

BY LANCE FLEMING

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## Digest



Shawna Hines

GERALD EWING

### Young volleyball team finishes 15-14

Second-year head coach **Kellen (Morrow '05) Mock** knew going into 2007 that the strength of the early season schedule would either make or break her team.

And while the tough early slate didn't exactly break her team, it did affect the Wildcats' record and keep them from a fourth straight trip to the NCAA Division II Southwest Region Tournament.

ACU finished 15-14 overall, reaching the semifinals of the Lone Star Conference Post-Season Tournament before losing to a West Texas A&M team that eventually won the regional tournament to advance to the Elite Eight for the second straight season.

The season was not without success, however, as Mock found a young core of players in setter **Ijeoma Moronu** and redshirt freshman middle blocker **Shawna Hines**. Moronu was one of the league's top setters, while Hines led the LSC in blocks.

Senior **Abbie Lowry** capped her career as a first team all-LSC South Division pick for the second time. She finished in the top five in ACU history in kills.

### First Wildcat soccer season a success

Before the inaugural season of ACU soccer started in August 2007, head coach **Casey Wilson ('99)** believed his team had the potential to surprise the Lone Star Conference and make a push to play in the post-season.

And while things didn't exactly turn out the way he had hoped, ACU's final 8-11-1 record (3-6-1 in the LSC) showed there is talent on hand.

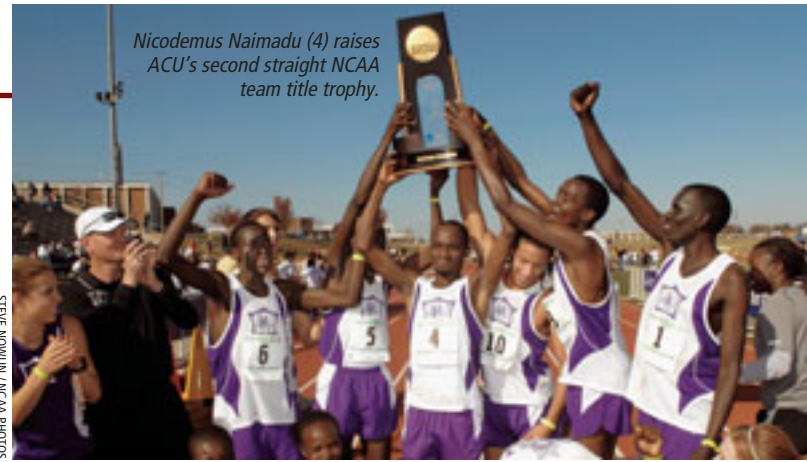
Wilson found future stars in freshman midfielder **Courtney Wilson** and freshman forward **Lyndsey Womack**, as well as sophomore forward **Jordan Reese** and sophomore defender **Alyson Thomas**.

Womack led the team in goals with 10, while Reese added eight and Wilson six. Reese led the LSC in shots with 76.

## Naimadu makes history, ACU earns second national title

Nicodemus Naimadu's final race as a Wildcat was a memorable one as he led the Wildcats to a second straight NCAA Division II team championship while putting his own stamp on collegiate history.

In the Nov. 17 race, Naimadu became the only athlete in NCAA history to win four consecutive individual national titles in cross country. And he won the title despite not running in either the



Nicodemus Naimadu (4) raises ACU's second straight NCAA team title trophy.

STEVE NOWLIN / NCAA PHOTOS

Lone Star Conference or NCAA South Central Region meets because of a knee injury.

But when he lined up for the start of the race in Joplin, Mo., he was healthy. And with all eyes on him, he came through with a memorable performance, pulling

away over the final mile to win handily.

The ACU women also had a successful season, finishing seventh at the championship meet behind freshman **Winrose Karunda's** second-place performance. ▲

## WILDCAT SPORTS ROUNDUP

### Basketball

- The **ACU men** were off to an impressive 14-2 start that matches the best 16-game start in school history. That record earned the program its first national ranking (No. 21) since February 1999.
- Three newcomers have meshed well, with forward **Dejan Sencanski** averaging a team-best 17.4 points per game. Backcourt duo **Corwin Ragland** (17.0 ppg) and **Brandon Callahan** (15.1 ppg) constitute one of the top guard tandems in the Lone Star Conference.
- The **ACU women**, meanwhile, had a 7-8 record in late January. Five of the Wildcats' losses have been by a total of 14 points, including two at the buzzer. Junior center **Audrey Maxwell** averages 17.9 points per game.

### Baseball

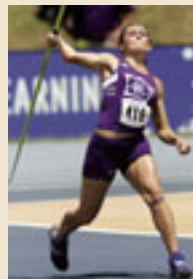
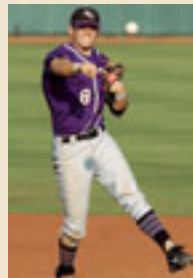
- The **Wildcats** should again be among the favorites to capture the LSC title in 2008. This year the LSC moves to one league (no divisional format) with the top six teams at the end of the regular season qualifying for the league's post-season tournament, which will again be played at Crutcher Scott Field.
- ACU returns seven everyday starters and three starting pitchers from last year's 47-13 team. The top returnees include pitcher/third baseman **Trey Watten**, shortstop **William Uechi**, catcher **Jordan Schmitt**, centerfielder **Matt Spotanski** and pitchers **Chris Wiman** and **Ben Maynard**.

### Softball

- Head coach **Chantiel Wilson ('98)** has rebuilt her team after last season's 25-24 record. ACU missed the LSC Post-Season Tournament after being picked to win the LSC South Division.
- Wilson has added several junior college transfers, including shortstop **Melissa Rodriguez** from Chaffey College (Calif.). Rodriguez earned first team all-America honors from the National Fastpitch Coaches' Association in 2007 after she hit .407 with 11 home runs and an .805 slugging percentage.

### Track and Field

- The **ACU men's team**, which finished second at last year's NCAA Division II indoor championship meet before cruising to the outdoor title, has four individual national champions on its rosters, including three from last year. The **women's team** – fourth indoors and second outdoors – should be a strong contender for a pair of national titles.
- Sophomore **Jordan Johnson**, who won the 400 meters at the outdoor meet as a freshman in 2006, returns to the team this spring after redshirting in 2007. He should be a force for ACU in the 200 and 400 meters and on both relay teams. Other national champions returning for the men are **Davy Manga** (outdoor triple jump), **Julius Nyanto** (outdoor 800 meters) and **Camille Vandendriessche** (decathlon).
- On the women's side, junior **Jessica Withrow** will defend her national title in the heptathlon, and three of the four members of the outdoor 4x400 relay team return. Those three – **Kim Prather**, **Venessa Whittle** and **Azraa Rounds** – helped the Wildcats finish second in the event at the outdoor meet in an LSC best-ever time of 3:33.66.



### Tennis

- Head coach **Hutton Jones ('81)** should again field men's and women's teams among favorites to win LSC and NCAA Division II Central Region team titles. The women's team will be led by the returning all-America doubles tandem of **Irene Squillaci** and **Aina Rafolo**, while the men are headlined by **Juan Nunez** and **Ryan Hudson**.

### Golf

- After a strong fall performance, head coach **Mike Campbell ('91)** will lead the nation's ninth-ranked team into a tough spring schedule. Those who played as the team's top five through the fall – **Erik Manning**, **Hilton Funk**, **Patrick Hanauer**, **Charles Levitte** and **Stephen Knight** – return for the spring. Manning had the top fall scoring average (73.1) for the Wildcats. ▲

*Pictured above: Trey Watten and Jessica Withrow*

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