



DBU ATHLETICS SPOTLIGHT

by Larry Northcutt

Over the last several years, DBU Patriot Athletics, a member of the NCAA Division II Heartland Conference and the National Christian College Athletics Association (NCCAA), has experienced success and built on a reputation of excellence both on and off the field of play. This past year, the DBU Tennis and Golf teams added to this tradition with strong finishes and promising futures.

The men's and women's tennis teams wrapped up their 2007 season with the men at the Heartland Conference Tournament and the women at the NCCAA National Tournament.

The men, finishing the season with a 5-18 record, but very strong in conference play, were once again led by senior Kerry Koppa. In addition, competing well for the men were juniors Travis Dixon and Derek Hill, sophomore Matthew Nations, and freshmen Josh King, Luke Pasley, Michael Rivera, and Bronson Vaughn.

The 2008 season looks promising for a young Patriot men's team, with the addition of four freshman to the squad, including Clint Baird, Chad Dozier, Justin Hanna, and Stephen Tabrizi. The young team looks to build for the future with the emergence of their freshmen and will rely on sophomore talent, Bronson Vaughn, to be the leader of the team in 2008.

Sophomore Candis Minor led the way for the Lady Patriots to a 13-12 mark and a fourth place finish in the NCCAA National Tournament during the 2007 campaign. Minor finished the year by being named to the Heartland Conference All-Conference Team, NCCAA All-American First Team for singles, NCCAA All-American Second Team for doubles, and NCCAA Student-Athlete of the Week. In addition, having a strong year were junior Brittany McCleary, who earned NCCAA All-American Second Team for doubles and singles, and senior Lacey Eggleston, who finished up the season by being named NCCAA All-American Second Team for singles.

The Lady Patriot tennis team will look to get stronger during the 2008 season with every player returning from the 2007 team.

"We had a very young team and had to rebuild some this past year with both squads," explained DBU Head Tennis Coach Jennifer Helm. The new players really stepped up in leadership by working extra hard and improving their overall game. I am excited about the future of DBU tennis."

The Lady Patriot golf team, in its second full year of existence, legitimately became a contender in the NCAA Division II Heartland Conference. The women competed in several tournaments throughout the



TENNIS AND GOLF TEAMS FIND SUCCESS IN HEARTLAND CONFERENCE AND NCCAA

2006-2007 season and finished in the top 10 on a regular basis, including finishing third place at the Concordia Lady Invitational and third place at the Heartland Conference Tournament.

The ladies were led by freshman standout, Heather Wilbur, who finished fourth in the Heartland Conference Tournament and earned All-Tournament honors. For the season, Wilbur averaged a 79.94 per round, had a team best of 73 for lowest round, and was second to only DBU junior Jamie Shirley in low total round score with a 151. Wilbur completed the year being named Freshman of the Year and a member of the First Team All-Heartland Conference.

Shirley was also a new addition to the team and another big reason the Lady Patriots continued to improve as the season went on. Shirley, who consistently played with Wilbur during the season, averaged an 81.44 per round, shot a season low 73, and holds the school record for lowest total round when she shot a 147 at the Oklahoma Intercollegiate, which earned her second place. She was named a member of the Second Team All-Heartland Conference.

The Lady Patriots are adding more weapons to the 2008 squad. Wilbur and Shirley will be joined by freshman Aubrey Slawter, freshman Ariel Trimble,

freshman Kristen Tucker, and transfer Audra Van Winkle.

The Patriot men's team continued to make improvements from the 2006 season and wrapped up their 2007 season at the Heartland Conference Tournament with a fourth place finish.

Senior Ronnie Van Woesik was named to the 2007 Heartland Conference All-Tournament team, shooting a 223 over three rounds and finishing in second place at the tournament.

Freshman Bennett Smith was named to the Second Team Heartland All-Conference. During the 2007 season, Smith averaged a 75.71 per round, which was the lowest on the men's team. Smith also shot a 69 for a two under par to compile the lowest score for a single round at DBU.

The men, during the 2008 season, are looking to have their best season yet. The Patriots have five players returning from the 2007 team and are adding two freshmen to the squad for the season.

According to DBU Head Golf Coach Kenny Trapp, who was named the 2007 Heartland Conference Coach of the Year, "I am excited about the 2008 season, because we are returning so many key components to our team, and I know that our additions will only build on our foundation."