FBLA prepares for national competition

NICOLAS SABAVA Contributing Writer

The FBLA Chapter of Future Business Leaders of America, Phi Beta Lambda division, will be sending 35 of its members to the 60th annual Florida Phi Beta Lambda State Leadership Conference, to be held in Tampa between March 18 and 21. The students will be competing to represent the state of Florida at the National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tenn., from July 9 to 12.

Every year since 1985, the marathon has expanded, with many teams competing each year to raise as much money as possible for the cause. The essential component of teams forming to run a marathon has broadened into a much larger set of festivities. Each year, the Luminaria Ceremony honors those who have been affected by cancer and those brothers and sisters who have succumbed to it. This year, professor Jeffrey Knap, a long-time FIU faculty member whose own efforts bolstered support for Relay for Life, will take place March 5 and 6 and run an estimated 15 hours.

In the fight against cancer, no event has seemingly proven more effective than the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life. Started in 1985 by Dr. Gordy Klatt, this event has become not only a means to raise funds to support cancer awareness, but also a venue in which cancer survival can be celebrated.

Relay for Life will take place March 5 and 6 and run an estimated 15 hours.

Speaking to this year’s marketing director, Angela Baker, provided a personal story endemic to all who are involved in the relay. “Both my grandpaunts [had cancer]; it affects everyone. It hits that soft spot and say, maybe I can go without that late today [and don’t],” she said.

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HECTOR MOJENA Staff Writer

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“The essence of FBLA starts with the competitive edge that we thought FBLA was lacking,” said Bruno Cevallos, FBLA’s official reporter.

FBLA, page 2

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FBLA, page 2

Haiti recovery to be discussed at teach-in

GABRIEL ARRÀS Asst. News Director

FIU will host its second ever teach-in as part of the University’s long-term commitment to Haiti’s recovery.

The School of International and Public Affairs, as well as the Latin American and Caribbean Center, are hosting the teach-in which will be Haiti themed. According to an e-mail sent to the University community by external relations, the discussion will include the country’s economic, political and social reconstruction, as well as the cultural preservation and public health issues it faces, in action.

The teach-in will take place on March 6, from 1 to 4 p.m., in the Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall Auditorium at Modesto Maidique Campus. It will consist of two panels, each followed by a question and answer session. According to the e-mail, the first panel will feature Robert Maguire, associate professor of

Haiti, page 2
Apple claims infringement violations on HTC

Apple has filed a lawsuit against cell phone manufacturer HTC for infringing patents related to the popular iPhone device. In the lawsuit, filed on March 2, claims that HTC violates 20 iPhone patents in the manufacturing and operating systems aspects of some of its popular devices, including the HD2 and the Hero, according to Engadget.com.

Google partnered with HTC to manufacture devices that run on Android OS. “We are not a party to this lawsuit, however, we are standing behind our Android operating system and the partners who have helped us to develop it,” Google said in a written statement.

WORLD

Wave takes lives and damages cruise ship

Two people aboard a cruise ship were killed after a 26-foot wave hit off the coast of France. According to CNN, 14 people were also injured as a result of the wave that hit the Greek Louise Cruise ship. The wave also caused damage to five windows on the ship.

Shortly after the incident, the ship and its 1,380 passengers returned to its home port of Barcelona, Spain.

--- Compiled by Jorge Valera

Initiative to begin campus-wide

FIU, page 1

“very good” or better.

Among those who gave the University positive marks were major donors, parents of undergraduate students and prospective undergraduate students. The study also found that the words and phrases used to describe FIU, six were recurrent in their responses: Entrepreneurial, International/Global, Accessible, Community-Focused, Vibrant and Ideally Located.

During the hour-long presentation, Rosenberg gave the audience an introduction to the campaign and the reasons that FIU is in need of a campaign-wide initiative to showcase the University as we claim a place on the South Florida map.

Very clearly, our community stated that they’re not hearing about our accomplishments or what we set us apart as a university and, as a result, we have an image problem,” he said.

Sharing the stage with the University president were guest speakers Troy Elder, an associate clinical professor at the College of Law, and Student Affairs Academic Advisor Binyon Fernandez. They elaborated on how the idea of “worlds ahead” has extended to both of their respective departments.

Fernandez told the story of one student—she advised who developed from being an undecided major to a community service leader traveling to the Dominican Republic to provide aid to children, while Elder elaborated on the accomplishments of the law school students in being able to represent human rights victims through the Carlos A. Costa Immigration and Human Rights clinic.

Derek Capo, an alumnus from the FIU College of Business, who is currently working in Beijing, China, was present via satellite and spoke to the audience about how his experience at FIU influenced him to take his goals to an international level.

“FIU gave me that foundation of knowledge and confidence,” Capo said through the video feed. “I look at Worlds Ahead as being an excellent destination of the graduates who are having huge impacts in this world.”

It is through individual stories, like Capo’s, that Rosenberg listed to the audience the numerous FIU faculty, students and alumni who have been successful because of their years at the University; from alumn Chandra Lawane who is an Olympic gold medalist in track and field to Garth Graham, who is one of the highest ranking officials in the Obama administration.

--- Compiled by Jorge Valera

Financing aided with fundraising

FBLA, page 1

Last January, FBLA hosted the University’s first Business Olympics, in which students competed in 35 categories of exams and performances to acquire business skills that ranged from word processing to business law.

Business organizations, such as the International Business Honor Society and the Finance Management Association, were represented at FIU’s Business Olympics.

FBLA also organized a “Tribute to Children’s Week,” which consisted of a series of events for the improvement of the lives of children. The organization managed to collect a total of $1,300 for the Children’s Miracle Network at Miami Children’s Hospital. The events included the distribution of get-well soon cards to elementary school children in hospitals, as well as a Children’s Miracle Gala.

This association is linked to a national entity, with a total of a quarter million members interested in business-related fields. Business leaders, advisors and counselors guide the local chapters.

FBLA received 10 new members this year and currently has 53 active members in its FIU chapter.

FBLA-PBL at FIU is aided financially by the Council of Student Organizations, under which it was on the top three organizations to receive the most points toward funding for last Fall semester.

The organization has a $30 fee, which goes to fund its local and national fees. FBLA has a partnership agreement with the American Airlines Arena, for its members to fundraise to cover their expenses by working at games.

FBLA also frequently organizes fundraisers such as car washes, bake sales and raffles.

Additional information for FBLA, FIU Chapter, can be found at http://fjalsa07.pbl.com.

Lectures to present steps for change

Haiti, page 1

international affairs at Trinity University in Washington, D.C. Maguire’s presentation, “Rebalancing Haiti in the Earthquake’s Aftermath,” will discuss how Haiti became a country out-of-balance, while also presenting ideas and options for Haiti to regain and enhance its social, economic, environmental, political and demographic equilibrium.

Florida International University, Biscayne Bay Campus

Applications for SGA Positions

Due March 9th

For More Information Please Contact

SGA BBC Office: 305-919-5680
or sgcbbc@fiu.edu
The Beacon – 3

www.fi.edu
Friday, March 5, 2010

AT THE BAY

STRESS RELIEF

Bernique Hanna, a health science alumna, receives a free massage at the 2010 Wellness Expo, sponsored by the University’s Wellness Center, in Panther Square on March 2. The exposition offered students free health screenings, information, and giveaways in order to promote well-being.

TUESDAY / MARCH 9, 2010

BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS
MARY ANNE WOLFE THEATER
DOORS OPEN AT 6:30 PM
LECTURE STARTS AT 7:00 PM
FREE FOR FIU STUDENTS, FACULTY & STAFF
$5.00 FOR NON-FIU STUDENTS
$15.00 FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

STRESS RELIEF

Melody Regalado
Staff Writer

MEXICAN EATERY ERASES PREVIOUS BAD EPISODES

This week, my friend Kish and I met for one of those, “Oh my god, I haven’t seen you in a while” dinners.

You know – the ones you go on when you can’t re-cognize your friend’s Facebook picture anymore.

Before we went out, he asked me, “Have you ever had good Mexican?”

You’re kidding, right? I mean, sure, I’ve taken trips to a Taco Bell or two that did not result in a near hospital visit, but I’ll be honest: I don’t have the affinity for Mexican food that I do for Greek. Honestly, I’ve never been to any Mexican place that didn’t leave me regretting my choice the next day.

But, catching up with a buddy is more important than nausea.

I went along for some “real” Mexican at this place by Biscayne Bay Campus called Cheen Huay, Southern Mexican Restaurant, 15400 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami Beach.

Before I say anything else about this place, I would first like to make a public apology to all of the Mexican restaurants I have gone to in the past because I had my own dish to worry about.

Rajnish was also a part of the festival last year, and she worked at the Loews Hotel’s media suite where she worked at the Whole Foods doing. Rajnish mainly understood what they were doing and made sure to ensure students were free health screenings, information, and giveaways in order to promote well-being.

The Student Associate Team was in charge of assigning student volunteers their positions, signing them in at events, and giving them their credentials, making sure they were where they supposed to be and signing them back out of the events.

This team of 10 students held several meetings and orientations before the festival to ensure students understood what they were doing. Rajnish mainly worked at the Whole Foods Market Grand Tasting Village tent, where she says everything went smoothly.

“This sponsors were happy, the guests were happy, and the students were happy,” Rajnish said.

Rajnish was also a part of the festival last year, where she worked at the Loews Hotel’s media suite and also at the festival’s Fun and Fit as a Family Zone, an area in the festival dedicated to kid-friendly options for healthy meals.

Born in Italy, Rajnish, a lover of travel, moved to the United States at the age of five and moved between Georgia and Saudi Arabia until she settled in Miami to attend FIU in Fall 2008. She also spends her summers in Switzerland.

“I never thought I’d be in Miami of all places,” said Rajnish. “I feel I’m exactly where I’m supposed to be in my life right now.”

Eventually, she aspires to run an environmentally-friendly luxury hotel in Switzerland or Colombia.

“This field allows me to communicate with others and make other people happy,” she said. “That’s what I love about hotels. Normally when you go on vacation, people are happy.”

Aside from traveling and the responsibilities of the festival, she is also a full-time student who likes to play volleyball and watch movies. Still, after all the work put into this festival and hectic schedule, she will be going through withdrawal now that it’s over.

“I want people to know how great an experience this is,” Rajnish said. “No matter what position you play in this festival, everything is important. It’s a great opportunity for networking possibilities and meeting new people. I recommend this no matter what you’re studying.”

MELODY REGALADO

STRESS RELIEF

Bernique Hanna

Rodrigo Zamith/The Beacon

TRAVELING STUDENT FINDS HOME IN MIAMI, DISCUSSES FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

Vanessa Rajnish has found a public apology to all of the Mexican restaurants I have gone to in the past. This was a real Mexican place by Biscayne Bay Campus called Cheen Huay, Southern Mexican Restaurant, 15400 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami Beach.

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Rodrigo Zamith/The Beacon
I have never been able to understand the thought process behind “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” as a policy. Of course, you could note the fact that it limits the amount of possible recruits for the military. Then there’s the fact that it costs millions of dollars to uphold the policy.

Then there is the moral issue at hand: a federal entity openly supporting a manner of segregation, which brings back memories from basic training when I met a young man who had never met a minority, aside from those he’d seen on TV. There was basic training, the Army told us that there is no such thing as being black, white, male or female. We were all soldiers, and race was green drab. We all had similar problems. We all had the same gripes and the same nonsense to deal with.

While there, I met a young man who could only be called “incredibly effemi- nate” though not homosexual. One night, while out in the field, he was held down and beaten with socks filled with rocks. They were careful not to hit his face. They held him down and brutalized him without relent.

The young man eventually brought this to the attention of the drill sergeants. He walked into their office with a few other soldiers, including those who helped beat him. He came out visibly upset, being told that he was making this all up and trying to cause trouble. I remember the tears he was fighting back. The look on his face was both of confusion and hurt, showing a sense of betrayal. But many thought he deserved it. He was guilty of angrily talking back to those who harassed him.

There was a time when blacks were not allowed to serve in the military. Then with time they were allowed to fulfill certain roles, but on a limited and segregated basis.

Fast forward to today and they make up a large percentage of our troops and do an outstanding job.

Of course, there are bigots and homophobes out there. But I would like to think that in a country where service in the mili- tary is voluntary, where people risk their lives to sacrifice much to uphold the Constitution and keep us safe, that they would be judged on the merits of their ability.

Now is it hypocritical to say that denying someone belonging to a racial or ethnic minority to serve in our mili- tary based on prejudice, and then say that gays cannot openly serve in the military? Would it be right or reasonable to ask those who are minorities to mask or hide their ethnicity or race?

I have heard time and again about unit cohesion and troop morale. Quite frankly, there would be some problems if homo- sexuals were allowed to openly serve. There would especially be conflict with those whose norms and upbringings are radically opposed to homos, which unfortunately for us have been here before when we talked about allowing blacks or women to serve in the military.

The military is only as good as the men and women in it. If we deny perfectly skilled and qualified men and women to serve, then not only do we weaken or lessen our national defense, we are guilty of an unconstitutional hypocrisy.

In my time as a soldier, the subject of the draft has come up quite a few times. The overall consensus among soldiers was that there was no way any of us wanted to be “boots on ground” with a draftie. There is no way we want to be in a FOB (forward operating base), or heading down in a convoy with someone without a clue of what the heck they were doing.

When your life is on the line, it does not matter if you live in the South, West, East, or the Midwest. You are there to serve your country, whether you are black, white, gay, straight, Hispanic, or whatever. You don’t want to fight for a bunch of people who are minorities to mask or hide their ethnicity or race.

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Contact Us
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Friday, March 5, 2010
www.fiuam.com

The Beacon — 5

CHERRY ORCHARD

Final production explores meaning of home

ADRIANA RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

The FIU Theatre has chosen a story that anyone can relate to in The Cherry Orchard, the final production of the season. The play deals with a Russian family who is losing their home, as well as their beloved cherry orchard, and the grief that comes from having something emotionally and financially being ripped from the family’s life.

In light of the recent housing crisis and the period of recession that the country faces at the moment, Cherry Orchard’s tale about the personal value of a place strikes a resonant and personal chord with many Americans.

“The play deals with the incalculable value of place and space with regards to personal history and memory,” said Philip Church, professor at the School of Theatre and director of The Cherry Orchard. The plot centers on Ranevskaya, owner of the cherry orchard. Due to bankruptcy and foreclosure, Ranevskaya is forced to put the property up for auction, resulting in the loss of the orchard.

The play speaks about family and identity which ties it to FIU’s last production, A Lie of the Mind. All members of the family and those closely associated with them are considered children of the cherry orchard — “people born of the memory of the orchard and what it has meant [to them],” Church explained.

“The subject of home, family and belonging is integral to every human being that has ever lived, and it is this power and this alone that drives the dramatic engine of Chekhov’s most poignant, lyrical and haunting of plays. He was writing as he wrote it. He was aware of his own fanning mortality as he wrote it; but then so was Russia itself as it moved from an oligarchy to socialism. The family splits. Tribes disperse. Identities become merged and a whole new social landscape appears, dotted with unanswered question marks. A time for youth to discover and build,” Church said.

Though it was written 100 years ago, the story of the loss of one’s home and identity are still pertinent.

“Fast forward to the tragedy in Haiti with hundreds of thousands left homeless and it is not difficult to see the parallels between the value and meaning of a home. Look under the overpasses of downtown Miami and one is instantly reminded of what ‘home’ really means,” Church said. “Place fashions our very identity.”

The period piece was a way to offer both the students of the theater school and audiences “a heavily classical production.”

The costume design process presented a new challenge for designers and actors, dictated by the round setup of the stage with the audience being seated on all sides.

“You can’t just go buy these clothes off the rack, so we have to build almost everything. Because the show is in the round, the audience is that much closer to everything, so there is much more attention to detail. For the actors, they have to learn to work with period

CHERRY, page 6

Professor remembered at this year’s Relay

RELAY, page 1

for the event, passed away and the event has a special significance for all involved. According to Baker, “he was one of our biggest fund raisers” and he will be sorely missed. The Fight Back Ceremony is another big part of the proceedings.

It acts as a personal pledge to take up the fight against cancer by giving up something (like smoking) or developing some new, healthier habits.

“We have a volunteer chair, so if you want to get involved the night of you can go to her.” Baker added. “Volunteers sign up for four-hour shifts and they get a T-shirt as well. They are assigned to committee members who need help

since there are only about 15 of us.”

The breadth of activities doesn’t necessarily end with these things.

In addition to the marathon and ceremonies, there are ways that one can donate for the cause.

The Relay for Life Web site, http://www.relayforlife.org/relay/, allows visitors to donate as much as they want and doesn’t require participation in the event.

Ultimately, this year’s Relay for Life looks to be a continuation of the beauty and goodwill that has so dominated these occasions. It’s not too late to enter a team, after all.

For more information on volunteering, contact Jasila Mzurahui at jnzura218@yahoo.com.

FISTFULS OF TECH!

Company gives consumers choice

If I had $1 for every cell phone manufacturer, I’d be a rich guy. However, if I had $1 for every one of them who made a difference, I’d have maybe $3.

HTC Corporation was founded in 1997 and began humbly as a company that designed hardware for cell phone companies to sell under their own brand, otherwise known in the biz as an “original design manufacturer.”

So, they would design a phone that would be sold, for example, as the “T-Mobile MDAc3000c” or whatever ridiculously futuristic, Star Trek-sounding, pattern of numbers and letters they thought of.

Though an interesting (and lucrative) business model, I have always thought HTC made a hell of a phone, and branding their Windows Mobile devices as a T-Mobile or Sprint device is doing the potential of the company’s brand a disservice.

Then, all of a sudden, things changed at HTC, and they started kicking large amounts of ass. HTC began churning out phones with both Windows Mobile and Android. The difference between then and now, however, was that HTC was branding their own phones but also innovating on the software as well.

The biggest accolade, I think, that this company has on its list of accomplishments is that it made Windows Mobile palatable.

HTC created the “Sense User Interface,” a sort of mask over the Windows Mobile OS that hid its flaws and errors and adapted it for touch interface way before Microsoft ever thought of doing it.

Microsoft’s ill-fated operating system tumbled on the brink of complete market failure until HTC came along and resurrected it from the dead.

The company later worked dropped Sense UI on Android, though, granted, Android is not nearly as horrible as Windows Mobile.

In the past five years, HTC has given consumers something that they never dreamed of having in the mobile technology; choice.

Currently, the company has over 20 devices on the market, powered by both Android and Windows Mobile operating systems.

The company also boasts hardware partnerships with Microsoft and Google, with whom they partnered to build the Google-branded Nexus One device.

At the end of the day, HTC has gone from an “original design manufacturer” to one of the biggest influences in the mobile industry — and that has made it a prime target for Apple.

On March 2, engadget.com broke that Apple filed a massive lawsuit against HTC citing that it has infringed 20 iPhone patents.

According to the filing, HTC has allegedly infringed such popular patents as “Time-Based, Non-Constant Translation Of User Inter-

FISTFULS, page 6
Dog makes its debut in play

**CHERRY, page 5**

**STEVE MESA**
Staff Writer

Avid film buffs or those seeking films different from the usual big-budget blockbusters can look forward to the 27th annual Miami International Film Festival, which begins tonight at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Miami.

Tonight’s opening film is a 2009 Cannes Film Festival favorite, *Looking for Eric*, the latest movie from director Ken Loach (*The Wind That Shakes the Barley*). The film is about a post worker named Eric (Steve Evets), a soccer fanatic suffering from a mid-life crisis. As his life starts to take a downward turn, he begins to receive philosophical life coaching from his hero, Manchester United’s legendary French soccer player Eric Cantona.

Two of this year’s Oscar-nominated films will also be screened at the festival: *The Milk of Sorrows*, a Peruvian import, will be shown as part of the festival’s yearly exchange linking experienced professionals with up-and-coming filmmakers. The film is about a woman who suffers from a rare disease that is transmitted from the breast milk of women who have suffered trauma from the ongoing war and terrorism.

*The Secret of Their Eyes* is an Argentinian film about a retired prosecutor who revises the unsolved murder of a young woman from Buenos Aires. This film will be screened at the Gusman Center on closing night, preceded by the festival’s keynote Dawn Walzak.

Hefner documentary to be screened at fest

**MIFF**

Presenter by FIU Theatre

**SUNDAY, MARCH 7**

**THE CHERRY ORCHARD**

*Relay for Life*

*FOR A MIRACLE*

*The Cherry Orchard*

*WHO GETS THE PETS?*

*The Good Wife*

*Spotless Mind*

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Barrett, Rojas collect accolades as team starts strong

STEPHANIE GABRIEL
Asst. Sports Director

The FIU softball team has been cleaning up. Just after sweeping Western Kentucky in a three game series on Feb. 26-28, senior pitcher Kasey Barrett and freshman slugger Brie Rojas swept the Sun Belt Conference softball awards with Pitcher and Player of the Week honors.

For Barrett, the award is her second so far this season as she was also named Pitcher of the Week on Feb. 22.

Meanwhile, Rojas enjoys the first honors of her collegiate career after batting .667 across the three contests against the Hilltoppers.

“It feels great. I’ve been working hard so I think I deserve it,” Rojas said. “The team is behind me and it is all flowing into place.”

The first year player, who stands at about 5 feet, knocked out a pair of three-run homers in the first run of the three game series on Feb. 26-28, senior pitcher Beth McClelland are aware that the pitching staff has also played a huge role in the team’s early success.

“Our pitching staff is fantastic and they keep working hard,” Rojas said. “The hitting is coming along just as well.”

Barrett threw two complete games against WKU and notched a 0.58 ERA in 12 innings of work while also striking out 12 batters. She holds a record of 6-1 as of March 3 and leads the entire pitching staff with an ERA of 0.47.

“I really think that our offense and knowing that there’s defense behind me to make all the plays has helped me out a lot,” Barrett said.

“And then when I have run support that defi nitely allows me to relax.”

McClelland agrees that although Barrett has been successful since her arrival to FIU, she continues to improve.

“I think she is doing a better job of approaching each game more focused on herself instead of being a team player,” she said. “She’s trying to go out and do the same thing every game no matter who we’re facing.”

The team continued play on March 4 against Eastern Michigan at FIU, with results available on FIUSM.com, and will travel to the University of South Florida on March 5-7 for the Under Armor Invitational which features games against Robert Morris, Fordham, Penn State, Boston University and Bradley.

“I don’t think we’ve earned the right to be too cocky or big headed yet,” McClelland said.

SOFTBALL

UNTIMELY INJURY, SLUMPS HINDER POSTSEASON HOPES

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TENNIS

The Golden Panthers had a rough day at the 2010 Sun Belt Indoor Track and Field championships on Feb. 27 and 28.

The team placed ninth out of 11 teams in the men’s competition with a total of 14 points and ninth out of 11 teams in the women’s competition with an ERA of 0.47. The FIU head coach Isaiah Thomas could not be reached for comment after numerous attempts.

Gary states that Thomas is providing much wisdom to the team and feeding them confidence while sharing his past experiences with them.

“Asl all we have to do is win four games and we’re in the NCAA tournament,” Gary said. “Coach told us in the NIT he had to face teams seven times, so it was much tougher, but here all we have to do is surprise teams one time for 40 minutes.”

Tennis returns after road trip to beat Boston College

The Golden Panthers finished second at the 2010 USA Lady Jaguar Invitational with a +55 (919) on March 1 and 2.

Unfortunately for FIU, Memphis rallied on Wednesday to finish first after the Golden Panthers led a hold going into the final day.

Christina Marin finished third overall individually with a +7 (223), just behind Memphis’ Marissa Stine, who beat out Lauren Cate in a playoff to win.

The Golden Panthers will travel to Phoenix, Ariz. next on March 16 to take part in the University of Nebraska Invitational.Compiled by Spencer Manley, Tom Dean, and Jonathan Ramos.

SPORTS REPLAY

Tennis returns after road trip to beat Boston College

GOLF

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The Beacon – 8

www.fi usm.com

Friday, March 5, 2010

SPORTS

MEN’S BASKETBALL

Tournament offers redemption

JOEY CRUZ

Staff Writer

With FIU forward J.C. Otiero out for the postseason with a torn ACL in his right knee, the Golden Panthers head to Hot Springs, Ark. to take on Denver in the first round of the Sun Belt Conference tournament with a major challenge in the size department. "He’s averaged a double-double in the past 10 to 15 games," FIU point guard Phil Gary Jr. said. “I might even have to move to the two spot at my size because we beat them twice,” Carey said. "We definitely have to not take anybody lightly. You never know when they can explode and maybe they were just off those two games.”

Head coach Cindy Russo agrees that the Mean Green should not be underestimated. "[NT] is a very good team and both of those games were very hard [during the season],” Russo said. “They are a very aggressive and athletic team.”

FIU did not look like a No. 7 team the entire season. They started out with a 3-7 record in conference play before going on a six game win streak and then ended the season with two straight losses to No. 2 Middle Tennessee and No. 3 Western Kentucky.

In recent practices, FIU has been focusing on some of the basics of the game in order to be successful in the postseason. According to sophomore Rakia Rodgers, the team has focused on handling pressure because teams love to use a full-court press against FIU, who averaged 20.1 turnovers this season.

“We’ve been working on pressing because we know that the teams we’re going to play are probably going to try to put a lot of pressure on us,” Rodgers said. “We’ve also been working on handling pressure, blocking out, and rebounding.”

In the end it will all come down to defense. “We’ve been focusing on defense more than anything. Defense wins games along with rebounding,” she said.

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Carey leads FIU to No. 7 spot and earns SBC award

STEPHANIE GABRIEL

Asst. Sports Director

Elisa Carey was close to unstoppable this season. Her efforts, which include a team-high 13.8 points per game, earned her a spot on the All-Sun Belt Conference Second Team and have also led the FIU women’s basketball team to the No. 7 seed in this weekend’s SBC tournament.

Carey hopes to lead her team again as FIU (14-15, 10-8 Sun Belt) has a great chance to advance to the SBC tournament with a major challenge in the size department.

FIU already defeated the Mean Green twice this season. Carey, however, stated that NT should not be taken lightly. “We’re going out there sluggish and [NT is] fired up because we beat them twice,” Carey said. "I think we definitely have to not take anybody lightly. You never know when they can explode and maybe they were just off those two games.”

In the lone regular season matchup between the two on Dec. 17, Denver (17-12, 10-8 Sun Belt) had a great offensive night, especially from beyond the arc while shooting 50 percent from the three-point line. They have slowed down the Chicago native, including the recoccurring issue of tendinitis in his left knee. After the loss against Middle Tennessee on Feb. 25, Gary slightly sprained his left wrist, but fortunately for FIU, it’s not his shooting hand.

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BASEBALL

First road trip of season poses test

JOEL DELGADO

Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers (6-0) put their perfect record to the test as they head west for a tournament in Surprise, Ariz. in their first road trip of the season.

BIG TEST

Playing four games in four days forced head coach Turtle Thomas to make some adjustments to the starting rotation, including having Daniel Desimone start the first game of the tournament on March 4 vs. Utah Valley.

Scott Renbuzz will pitch vs. UC-Riverside with Carey Polizzano on the mound against Cal Poly. Aaron Arboleya will handle the most difficult game of the tournament against Arizona State (7-0), the No. 12 team in the nation according to the latest Baseball America Top 25 rankings.

“He’s been good,” Thomas said of Arboleya. “Hopefully he’ll continue to improve. The big thing with Aaron is that he needed to develop a second and third pitch that are good, quality college pitches. And he needed to keep the ball down in the strike zone better. And those are two things that he has done a better job of this year.”

In addition to adding speed to his fastball, Arboleya has also developed his slider and changeup, pitches that have allowed him to have a 1.80 ERA and nine strikeouts in his two starts.

SWING AWAY

Thomas has also been pleased with the way his offense is performing so far this season. Garrett Wittels leads the team with a .538 batting average with seven RBIs, but Thomas has stressed that FIU’s success at the plate is attributed to consistency throughout the batting order.

“You can’t just have three or four guys at the top of the order and the guys at the bottom of the order can’t hit,” said Thomas. “We feel like we have 13 or 14 capable hitters.”

The team as a whole has been efficient in its first six contests with a .360 overall average.

FIU head coach (sigh Thomas will return from a one game absence to lead the Golden Panthers into the Sun Belt Conference tournament on March 6.

MEN’S, page 7