."

Season ends for 'Shark' after shoulder surgery

(AP) — Greg Norman will miss the next three major championships this year and the rest of the PGA Tour season after arthroscopic surgery today on his left shoulder.

The 43-year-old Australian, who has missed only five majors since 1980, withdrew from The Players Championship in late March because of shoulder pain and missed the cut two weeks later at the Masters.

"The procedure itself was a success," Norman's business manager Bart Collins said today from the offices of Great White Shark Enterprises in Tequesta, Fla. "His arm will be in a sling for the next 10 days and after that he will be able to take it off from time to time to get some range of motion."

Collins said "significant" rehabilitation would not begin for four weeks and the entire rehab period would last six months.

He said a tentative timetable for Norman's return to competition would be at the Shark Shootout in Thousand Oaks, Calif., on Nov. 9-15.

Norman was under a local anesthetic during the operation and would remain groggy for several hours and be unable to comment, Collins said.

"We have known for about four or five days that surgery was neces-

sary," he said.

The operation was performed by Dr. Richard Hawkins at the Steadman Hawkins Sports Medicine Foundation in Vail, Colo., where Olympic gold medalist skier Picabo Street was operated on early this year.

Collins said Norman had a bone spur under the top of the left shoulder that caused tendinitis and that there was some tearing under the rotator cuff and possibly a tear in the muscle lining.

"If everything goes according to plan, Greg is going to be able to play tournament golf in late October or early November," Collins said.

"Right now we are aiming for the Shark Shootout."

A return at the Shark Shootout would give Norman time to get ready for the Presidents Cup, played in his native Australia for the first time on Dec. 11-13. It would be a major disappointment to his home fans and a blow for the event if Norman were unable to compete.

Norman, who has played only 19 1/2 competitive rounds this year, most of that overseas, became close friends with President Clinton through their mutual love of golf. It was at Norman's Hobe Sound, Fla., home in the early morning of March 14, 1997, that Clinton fell down the stairs, requiring surgery.

Men's Team goes to Big 12 Tourney

By AL LAZARUS
Staff writer

The Texas A&M Men's Tennis Team (14-4, 7-2) is in Lincoln, Neb., to compete in the Big 12 Tournament, which begins today and will go through Sunday.

The Aggies are the tournament's No. 2 seed and have a first round bye. On Friday they will play the winner of today's match between Oklahoma and Missouri.

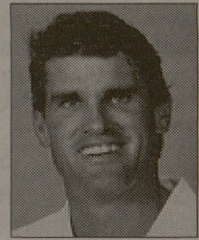
A&M Coach Tim Cass said after finishing second in the Big 12, the Aggies are looking to prove themselves in the tournament.

"We are disappointed in finishing second, because we really believed we had a chance to take a share of first place with Texas," Cass said. "If that's really the truth, now is our chance to prove it."

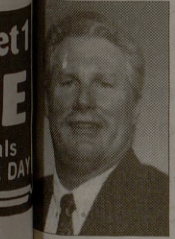
In the Rolex Collegiate Rankings released on Tuesday, the Aggies fell from No. 17 to No. 24. Other Big 12 teams ranked in the top-30 include the University of Texas (No. 5), Oklahoma State University (No. 25) and Baylor University (No. 26).

Cass said despite a multitude of highly-ranked teams in the tournament, he is only worried about the one in maroon and white.

PLEASE SEE TENNIS ON PAGE 9.



Cass



Kleinecke