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MARCH 2021

SPORTS DIGEST

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INSIDE: 2021 NCAA FOOTBALL SCHEDULES, Pgs. 8-9

MADNESS!

IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR! HOW FAR CAN THE MOUNTAINEERS GO IN POSTSEASON PLAY? Pg. 6



WVU, MARSHALL HEAD TO POSTSEASON PLAY, Pgs. 6-7



FILL YOUR NCAA BRACKETS Pg. 4



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COVER PHOTO CREDITS

WVU junior forward Derek Culver and head coach Bob Huggins, photos by Greg Ellman, courtesy of West Virginia University.
Marshall University head coach Dan D'Antoni, Photo courtesy of Marshall Athletics.

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Wally's & Wimpy's News and Notes

EDITOR'S NOTE
By Jim Workman



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publication that is in its fourth successful decade! Please go to Patreon.com/WallysWimpys to become a monthly patron. Thank you! - JW

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MSAC BOYS & GIRLS READY TO TIP OFF 2021 SEASON

The Mountain State Athletic Conference boys and girls basketball teams are beginning their respective seasons, a little later than normal, due to COVID protocols. But an 18-game regular season with nine mandated MSAC conference games is the goal, before postseason play in April and May this year.

The George Washington boys and girls teams were picked to finish atop the MSAC standings, in a poll of coaches and administrators at the annual MSAC Basketball Media Day, Feb. 26, at South Charleston. GW's Kalissa Lacy, the WV Player of the Year last season returns. The Patriots boys also return their leading scorer, Mason Pinkett.

2021 MSAC Night of Champions

New dates for the MSAC Night of Champions games and events have been established. Complete schedules with times TBA. Site: South Charleston Community Center

Thursday, April 8 – Place games
5 vs. 6, 7 vs. 8, 9 vs. 10 at higher seed

Friday, April 9 – Skills Competition

Saturday, April 10
Championship and Consolation Games
1 vs. 2, 3 vs. 4.

2021 MSAC PRESEASON BOYS POLL

School	Pts.	1sts
1. George Washington	93	(5)
2. Cabell Midland	92	(3)
3. Huntington	77	(2)
4. South Charleston	62	
4. St. Albans	62	
6. Capital	58	
7. Spring Valley	33	
8. Hurricane	31	
9. Parkersburg	30	
10. Riverside	12	

2021 MSAC PRESEASON GIRLS POLL

School	Pts.	1sts
1. George Washington	90	(2)
2. Cabell Midland	87	(3)
3. Parkersburg	81	(4)
4. Huntington	76	(1)
5. South Charleston	62	
6. Spring Valley	51	
7. Capital	37	
8. St. Albans	31	
9. Hurricane	21	
10. Riverside	13	

The poll was conducted by Wally's & Wimpy's Sports Digest in a survey of MSAC coaches and representatives.

KOMAX Business Systems STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

JACOB BURNS Herbert Hoover High School

Wally's & Wimpy's Sports Digest is proud to announce Jacob Burns of Herbert Hoover High School in Kanawha County as our KOMAX Student-Athlete of the Month. He is a 6-foot-3, 150-pound sophomore wide receiver for the Huskies, a Cardinal Conference member that competes in Class AA. In eight games in 2020, Burns grabbed 22 receptions for 606 yards, with six touchdowns. He added 288 kick return yards. Burns was named Second team All-Cardinal Conference, and was an Honorable Mention AA All-state selection. Coalfield & Company has ranked Burns the No. 4 rated A/AA wide receiver for 2021. Coalfields stated "...the Huskies have become on of the better passing offenses in Class AA. Jacob Burns heavily benefitted from its scheme

change, becoming a top target. What stands out on film is his ability to play the ball during contested passes. "His athleticism should see improvement over the next two years to really complete him as a wide receiver."



Burns, a Class of 2023 recruit, has been invited to the 2021 Appalachia Prep Combine in Gatlinburg TN in May 2021. Burns is also a standout in the classroom, with a 3.0 GPA. His favorite class is History.

Photo courtesy of Burns' family.



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2021 NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

FIRST ROUND
MARCH 19-20

SECOND ROUND
MARCH 21-22

SWEET 16
MARCH 27-28

ELITE 8[®]
MARCH 29-30

NATIONAL SEMIFINALS
APRIL 3

NATIONAL SEMIFINALS
APRIL 3

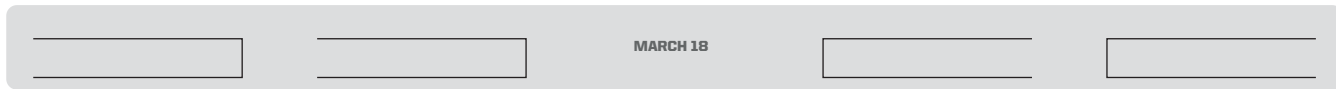
ELITE 8[®]
MARCH 29-30

SWEET 16
MARCH 27-28

SECOND ROUND
MARCH 21-22

FIRST ROUND
MARCH 19-20

FIRST FOUR[®]



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"WHY ME, TWENTY-TWENTY?"

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author, Aiden Satterfield, is a senior at Charleston Catholic. He was named captain of the Class A All-State Basketball First Team as a junior in 2020. He has committed to continue his education and playing career at West Liberty University.

Why Me, Twenty-Twenty? By Aiden Satterfield

The year 2020 will go down in history as one of the most chaotic and sad years in human history. The Black Lives Matter movement, to a deadly global pandemic that ruined so many lives, futures, and potential memories.

In February of 2020, a month after one of my idols, Kobe Bryant, died in a tragic helicopter crash. I got the news that my Dad had cancer, a rare stomach cancer called mesothelioma, and his prognosis was grim.

It was just by my luck that this news came on a game day. I've been a starting basketball player for my high school since my Sophomore year. There was an expectation on me in my Junior year to be a leader.

I walked on the court with the weight of the world, thinking about losing my Dad. Mentally, I couldn't shake the thought. My Dad has watched every game and most of my practices since I started playing basketball at age five. Looking into the stands and not seeing or hearing him knowing that he could die, really impacted my game.

I didn't play my best even though I finished with 22 points and a handful of rebounds, and we lost.

It was the most challenging night of my entire sixteen-year-old life. I

mean, tough. I felt like I didn't want to play basketball anymore, and as I battled inside my emotions, I wondered why I wanted to quit the game I thought I loved and had dedicated so much time to. I simply didn't care about my future at this point. I was always thinking, "Why me?"

Looking back, I understand how kids give up. Some leave athletics, turn to drugs or other destructive behaviors. I was full of worry and self-pity, but I just kept going to school, going to practice, and trying to imagine my future in college.

My Dad's diagnosis was still unknown, and this was hard. My team knew I was hurting, and they let me know they needed me. We were heading into the playoffs and could win. I started to have a shift. It sounds cliché, but I stopped thinking about myself and more about, we.

We won the first two games of the playoffs and made it into the regional championship game. This would be the game that decided whether we make it to the State tournament.

It just happened to be the day my Dad was sent to Michigan to receive his chemotherapy treatment. It was March 12, 2020. I'll never forget that day. I felt so alone at my teammate's house while my family is in Michigan, ensuring my father is alright getting ready to play the biggest game of my life.

The game started slow, our coach yelled at us, and then something

in me clicked. I catch an alley-oop and dunk it. The crowd goes crazy. I block a shot and go down the lane and make a reverse layup.



I can't describe this feeling. The crowd is cheering for my talent and knowing everything that's on my mind with my Dad.

We won the regional championship, and we advanced to the state tournament. My dad's surgery went well, he's on his way home, and all I can think about is

getting to play at the new Charleston Civic Center, a dream I've had since I was a little boy. My mental state is at an all-time high.

Then the next day, Governor Justice announces the postponement of all state tournaments due to Covid-19. I remember where I was. In eighth period history class and I looked down at my phone. It is something Charleston Catholic is very strict about but it was a special circumstance so my teacher understood. I read the message from my coach and couldn't believe it. It was like a wave of disbelief went through all of our bodies as I told my classmates the news. Then a few moments later our principal announced we would be doing virtual learning. The rest is history. This is an ache that I will never forget. We were allowed one last practice during which our team was devastated, and we cried our eyes out together.

At this moment in time, I com-

pletely changed my outlook on life. I've embraced a more positive outlook. The "why me?" mentality is gone.

By April, the state tournament was officially canceled. This means we will never know who won the tournament, and it's like a ghost of an opportunity. I kept practicing my positive thinking and started imagining all the time I had to work on my game for next year.

If I needed proof that a positive attitude works, I got it. Just on the 2020 State Tournament heels being canceled for all eternity, I was awarded First Team All-State Captain. One of the most prestigious awards in West Virginia high school basketball.

I thought, me, Aiden Satterfield, that kid who always sat on the bench had grown up literally to 6'6 and earned one of the highest athletic awards in the State, and I still had another year of High school to perform.

It felt surreal. My Dad was healthy, and my team made it to the States. I earned a prestigious award all while the world seemed so unsure. I felt so much gratitude.

These few months in 2020 changed everyone's life, but they helped me develop a perspective that I will carry for the better. I learned that I couldn't control anything but my attitude. Little kids look up to me now, and I'm so happy I didn't give up and can be an example for others.

People often ask me why I smile and work so hard at basketball. I say, what is supposed to happen will happen and that God will take care of me, that's why.

Photo by Chuck Roberts

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WVU Mountaineers

'20-'21 Men's Hoops Schedule

N 25 So. Dak St.	W	79-71
N 26 VCU	W	78-66
N 27 WKU	W	70-64
D 2 Gonzaga	L	87-82
D 6 Georgetown	W	80-71
D 11 North Texas	W	62-50
D 13 Richmond	W	87-71
D 18 Iowa State	W	70-65
D 22 Kansas	L	79-65
D 29 Northeastern	W	73-51
J 2 Oklahoma	L	75-71
J 4 Okla. State	W	87-84
J 9 Texas	L	72-70
J 12 Baylor	A	PPD
J 16 TCU	H	PPD
J 19 Okla. State	H	PPD
J 23 Kansas State	W	69-47
J 25 Texas Tech	W	88-87
J 30 Florida	L	85-80
F 2 Iowa State	W	76-72
F 6 Kansas	W	91-79
F 9 Texas Tech	W	82-71
F 13 Oklahoma	L	91-90
F 20 Texas	W	84-82
F 23 TCU	W	74-66
F 27 Kansas State	W	65-43
M 2 Baylor	H	5:00
M 4 TCU	H	7:00
M 6 Oklahoma St.	H	TBA

See WVUSports.com for updates



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WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY



WVU junior forward Derek Culver (1)
photo by Stephen Spilman. Sean McNeil (22)
photo by Dale Sparks, Photos courtesy of WVU Athletic Communications.

WVU Aims for K.C.

WVU headed into March on a three-game win streak - winning six of its last seven games, sporting a 17-6 overall record and a 10-4 mark in the

Big 12, second only to Baylor.

And a Top Ten placement in the Associated Press Top 25 poll.

In the hot streak, West Virginia disposed of No. 18 Texas Tech, No. 14 Texas and No. 17 Kansas.

The Big 12 tournament will perhaps be more competitive than ever.

So, the Mountaineers ready themselves for the 2021 Phillips 66 Big 12 Basketball Championship in Kansas

City. The tournament takes place Wednesday March 10 through Saturday March 13.

As Coach Bob Huggins climbed closer to his 900th career victory, he's been heralded as having one of his best seasons. He's getting contributions from a variety of players, including Derek Culver, Jalen Bridges, Miles McBride, Taz Sherman and Sean McNeil.

2020-2021 West Virginia University Mountaineers

#	Name	Ht.	Pos.	Cl.	Hometown/Last School
0	Kedrian Johnson	6-3	G	Jr	Dallas, TX/South Oak Cliff HS
1	Derek Culver	6-10	F	Jr	Youngstown, OH/Warren G. Harding HS
2	Jalen Bridges	6-7	F	R-Fr	Fairmont, WV/Fairmont Senior HS
3	Gabe Osabuohien	6-7	F	Sr.	Toronto, ON/S.W. Christian Academy
4	Miles McBride	6-2	G	So.	Cincinnati, OH/Archbishop Moeller HS
5	Jordan McCabe	6-0	G	Jr.	Kaukauna, WI/Kaukauna HS
11	Emmitt Matthews Jr	6-7	F	Jr.	Tacoma, WA/Woodrow Wilson HS
12	Taz Sherman	6-4	G	Sr.	Missouri City, TX/Ft. Bend Thurgood Marshall HS
13	Isaiah Cottrell	6-10	F	Fr.	Las Vegas, NV/Huntington (WV) Prep
20	Jay Moore	6-3	G	Fr.	Beckley, WV/Greater Beckley Christian
22	Sean McNeil	6-3	G	Jr.	Union, KY/Cooper HS
23	Seny Ndiaye	6-10	F	Fr.	Dakar, Senegal/Huntington (WV) Prep
24	Taj Thweatt	6-7	F	Fr.	Wildwood, NJ/Wildwood Catholic HS
30	Spencer Macke	5-11	G	So.	Fort Thomas, KY/Silver Grove HS

Head coach: Bob Huggins
 Assistants: Larry Harrison, Ron Everhart, Erik Martin



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- ✓ ODOR CONTROL



▶ SCAN ME

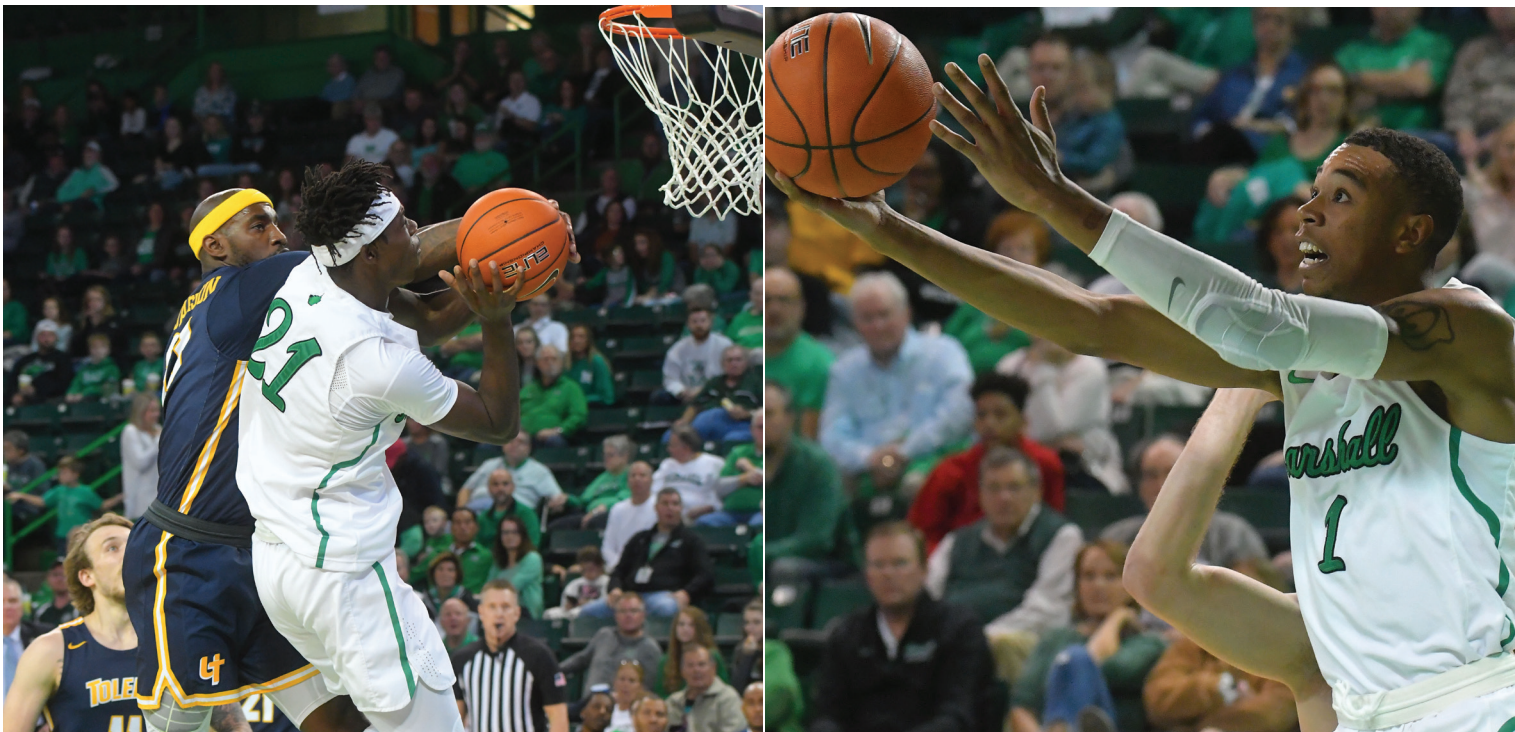
MARSHALL UNIVERSITY



**Marshall University
Thundering Herd**

'20-'21 Men's Hoops Schedule

N 27 Ark. State	W	70-56
D 3 Wright State	W	80-64
D 5 Akron	A	PPD
D 9 Col. Charlstn.	W	84-72
D 13 Ohio Univ.	W	81-67
D 16 Toledo	L	96-87
D 20 Robert Morris	W	85-71
D 22 UNC Asheville	W	88-67
J 1 La. Tech	L	75-68
J 2 La. Tech	W	80-73
J 8 Charlotte	H	PPD
J 9 Charlotte	H	PPD
J 14 WKU	L	81-73
J 17 WKU	L	69-67
J 22 FIU	W	79-66
J 23 FIU	W	89-72
J 29 FAU	H	PPD
J 30 FAU	H	PPD
F 5 Old Dominion	L	82-81
F 6 Old Dominion	W	87-67
F 12 MTSU	W	107-79
F 13 MTSU	W	96-85
F 20 Rice	A	CANC
F 21 Rice	A	CANC
F 26 North Texas	L	77-65
F 27 North Texas	W	73-72
M 5 Charlotte	H	7:00
M 6 Charlotte	H	2:00



Herd senior forward Darius George (L) and Taevion Kinsey (R). Photos courtesy of Marshall Athletics.

C-USA Basketball Championships will be played Tuesday March 9 through Saturday March 13. The Herd will need a solid showing in Frisco, Texas to join the big dance. The brackets for

the C-USA tournament will be announced on Saturday March 6. Marshall ended February with a 13-6 overall record, 7-5 in conference play. Marshall leads C-USA with an 81.1 ppg. Taevion

Kinsey tallies 19.8 points per contest, second in the league with 5.9 rebounds. Jarrod West's 6.3 assists per game lead C-USA.

More info: HerdZone.com

Herd Notes

It's March Madness time! The Air Force Reserve

2020-2021 Marshall University Thundering Herd

#	Name	Ht.	Pos.	Cl.	Hometown/Last School
0	Andrew Taylor	6-3	G	R-So	Corbin, Ky/Corbin HS
1	CJ Meredith	6-6	G/F	Fr	Huntington, WV/Spring Valley HS
2	Iran Bennett	6-9	F	R-Jr	Durham, NC/Hargrave Military Academy
3	Jansson Williams	6-9	F	R-Sr	Newnan, GA/Newnan HS
4	Ty Sturm	6-2	G	R-Fr	Hurricane, WV/Cabell Midland HS
5	Jeremy Dillon	6-5	G/F	R-So	Mingo, WV/Mingo Central HS
11	Luke Thomas	6-0	G	Jr	Proctorville, OH/Fairland HS
13	Jarrold West	5-11	G	Sr	Clarksburg, WV/Notre Dame HS
15	Marko Sarenac	6-7	G/F	So	Ljubovija, Serbia/Hoosac School
21	Darius George	6-7	F	Sr	Staunton, VA/Robert E. Lee HS
23	David Early	6-4	G	Fr	Logan, WV/Logan HS
24	Taevion Kinsey	6-5	G	Jr	Columbus, OH/Eastmoor Academy
25	Obinna Anochili-Killen	6-8	F	Fr	Lagos, Nigeria/Chapmanville HS
31	Mikel Beyers	6-9	F	Sr	Houston, TX
35	Devin Collins	6-8	G	R-Fr	Chapmanville, WV/Chapmanville HS
50	Goran Miladinovic	7-0	C	So	Tivat, Montenegro/Hoosac School

Head coach: Dan D'Antoni
Assistants: Mark Cline, Scott Rigot, Cornelius Jackson

See Herdzone.com for updates



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MOUNTAIN EAST FOOTBALL SPRING 2021

MOUNTAIN EAST

ALDERSON BROADDUS

M 11	Frostburg St.	A	7:00
M 18	Wheeling	H	7:00
M 27	Fairmont St.	A	12:00
A 3	West Liberty	H	TBA
A 10	Notre Dame	A	TBA

NOTRE DAME COLLEGE

M 13	West Liberty	H	TBA
M 20	Frostburg St.	H	2:00
M 25	Wheeling	A	8:00
A 3	Fairmont St.	A	TBA
A 10	A-Broaddus	H	TBA

Follow the Mountain East Conference @TheMountainEast

CHARLESTON

M 13	Concord	A	TBA
M 20	Glenville St.	H	TBA
M 27	UNC Pembroke	H	TBA
A 3	WV Wesleyan	A	TBA
A 10	WV State	H	TBA

UNC PEMBROKE

M 13	Glenville St.	A	TBA
M 20	WV Wesleyan	H	TBA
M 27	Charleston	A	TBA
A 3	WV State	A	TBA
A 10	Concord	H	TBA

CONCORD

M 13	Charleston	H	TBA
M 20	WV State	A	TBA
M 27	WV Wesleyan	A	TBA
A 3	Glenville St.	H	TBA
A 10	UNC Pembroke	A	TBA

WEST LIBERTY

M 13	Notre Dame	A	TBA
M 20	Fairmont St.	A	TBA
M 27	Frostburg St.	H	1:00
A 3	A-Broaddus	A	TBA
A 10	Wheeling	H	TBA

FAIRMONT STATE

M 11	Wheeling	A	7:00
M 20	West Liberty	H	TBA
M 27	A-Broaddus	H	12:00
A 3	Notre Dame	H	TBA
A 10	Frostburg St.	A	1:00

WEST VIRGINIA STATE

M 13	WV Wesleyan	H	1:00
M 20	Concord	H	TBA
M 27	Glenville St.	A	TBA
A 3	UNC Pembroke	H	TBA
A 10	Charleston	A	TBA

FROSTBURG STATE

M 11	A-Broaddus	H	7:00
M 20	Notre Dame	A	2:00
M 27	West Liberty	A	1:00
A 3	Wheeling	H	1:00
A 10	Fairmont St.	H	1:00

WEST VIRGINIA WESLEYAN

M 13	WV State	A	1:00
M 20	UNC Pembroke	A	12:00
M 27	Concord	H	TBA
A 3	Charleston	H	1:00
A 10	Glenville St.	A	1:00

GLENVILLE STATE

M 13	UNC Pembroke	H	TBA
M 20	Charleston	A	TBA
M 27	WV State	H	TBA
A 3	Concord	A	TBA
A 10	WV Wesleyan	H	TBA

WHEELING UNIVERSITY

M 11	Fairmont St.	H	7:00
M 18	A-Broaddus	H	7:00
M 25	Notre Dame	H	8:00
A 3	Frostburg St.	A	1:00
A 10	West Liberty	A	TBA

MOUNTAIN EAST	Overall			Conf.		
	W	L	T	W	L	T
Alderson Broaddus	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charleston	0	0	0	0	0	0
Concord	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairmont State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frostburg State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Glenville State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Notre Dame College	0	0	0	0	0	0
UNC Pembroke	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Liberty	0	0	0	0	0	0
WV State	0	0	0	0	0	0
WV Wesleyan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wheeling	0	0	0	0	0	0



MOUNTAIN EAST CONFERENCE NEWS & NOTES

MOUNTAIN EAST UPDATES SPECTATOR POLICY

Spectators for outdoor sports (football, men's and women's soccer, baseball, softball, women's lacrosse, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's golf, men's and women's track and field) will not be permitted until March 10. As of March 10, a limited number of spectators may be permitted at the discretion of MEC institutions in accordance with state and local guidelines.

"Our league has had a great deal of success in playing a high percentage of its scheduled contests up until this point, and we believe keeping the current campus attendance policies in place for indoor sports puts our teams in the best position to complete their respective seasons," Commissioner Reid Amos said. "Although a difficult decision, based on the medical advice we continue to receive, I am confident that it is the one that provides our student-athletes and coaches the best chance of continuing to compete.

"As for outdoor sports after March 10, at the point when most indoor contests will be complete, the league

feels it's appropriate for each institution to begin to make its own decisions about limited spectators due to the fact that outdoor venues are more conducive to social distancing and there is a significantly lower risk of spreading COVID while outdoors," Amos continued.

MountainEast.org

NEW FOOTBALL MEMBERS TO DEBUT IN MEC PLAY

The Mountain East Conference will have a fresh look for 2021, playing a five game conference-only spring schedule along with the debut of a couple new football programs.

The North Division will consist of: Alderson Broaddus, Fairmont State, Frostburg State, Notre Dame College, West Liberty and Wheeling.

The South Division includes: Charleston, Concord, Glenville State, UNC Pembroke, West Virginia State and West Virginia Wesleyan.

The top teams from each division will meet in the Mountain East championship on April 17 or 24, with the team with the best record having the option of hosting the contest.

In June of 2020, Alderson Broaddus' application for full membership into the MEC was unanimously approved by the league's Board of Directors.

A-B had been part of the Great Midwest Athletic Conference since the former West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference disbanded.

UNC Pembroke will be part of the MEC as a football program only. Its other sports will compete in Conference Carolinas beginning in 2021-2022.

Wheeling University has played just one season in the MEC. In 2019, it went 1-10.

Former MEC member Urbana University permanently closed its campus in 2020.

Established in 2013, the Mountain East Conference quickly established itself as one of the top all-sports conferences in the country. In seven years, MEC institutions produced three team NCAA Division II champions, eight national finalists and 14 semifinalists. In addition to the athletic success, the MEC recognizes nearly 2,000 student-athletes annually for their academic success and has had

nine "NCAA Elite 90" winners, which honors the individual with the highest cumulative grade-point average at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 90 championships.

More info: MountainEast.org

MEC HOOPS TOURNAMENT SET

The Mountain East Conference mens and womens basketball tournament will look a little different this season, due to COVID protocols.

On March 1, first round games will be played on campus sites of highest seeds.

The games move to Wheeling's Wesbanco Arena on Thursday, March 4 for women's quarterfinal action, with the men's quarterfinals slated for Friday, March 5.

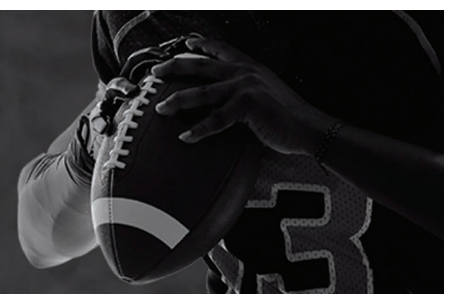
Men's and Women's Semifinals games will be played Saturday, March 6, with the championships scheduled for Sunday March 7.

The women's title game will tip off at 1 p.m., with the men following at 4 p.m.

Follow online at Tournament Central at MountainEast.org

Games can be viewed live on MountainEast.TV

**WHEN THE GAME ENDS,
WE KEEP GOING.**



SOUTHWEST ATHLETIC CONF. - SPRING 2021



SOUTHWEST ATHLETIC

ALABAMA A&M

M 6	Miss. Valley St.	A	3:00
M 20	Prairie View	A	TBA
M 27	Grambling St.	H	TBA
A 10	Jackson State	A	TBA
A 17	Alabama St.	A	6:30

ALABAMA STATE

F 26	Southern	L	24:21
M 20	Jackson State	H	2:00
M 27	UAPB	A	6:00
A 10	Miss. Valley St.	H	TBA

GRAMBLING STATE

M 6	Jackson State	H	TBA
M 13	Prairie View	N	3:00
M 20	UAPB	H	12:00
M 27	Alabama A&M	A	TBA

JACKSON STATE

F 21	Edward Waters	W	53:0
M 6	Grambling St.	A	TBA
M 14	Miss. Valley St.	H	TBA
M 20	Alabama State	A	2:00
A 3	Notre Dame	H	TBA
A 10	Frostburg St.	A	1:00

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE

M 6	Alabama A&M	H	3:00
M 14	Jackson State	A	TBA
A 3	UAPB	H	3:00

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M

M 6	Texas Southern	H	7:00
M 13	Grambling St.	N	3:00
M 20	Alabama A&M	H	TBA
M 28	Jackson State	A	TBA

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

F 26	Alabama St.	W	24:21
M 6	UAPB	H	1:30
M 20	Texas Southern	A	TBA
A 3	Jackson State	A	TBA

TEXAS SOUTHERN

M 6	Prairie View	A	7:00
M 20	Southern	H	TBA
A 3	Grambling St.	H	TBA
A 24	UAPB	A	TBA

UAPB - ARKANSAS PINE BLUFF

M 6	Southern	A	1:30
M 20	Grambling St.	A	12:00
M 27	Alabama St.	H	6:00
A 24	Texas Southern	H	TBA

The Southwestern Athletic Conference released its revised Spring 2021 Preseason All-SWAC Football team with Alabama A&M's Aqeel Glass being named Preseason Offensive Player of the Year. The preseason team and preseason poll includes only student-athletes and teams scheduled to participate during the spring season. Alcorn State opted out of the Spring season. The preseason team and predicted order of finish was voted on by the league's head coaches and SIDs. Alabama A&M's Glass (St. Louis, Mo.) was an All-SWAC second team choice a year ago, playing in all 12 games for the Bulldogs under

center while anchoring the top passing attack in the SWAC. He threw for 3,600 yards to lead the league and his 32 touchdowns was second for the conference lead in that category. Glass also now enters the season as an All-SWAC Preseason first team honoree at quarterback. A total of nine student-athletes were elevated on the team including Alabama State's Ezra Gray who moved up to the Preseason All-SWAC first team at running back. Southern's Ladarius Skelton (QB/2nd team), Texas Southern's Dominic Franklin (RB/2nd team), Alabama A&M's Gary Quarles (RB/2nd team), Grambling State's Kyree Wade-McLeod (OL/2nd team), and

Alabama A&M's Jonathan Williams (OL/2nd team) were all tabbed Preseason All-SWAC second team selections. Defensively, Alabama State's Andrew Ogletree (DL/2nd team) and Grambling State's Kenan Fontenot (DB/2nd team) were elevated to the Preseason All-SWAC second team defense. Each active team in the league was represented on the preseason team with Alabama A&M tallying the most preseason selections with 11 total picks. Prairie View A&M amassed the second most selections (8), followed by Alabama State (7), Southern (7), Arkansas-Pine Bluff (6), Jackson State (4), Texas Southern (3), Grambling State (2), and

Mississippi Valley State (1). In the revised predicted order of finish, Alabama A&M was picked to finish first in the East division followed by Jackson State, Alabama State, and Mississippi Valley State. AAMU claimed 13 first place votes while also tallying a league leading 83 total points. In the SWAC West division Southern was picked to finish first as they will seek their third consecutive divisional title. Grambling State was tabbed to finish second followed by Prairie View A&M, Arkansas-Pine Bluff, and Texas Southern. Southern garnered eight first place votes while amassing 77 total points. The season will culminate with the Cricket Wireless

SWAC Championship Game. The title game is scheduled to be played on Saturday, May 1 live on ESPN.

2021 Spring Season SWAC Preseason Poll

SWAC East

- Alabama A&M 83 (13)
- Jackson State 63 (3)
- Alabama State 61 (2)
- Miss. Valley State 40

SWAC West

- Southern 77 (8)
- Grambling St. 70 (4)
- Prairie View A&M 65 (4)
- Ark. Pine Bluff 34 (1)
- Texas Southern 28 (1)

**First place votes listed in parentheses*

Courtesy, SWAC

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PROSPECT LEAGUE CLUB IN BECKLEY THRIVES

By Gary Fauber
Sports Editor, *The Register-Herald*
For *Wally's & Wimpy's Sports Digest*

The landscape of baseball in West Virginia will have a different look in 2021.

The West Virginia Power will transition to the independent Atlantic League after the South Atlantic League did not make the cut in Major League Baseball's plan to restructure the Minor League system. The West Virginia Black Bears in Granville did fit into that vision as members of the new MLB Draft League. Princeton and Bluefield, decades-long homes to low-level minor leaguers, will usher in a new era with the Appalachian League's shift to the new Prospect Development Pipeline, a collegiate wood bat league.

Meanwhile in Beckley, one baseball organization stands firm as it approaches its second decade.

The West Virginia Miners are members of the Prospect League, a collegiate wood bat league that has been in existence since 2009. The Miners joined the league the following summer and are a family-run organization. The team is owned by Doug and Linda K. Epling, and the stadium bears her name. Their sons are directly involved — Tim is the manager and Gary has served as a coach, and Matt has worn many hats.

Like other wood bat leagues, the Prospect League's purpose is to provide the nation's top college baseball players a chance at exposure in front of professional scouts. The Miners have done just that — Tim Epling estimates over 80 Miners

alumni have signed professional contracts.

"Our league is designed to take these collegiate kids and get them on a platform to be able to possibly get them to the next level," Epling said. "The exposure for them, and



you get them with the wooden bat, it's almost like the minor league system. We try to get them drafted and looked at. Major League Baseball is happy and we're happy. We're just trying to get them a positive environment to play in."

Three have made their way to the Majors. The first was Kevin Shackelford, a right-handed pitcher out of Marshall who played for the Miners in their inaugural season of 2010. He made his MLB debut with Cincinnati in 2017. A year later, David Hess, another right-hander, debuted with Baltimore.

The most recognizable of the three would be Mike Brosseau, a third baseman who made his debut with Tampa Bay in 2019. His solo home run off Yankees reliever Aroldis Chapman lifted the Rays to a 2-1 win in Game 5 of the American League Division Series last October.

The Miners made the Prospect League playoffs in their first four years of existence and seven of their first eight. It resulted in back-to-back

league championships in 2012 and 2013, then a third in 2016. Within the first three years, then-commissioner Dave Chase was referring to the Miners as the league's flagship organization.

"In some sorts, we're kind of a household name across the country now," Epling said. "That's a huge accomplishment for a little town like Beckley. That's just another positive. We want to put a good product on the field, but when the players come in, we represent to them our community and the impact it has."

Perhaps even more important than what the team provides for its players is its presence in the community. The Miners, as well as other league teams, are operated much the same as Minor League teams. There are games involving fans between innings, fireworks shows and many nightly promotions.

Epling has often said that host families are the lifeblood of the organization, providing the players with a three-month home away from home.

Hess and Clayton Prestridge, considered by many to be the greatest Miner of all time, both met their wives while playing in Beckley.

"That's what makes our league special, because that's what it's for. We're a community-based league," Epling said. "If you look at the blueprint of what we do, baseball can be an enjoyable experience when you bring the family and the kids out. It's much more than just watching a ballgame. You try to give people an environment outside of the pressures of what's going on. It's a type of environment where you can

spend time with your family and do something outdoors, rather than be locked up like we are right now.

"We connect all the areas of the community together. The business community is connected with the fans. The fans are connected with different organizations and businesses. So, it's like everybody is helping everybody to achieve the exposure they're looking for, from nonprofits to business. The people who support us, we support them."

With the 2020 season wiped out due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Miners will be looking to get back to their winning ways this summer.

They finished below .500 in 2018 and again in 2019, when they went a franchise-worst 18-42.

Epling managed the team for its first nine seasons before resigning in 2018 as the league's all-time winningest manager with exactly 300 victories.

He agreed to come back after the disastrous 2019 season.

The Miners are scheduled to begin the season Thursday, May 27, at the Johnstown (Pa.) Mill Rats. The two will meet at Epling Stadium the next night.



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Elkview
Fairlea

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Martinsburg
Milton

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Moundsville
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