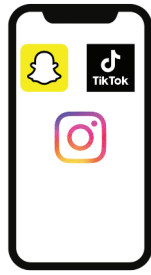


Social media

Social media causes struggles for some athletes. Read more on page 5.



Character

Characters in a story are more than just what they appear. Read more on page 9.



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Dr. Maier stepping into new role

By INGRID MALDONADO
Senior Reporter

Dr. Steven Maier will be the new vice president for academic affairs starting in July.

Maier will step into this position following Dr. James Bell, who will be retiring after this spring semester.

Maier is a first-generation student who aspired to be a teacher.

He grew up in New York and got his undergrad in physics and teaching at St. Lawrence University in New York.

From there he went to Oklahoma State University and got his master's degree in physics.

Once he started working at NWOSU, he started his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) from the University of Oklahoma.

"I really just saw myself as a high school teacher, and I don't say 'just' as a negative thing, I mean that's what I wanted to be," Maier said.

Maier explained he didn't see himself going into administration, and how he only wanted to teach because he loves science and liked the idea of teaching because he had teachers who promoted that career.

He said his career progressed differently as he started as an instructor of physics, then became a professor, then chair to a dean.

In a span of 27 years and a half, he's collected experience, tried to remain humble and go through the process, Maier said.

"I want to maintain the continuity, I want to maintain the integrity and just make sure that I



Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

Dr. Steven Maier, current dean of faculty, will be taking over as the vice president for academic affairs in July.

uphold the standards that they've set," Maier said.

Maier explained he wants to do this job as well as people who have been in this position in the past, like Bell, Dr. Bo Hannaford and Dr. Steve Lohmann.

This job will be new and different, and there's going to be a learning curve, he said.

Maier said one of Northwestern's academic strengths are the programs it has.

He said Northwestern has many programs that people in the state and beyond the state are aware of.

While going through the Chicago airport, Maier said he start-

ed a conversation with someone about their daughter who is completing a nursing degree at Chicago State University and then recommended her Northwestern's Doctorate Nursing Program which is available online.

"I think we have programs that are marketable to Oklahoma students for sure, and we want Oklahoma students but we also have reach," Maier said. "We have faculty with national and international experiences and we have that reach here in rural Oklahoma."

Maier brought up an enrollment cliff, which is a decline in students attending college.

He said while this is affecting Oklahoma, it is affecting the East and West Coast more extensively.

Due to this, he explained that recruiting new students has been a significant challenge recently.

"We've got the retention and the enrollment form, we have chairs and we have faculty and we have administration that are working together to recruit students and to retain students," Maier said. "That's a challenge we are overcoming."

While there are some challenges, Maier said they are accomplishing significant benchmarks.

One of them being maintaining a steady increase in enroll-

ment, he said.

Although it is not a huge increase, it has been increasing steadily.

Another accomplishment was no tuition increase in four years, he said.

"All of this in the time where the economy isn't the best, and we kept the tuition the same, and while that was happening, the enrollment was increasing," Maier said. "So, we're accomplishing great things."

When talking about the programs, Maier explained there is a lot of what Northwestern can do with what it has to offer.

While Northwestern does not have a microbiology major, one of Northwestern's graduate students went to be the lead microbiologist for NASA, he said.

"It's not that we have to have a specific program to find success for our students to go and do great things and very specialized fields," Maier said.

Maier said one of the things that motivated him to go into teaching was to have an impact.

He explained he was excited to be a part of students' lives and have an impact on them.

Then when he had the opportunity to serve as chair, he was excited to have an impact on the department's program and as dean an impact on multiple protocols, he said.

"I'm excited to be working with faculty, and the university as a whole, excited to see what the future holds," Maier said. "Again, just looking to continue on the great things that have already taken place here."

NEWS

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SPORTS

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Icy campus

Two students walk to classes on the snow-covered sidewalks Tuesday. The storm that rolled over northwest Oklahoma — and on through to the Carolinas — dropped more than half a foot of snow on Alva over the weekend. KOCO TV reported Enid saw 11.5 inches while Woodward had 6 inches.

The storm began late Friday and continued in waves through Sunday morning. Local churches canceled services on Sunday, and NWOSU canceled classes Monday.

Classes resumed on Tuesday with many walkways still snowy and slick.

See more snow photos on pages 6 and 7.

Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

NEWS

Athletes learn about abuse

By **BRAXTYN TURNER**
Student Reporter

NWOSU student-athletes gathered in Percefull fieldhouse Jan. 20 to attend a Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention seminar. The meeting began with introductions for Brad Franz, vice president of athletics; Calleb Mossburg, vice president of student services and enrollment; and Taylor Wilson, director of counseling.

Shortly after their introductions, Steve Tanio, a Woods county district attorney investigator, took to the floor to begin his part of the seminar.

As he spoke, he explained the risks of substance use while reviewing recent statistics that dealt with substance abuse specifically in college environments.

He explained the effects that these substances can have on your body, mental health and overall performance as a student-athlete.

Carter Morris, a sophomore football player and business major from Wichita, Kansas, who attended the seminar, said "I think it's important that we have these seminars because I think a lot of students need to be reminded of all the penalties that can happen from making mistakes.

"I mean everybody makes mistakes, but at the end of the day if you know the consequences from your mistakes then it makes it a lot less likely that it'll happen to you and you'll make one of those dumb choices you know."

Tanio also spoke about the



Morris



Eastes



Scott

lasting effects of rape and sexual assault.

He showed the statistic that 97,000 students report experiences with sexual assault or date rape while under the influence of alcohol per year.

The importance of being aware of what you are consuming and how much you are consuming was emphasized multiple times throughout the meeting.

When asked what she learned in the seminar, Ryann Eastes, a freshman volleyball player majoring in elementary education from Pratt, Kansas, said, "I would say, if you are of age, don't drink your drink unless you see it be made for you."

Tanio also spent time advising students to stray away from sexual interactions online.

He presented the group of student-athletes with resources such as the website Havebeenpawnd, which allows individuals to find out if anyone has access to their phone, and IC3.gov, which can scrub the internet for inappropriate images.

Repeatedly throughout the seminar, Tanio expressed the importance of checking up on your friends and taking notice of their behavior changes.

He emphasized that small shifts in mood and habits can often signal deeper struggles.

By being attentive and willing to ask questions, there is a space created for support and safety.

Drew Scott, a sophomore baseball player from Edmond, majoring in business, who also attended the seminar, said, "I think overall I just learned, if you notice something say something to someone you can trust, or if you see it happening, take action."

The seminar is part of NWO-SU's ongoing effort to promote student safety, accountability and well-being.

Organizers encouraged student-athletes to continue using campus and community resources and to support one another both on and off the field.

Opinion

Snow on Campus

The campus was hit with a snow storm on January 24.

The storm was well announced before the storm even hit so the disappointment that students have in how the campus has decided to take precautions on the weather and the snow is understandable.

Campus was closed on Jan. 26 with the exception of the cafeteria which was opened on weekend hours. Some parts of the campus look like they were taken care of while other parts did not meet those same expectations.

If a student was to walk from the dorms to Jesse Dunn, the chances of them slipping on ice is high.

The storm that caused the ice and snow did not come by surprise to the people of Oklahoma and if the campus wanted to be open by Jan. 27, as they did, the ice and snow on sidewalks should have been cleared.

It is not only on the sidewalks but in the parking lots as well. Compact parking by Vinson Hall and Jesse Dunn has a pile of snow on it that blocks those who use that parking lot from a safe exit.

Students and faculty that use that parking have to cross into the road beside the parking to get to the steps and enter onto the campus.

This is unsafe and with the construction happening on that road it makes it even busier.

Cunningham hall has a

crosswalk for girls in the dorm to cross and join the rest of the campus, this crosswalk has been completely blocked by the snow.

There is not a clear entrance or exit on the crosswalk.

The students would have a better access by just crossing the street instead of using the crosswalk.

The sidewalks around Coronado Cafeteria are clear however most other sidewalks on the campus still have snow and ice built up on them.

It appears that the campus wanted to make sure that students had access to the cafeteria but when it came to other buildings on campus they did not care as much.

Many students have shared the same sentiment on how disappointing that they are in how the snow has been handled.

Courtne Dennis a junior ag communications major said it felt like the campus just said to push it to the side and let it go.

Students all over campus wondered why the school even opened back up on Tuesday when it was not properly taken care for.

The main areas of campus like around the Student Center, Coronado Cafeteria and the J. W. Martin Library all had clear paths while buildings like Jesse Dunn, Vinson Hall and the dorms had more snow piled on and around them.

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NEWS

WHAT'S UP

Jan. 30

- Project Learning Tree Workshop EC 109 8 AM-12 PM

Jan. 31

- Sports Hall of Fame luncheon at Student Center Ballroom and recognition at Percefull Fieldhouse 11 AM-4 PM

Feb. 2

- Education Center Fair Student Center Ballroom 11 AM- 1 PM

Feb. 3

- Writer's Roundtable Meeting VH 200 5:30 PM-6:30 PM
- Chi Alpha Night Student Center Ranger Room 6 PM- 8 PM

Feb. 4

- Future Educators Day EC 109 and Student Center Ballroom 9:30 AM- 2:30 PM



Tips for keeping your car safe

With extreme weather affecting road conditions, officials shared information outlining steps drivers can take to prepare vehicles to travel safely.

As winter weather approaches our region, it is important for motorists to take caution while using their vehicles.

Whether it's snow or sleet, harsh winter conditions can be troubling to tackle.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, there are over 745,000 weather-related crashes each year.

"Preparing yourself and your vehicle for winter weather is key." The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said in its winter weather driving tips.

Officials recommend slowing down and increasing your following distance behind other vehicles, noting that slick or snow-covered roads significantly increase stopping distance.

In the event that a vehicle becomes stalled the NHTSA advises drivers to remain in their car.

Motorists should let their vehicle be visible with bright markers and wait. Markers such as your hazard lights, emergency markers, flares or just the interior dome light.

It is important to be mindful of carbon monoxide poisoning as you wait.

Be sure that the exhaust pipe is clear of any snow and run your car just long enough to stay warm.

Start it only sporadically.

It is important to keep your car stocked with common driving-related supplies that you may need in an emergency.

Things like an ice scraper, jumper cables, flashlight, first aid kit and blankets.

Alongside abrasive material, in case your vehicle gets stuck in deep snow, like sand or kitty litter.

The temperature is not the only thing that you will see dropping.

As the outside temperature falls, so does tire pressure.

Inspect your tires frequently to ensure that each tire has the correct tire inflation pressure that is aligned with the recommended pressure.

Each vehicle is different, so it is important to check your vehicle manufacturers recommendation in the owners manual.

Battery power is also something that you will be seeing drops in as it gets colder.

In weather like recent conditions, gasoline and diesel engines both take more battery power to start.

Most mechanics offer free battery checks.

"Make sure you have plenty of fuel. Keep your gas tanks full and do not run your car anymore than you have to," said David Kenyon, a mechanic at Garnett Oil.

Garnett Oil is located right across the street from the Ranger statue on campus and offers free services ranging from free tire pressure and battery checks to fluid top-offs.

With winter conditions expected to persist, the NHTSA officials say that taking precautions like these will help drivers avoid collisions and breakdowns.

Even if the weather isn't as harsh as it was over this weekend, it is vital to be cautious.

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OPINION

Coach looks back at season

By ECE OZDEMIR
Opinion Editor

After making it to GAC tournament last season, the NWOSU volleyball team faced a challenging year, finishing with an unexpected record. With a young roster and a focus on rebuilding, this season became more about growth than results. To better understand the challenges, lessons, and goals moving forward, I spoke with the NWOSU volleyball Head Coach Jon Bingesser about the team's journey.

Q: How would you describe Nwosu volleyball's team culture?

Bingesser: "You know, I think our team culture is still a culture that has yet to be defined. I think that we have an idea of what we want. I think we know the direction that I want to go, and I know the direction that the girls want to go. It's just a matter of being able to keep everybody on the same page, which I think we are, but also bring in recruits who can reinforce that mentality. And I think that the team culture that we're building is one that we all want."

Q: What qualities do you value most when recruiting student-athletes to NWO-SU?

Bingesser: "My first thing when I look for players is, are they good, you know, are they tall, athletic? Can they move? Do they hit hard? Are they aggressive? And then, you know, also, like, are they good people? You know, are they somebody that I can get along with? Personality, kind of overweighs the athletic or the skill set sometimes, but the skill set and athleticism is the immediate eye-catcher. Like that's what you look for first. And then you can dig deeper into their personality traits to see what kind of student they are, what kind of teammate they're going to be."

Q: How do you define success for this team beyond wins and losses?

Bingesser: "You know, this was a crazy year. The universe really was against us. There was a lot of things and events that happened on our team this year that were beyond control, beyond the control of players, beyond the control of the coach. And that was a unique experience. And the thing that I think defined the success for us this year outside of the the wins and loss category was the fact that we were really solid as a team togeth-



Jon Bingesser

er. You know, we're not best friends holding hands, dancing around, but we're definitely a team that understands, you know, what we're all doing here. We're all here to play volleyball. We all want to win, and nobody's out to get anybody, which is probably one of the best things that I could say about our team is that we have that mentality that is supportive, but also, you know, aware. And I also like the fact that we have a really good high GPA as a team and that's something too, that is, you know, that's another success that can be measured outside of the wins and loss category.

Q: What goals are you setting for the upcoming season and offseason?

Bingesser: "I mean, the goals for the season are always the same. We want to win the conference. We want to make it to the national tournament. Like that's, especially in our conference, that's not an unrealistic goal. I mean, our conference, the only difference between the number one team and the number 12 team is who's going to make the most errors when they play each other. Aside from that, you know, it's really anybody's game, which is, which does allow you to shoot your goals pretty high because they're 100% obtainable."

Campus dining needs improving

By ECE OZDEMIR
Opinion Editor

For many students at NWOSU, the dining hall is not just a place to eat, but an essential part of daily life. Especially for students living on campus and required to have a meal plan, this service is not a choice, but a necessity. Therefore, the increasing dissatisfaction with the campus dining hall in recent times should not be ignored.

Among the most frequently voiced complaints among students are the repetitive

menus, inconsistencies in food quality, and the lack of healthy or balanced options. While occasional dissatisfaction is normal at any university, the fact that so many students are complaining about the same issues suggests that the problem is systemic, not individual.

Another important issue is the question of "value for money." Students feel there is a significant imbalance between the quality of service they receive and the mandatory meal plan fees they pay. University life is already financially challenging, and the fact that a basic need like food becomes an additional source of stress is frustrating for students.

Also, too, I'd like to see us continue our success off the court as well."

Q: How do you foster accountability and motivation within the team during tough stretches?

Bingesser: "You know, honestly, I'm very open and direct, and I'm one of those coaches who is going to be transparent to a fault. The first thing I'm going to do to foster accountability is to tell them, like, hey, this is what you need to do."

"And if you don't, then this will probably happen. And I do rely on the athletes internal motivation within themselves, but there are times where, you know, you do got to give a little bit extra of a boost, you know, just kind of reminding them why they're here, reminding an athlete, you know, what you see in them, because, you know, none of the players on my team are here just to be here. They're all here because I genuinely see something in them that can help me and help our program and then in turn help all of us accomplish what we want. So I think just being as transparent as possible with your coaching and with your motivational tactics and with your goals is the best way to foster that accountability and motivation.."

Q: Is there anything you'd like the campus community to know about this team that doesn't always show up in the record?

Bingesser: "They're all very smart girls and young athletes, and I really think that, like, they, if you more than just watching us play on the court, if you knew, some of their stories, their history, their backgrounds. And I'm even talking about our girls who are from Texas, who are from Kansas, you know, not just ours, who are from Europe or anywhere else, but everybody on our team has a unique story and a really great family background that they all come from. And, you know, I think that's probably one thing that doesn't show when you're playing a sport is your true personality and our team has a great personality."

While this season did not produce the results the team hoped for, it played an important role in building the foundation for the future. The experience gained, lessons learned, and commitment to development reflect a program focused on long-term success. As NWOSU volleyball continues to grow, this rebuilding year may prove to be a key step toward stronger seasons ahead.

Of course, it must be acknowledged that the cafeteria staff work hard and that operating this system is not easy. However, the existence of hard work should not prevent criticism. Constructive criticism is a prerequisite for improvement. Students want to see more variety, more consistent quality, and for their feedback to be genuinely taken into account.

NWOSU defines itself as a student-centered university. If this definition is to reflect reality, then more transparent, responsive, and solution-oriented steps need to be taken regarding food services, which directly affect students' daily lives.

Let your voice be heard!
Send letters: NWNNews@nwosu.edu

OPINION

Women's sports need publicity

Women deserve more pay

By ECE OZDEMIR
Opinion Editor

The lack of promotion in women's sports is not due to a lack of talent or effort, but rather because it has not been considered a priority for years. Female athletes train just as diligently as male athletes, compete with the same seriousness, and represent their schools with the same pride. Despite this, their matches are often not adequately publicized, reported on, or are simply ignored.

One of the most common misconceptions about women's sports is the claim that they "don't attract viewers." However, interest increases with visibility. When matches are promoted, when athletes' stories are told, and when successes are shared, audiences respond accordingly. The problem is not a lack of demand, but a lack of opportunity. We cannot expect people to support something they are unaware of.

At the collegiate level, women's teams, especially those outside of major Division I programs, receive limited media attention despite being an important part of athletic culture. This affects not only attendance but also the athletes' motivation, self-confidence, and fu-

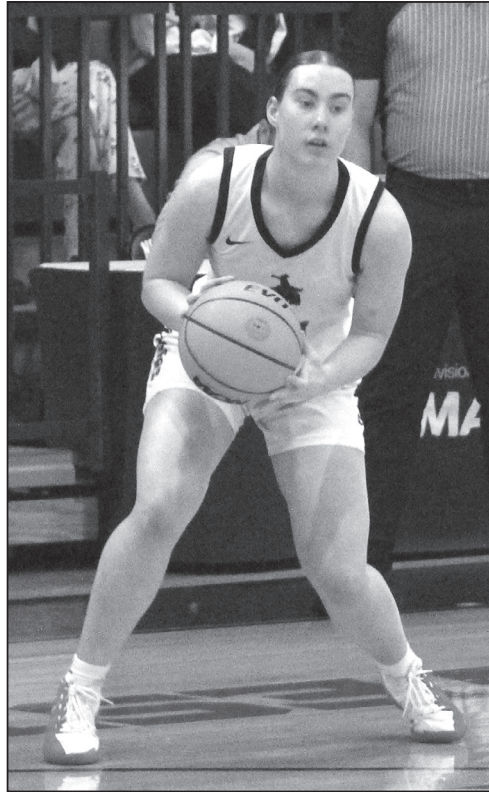


Photo by Victor Kinzie
Conley Cayot, a freshman from Enid majoring in health and sports science, maneuvers the ball Jan. 22 against SWOSU at home.

ture opportunities. Being seen and appreciated is just as important as performance.

At this point, the media bears a significant responsibility. Equal coverage doesn't mean creating artificial interest; it requires a fair and consistent approach. Treating women's sports with the same seriousness and respect as men's sports ensures that female athletes are seen not as exceptions, but as competitive athletes.

Women's sports don't need to be "saved." What they need is support. Coverage is not a reward, but a responsibility.

Professional women's team sports by the numbers

Basketball: 180 players
Volleyball: 114+
Soccer: 300-360
Hockey: 157
Softball: 140

By ECE OZDEMIR
Opinion Editor

In professional sports, the wage gap between male and female athletes is often explained by the "revenue gap." However, this explanation alone is insufficient. Revenue is not only a result of audience demand, but also of investment, marketing, and media visibility. In these areas, women's sports have historically received less support.

Female athletes' training intensity, level of professionalism, and performance expectations are comparable to those of male athletes. Despite this, compensation policies do not reflect this equality. This situation is not due to economic necessity, but rather to long-standing structural biases.

The wage gap is also related to the corporate governance of the sport. Limited investment in women's leagues hinders the development of their revenue potential; this low revenue is then presented as a justification for wage inequality. This cycle points to a systemic problem.

The demand for equal pay does not necessarily mean the same salary under all circumstances. However, it requires fair evaluation, transparent criteria, and long-term strategies that support development. Making women's sports economically sustainable is impossible without conscious investment in these areas.

In conclusion, the salaries of women in professional sports should be addressed as a structural and economic issue, not an emotional one. The focus of the discussion should be on the system itself, rather than individual performance.

Women in Pro Sports

Social media can affect athletes

By ECE OZDEMIR
Opinion Editor

Social media has become an integral part of not only daily life but also the world of sports. Athletes actively use social media to interact with their followers, share their achievements, and capitalize on sponsorship opportunities.

However, this tool presents both opportunities and risks.

The positive effects are clear. Athletes can use social media to build their personal brands, share sources of motivation, and establish a strong connection with their fans. This can be particularly confidence-boosting for young athletes and can support their professional careers.

Conversely, the negative effects of social media are also serious. Constantly being judged based on follower counts, likes, and comments creates immense

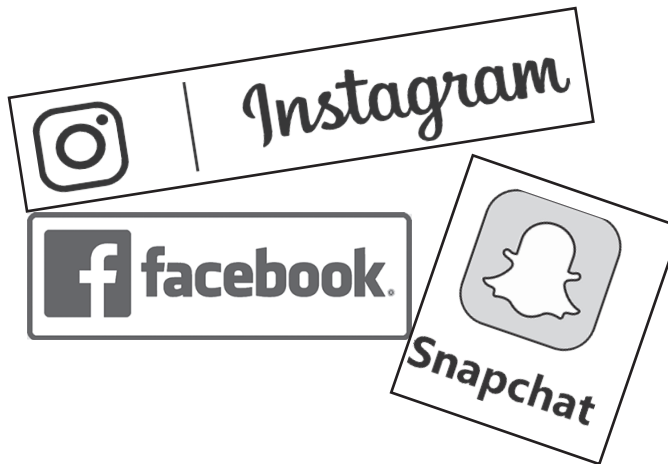
pressure on athletes. Criticism, abusive comments, or performance expectations shared on social media increase the risk of anxiety, stress, and burnout. This psychological burden can directly impact training quality and performance.

Many athletes are having to set conscious boundaries to manage the negative effects of social media. Social media detoxes, professional psychological sup-

port, and media consulting are becoming increasingly common strategies to protect performance and mental health.

In conclusion, social media presents both opportunities and risks for athletes. While it can contribute to success, it can also threaten mental health.

Maintaining this balance is the responsibility not only of the athletes themselves, but also of the university and coaches.



"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

— James Baldwin

Screen time and mental health: Are students addicted?

By ECE OZDEMIR
Opinion Editor

Today, screens are an indispensable part of students' daily lives. Classes take place on online platforms, friendships are maintained on social media, and leisure activities are conducted through digital applications. But how does this intense screen use affect our mental health, and are students becoming addicted to screens?

Research shows that excessive screen time can lead to sleep

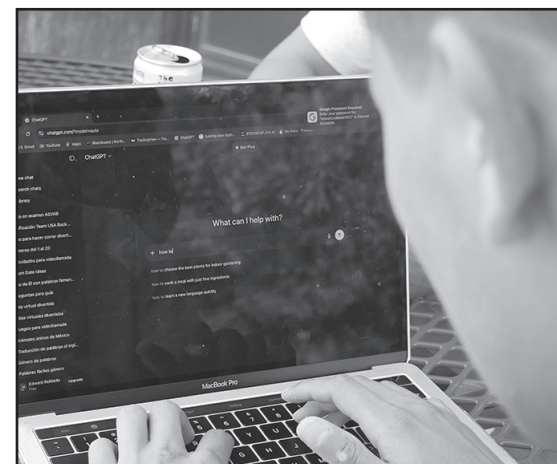
disturbances, attention problems and increased stress levels. Social media, with its constant notifications and pressure for online interaction, causes students to feel constantly "connected." This situation is directly linked to anxiety, fatigue and decreased motivation.

On the other hand, screens are not entirely negative. Online classes, group projects, and research are all made possible thanks to screens. Communication tools keep friendships and community relationships alive. The problem is not the quantity, but the way they are used and

the awareness surrounding their use. Students' inability to manage screen time and set limits increases the risk of addiction.

The solution begins with individual awareness and discipline. Limiting daily screen time, managing social media notifications, and allocating time for offline activities can help maintain balance. Universities can also offer guidance and educational programs on this topic.

In conclusion, students are at risk of screen addiction; however, addiction stems not solely from the presence of screens, but from



A student spends time online. Screens of all kinds are becoming an addiction.

File photo by Aaron Medrano

a lack of control and unconscious usage habits. Technology is a

tool, and addiction is the result of the inability to manage this tool.

Winter finally brings snow to Alva



Levi Crumpton and Johnathon Snyder walk together in front of Carter Hall Tuesday morning. Workers cleared some of the sidewalks before the day began but icy patches were everywhere. *Photo by Ingrid Maldonado*



Snow in Alva means it's time to head to Hatfield Park for a day of sledding and playing in the white stuff. *Photo by Victor Kinzie*



Many county roads were impassible on the weekend following the storm, but are beginning to clear as the snow starts to melt. *Photo by Oaklee Fielder*



Snowfall in the square was already beginning to coat the streets just two hours after the storm hit Alva Friday night. The snow continued most of the day Saturday as well. *Photo by Victor Kinzie*



The sun sets behind Coronada Hall and the Intramural Field. Friday's storm left Alva covered in snow, then temps in single digits. *Photo by Oaklee Fielder*



An NWOSU student walks on a slick sidewalk Tuesday after having a snowday on Monday. *Photo by Ingrid Maldonado*

Snow done for awhile

No more snow is forecast for the next two weeks despite the sometimes cloudy skies Alva will experience. Temps will eventually reach 60 degrees by Feb. 6.

Friday could see the lowest temperature for the next two weeks, dipping to 7 degrees. However, most lows will be above 20 degrees.

—Weather.com

FEATURE

Super Bowl competitors decided

By **JESSICA SCHIEBER**
Editor-in-Chief

The time has officially come. The biggest game of the football season is two weeks away. Super Bowl 2026 is happening Feb. 8.

Fans of the sport witnessed two great games on Jan. 25. The AFC championship game and the NFC championship game.

The Denver Broncos faced the New England Patriots faced off against each other in a back-and-forth battle for victory. The two had a very low scoring game against each other. With only three scores throughout the entire game.

It opened with the Broncos backup quarterback Jarret Stidham passing to Courtland Sutton to get the touchdown. Wil Lutz scored the extra point, which brought the score to 7-0 in the first quarter.

In the second period Drake Maye rushed six yards for a touchdown. Followed by Andres Borregales making his extra point which made the game a tie game



at 7-7.

In the third quarter Borregales is given an attempt to bring his team in the lead with a field goal. The kick was good and brought the Patriots to a score of 10. This was the last goal of the game.

The Patriots won the game 10-7. Which made the Patriots the AFC championship winners, locking them in as the first announced team for the Super Bowl.

In the NFC Championship game was a lot more eventful than the AFC.

The Los Angeles Rams and the Seattle Seahawks game started off with the Seahawks making the first movement of the game. Kenneth Walker III scored a touchdown and was followed by Jason Myers making the extra point.

Harrison Mevis made a 44-yard field goal for the Rams

bringing the game to 7-3, unfortunately the plan of going into the second period with that being the last score for the first did not happen.

Myers made a 27-yard field goal bringing the score to 10-3 in favor of the Seahawks.

In the second quarter Mevis scored another field goal, bringing the game to 10-6.

His field goal was followed by

Kyren Williams making a touchdown and Mevis making the extra point. This brought the game to 10-13.

After that the Seahawks needed some more action.

Jaxon Smith-Njigba scored a touchdown, and Meyers scored the extra point, bringing the game to 17-13.

In the third quarter, Jake Bobo scored a touchdown, and Myers scored the extra point, making it 24-13.

Davante Adams and the Rams weren't done yet, however, as Adams makes a touchdown, and Mevis made the extra point, bringing the game to 24-20.

Cooper Kupp scored a touchdown and Myers' extra point was good making the game 31-20.

Puca Nacua made a touchdown and Mevis kick was good, bringing the game to 31-27. The Seahawks walked away with victory.

So, Super Bowl 2026 will be the Patriots vs Seahawks. The game's halftime performance will be Bad Bunny. Bad Bunny will have Greenday out for part of it.

Markiplier plans a blood drive

By **JESSICA SCHIEBER**
Editor-in-Chief

The famous YouTuber Markiplier is creating a movie that is set to release Jan 31.

This movie is a Sci-fi horror movie "Iron Lung" to promote this movie he is hosting a massive blood drive. This will happen during the premiere weekend of his movie.

This is to help boost blood supplies and he is targeting a potential world record.

Markiplier is hoping to break the record of most blood donations in a single day.

"Iron Lung" is set to release on Jan. 30 and is an adaptation of the hit indie horror game of the same name.

According to Virginia Glaze in Dexerto blood is a central facet of both the game and the film. Markiplier surmises that he may have broken the world record for most fake blood ever used in a movie, boasting that he needed over 80,000 gallons of the stuff during production.

Certain theaters showing "Iron Lung" across the United States are holding blood drives to help ease the current blood shortage and break another world record for a good cause.

The Red Cross has reported a severe blood shortage with a 35% decrease in supply as hospital demand has skyrocketed this January.

The Intense winter weather combined with seasonal illnesses have put a significant strain on the system.

Markiplier is aiming to ease

this shortage with the blood drives around the theaters.

The current number of blood donations given in a single day is at 37,018 donations.

To donate for the blood drive viewers will have to be at least 16 years old and 110-135 pounds depending on local requirements.

You will also have to bring your ID and stay hydrated before donating.

Donors must stay healthy at the time of donating and be thoroughly nourished.

You do not have to be watching the movie to go and donate to the cause, but it is recommended to donate prior to sitting down in the theater if you plan to watch.

Markiplier is not only known for his status as an internet star but also for using his fame in a positive manner.

He and his fans have donated thousands of dollars to nonprofit organizations.

Ironlung.com has a list of all participating theaters.

This website also give the general requirements of donating and there is an eligibility review.

For those who are 16 and looking to donate you will need to have a parents permission to do so.

Markiplier is 36 years old and his legal name is Mark Edward Fischbach.

He became well known for his "Let's play" video he created on YouTube which often featured indie horror games, something he has no shortage of knowledge and passion about.

Markiplier has also created a clothing brand called Cloak.

According to IndieWire more

than 2,500 screens and shows are already sold out.

Markiplier has self-distributed the movie and has made no paid marketing campaign for it.

Markiplier has about 38 million YouTube subscribers and has been building his audience for over a decade.

He has made large-scale interactive series for YouTube Originals and he writes, directs, edits, produces, finances and stars in much of his own work.

Markiplier has been moving toward longer-form storytelling for years.

His audience didn't show up for "Iron Lung" because he just decided to ask them to, but because they have watched him grow for more than a decade.

Markiplier had approached the game's creator, David Szymanski, and shortly after that he began to develop "Iron Lung" in the latter half of 2022.

It was a 35 day SAG low-budget shoot in spring of 2023. The rather large gap between post-production and debut is because Markiplier did almost everything by himself.

"I don't think that I made it any more efficient," Markiplier said to Indie Wire. "The skills I've built in the past few years of doing this dwarfed the entirety of my time on YouTube."

Markiplier said that he has sold to his audience before and he knew that he could get people to show up.

Markiplier made the announcement of the movie on his YouTube channel and the fans will do the rest. He knows what his fans are capable of.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Characters can be more than looks

By KEVIN KAUMANS
Entertainment Editor

I feel like our society is more focused on a character's physical appearance than how real they feel. Every time I get on the internet, I see posts of people thirsting amorously over some fictional person from the most recent media. Oh sure, it's slightly different every time; Sometimes it is a woman, sometimes it is a man, sometimes it is an alien, monster, or even an anthropomorphic animal. In the most absurd corners of the internet, the object of desire is not even a humanoid.

Granted, there is nothing wrong (to an extent) with someone having a crush on a character.

However, my issue is, when it comes to the interior at least, other more interesting things about a character that often get over-

looked. We live in a world where hypersexuality has become the norm.

Pornography has been easier to access than ever. It has gotten to the point where children can quickly find themselves exposed to content they should in no way be looking at. Because of this, we see online videos and articles of men talking about how they became addicted to porn to as young as elementary school.

Some of you reading this may be scratching your heads at what it is I am writing. What could these social ramblings of a college student have to do with social media's indulgence of attractive characters? My point is this: because our society is so hypersexualized, consumers nowadays seem to only care about a character's looks and nothing else.

Because of this, I worry that future show creators and video game designers will start making all their characters look

as attractive as possible and assume that they do not need to add anything else to make them interesting. This is simply not true.

You can have a character that can both serve as eye candy to the audience and be complex. Recently, during Christmas break, I got this new game called "Dispatch". The game's extremely popular and has even been making its own rounds on the internet for its alluring characters, one of the biggest being Blonde Blazer.

But here's the thing: While she is set up to be one of the main love interests, the game writers make sure that there is more to her than her looks. See, Blonde Blazer's powers are given to her by this amulet that she wears around her neck. The problem with this is that the amulet also changes how she looks, making her feel like no one will really want to know "the real her".

On top of that, Blonde Blazer's per-

sonality is just as complex as her internal struggle. When she is at work, her attitude is more or less professional. Yet, when the player gets to see her outside of work, we see that not only is she laid back, but also soft-spoken and even funny at times. This shows the audience how she is more than a one-note character.

Another interesting part of Blonde Blazer's character is her romantic life; Before the events of the game take place, she's in a relationship with one of the strongest heroes in the world. From a first glance, they seem to have a good relationship. Once they break up, however, the player can choose to romance her. When they do, they find out that her breakup was caused by her feeling like he did not love her real self.

I doubt any big studio would listen to me. Still, I need to get this out somewhere. I fear that bottling up my inner thoughts will lead me to insanity.

Oklahoma Cider

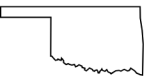
I love you dear,
Let us go to the panhandle.
I'll teach you to drink.

Please come here.
I can wait for you no longer.
I spit my bile into the sink.

Don't tell me I need help,
I don't need no pity.
Cross my stone heart.

Where are you love?
Don't be scared, it's still me.
Let us go to the panhandle.

-Kevin Kaumans



Trails

One trail leads me on
my way
The other leads me a
path astray
To which I travel is up
to me
But the trails cry out
"Please take me."
When one trail is clear
So seems the choice
But do I answer to the
the other's voice?
For is the illusion the
trail so clear?
But the path covered
never truly disappears.

-Jessica Schieber

'Mercy' receives mixed reviews from critics

IMDb: 6.1/10
Rotten Tomatoes: 23%
Metacritic: 37%

Reviews:
"Chris Pratt did a good job portraying the cop in trouble. The story itself couldn't keep it afloat for the whole movie. As a procedural that kept you on the edge of your seat, it was really good. As an AI evolution, it was tough to convince me the AI developed feelings or glitched when it did. Others might buy this, I didn't. The ending, the last line, was the most difficult to swallow."

-Steven J (Rotten Tomatoes).
"Overall good action movie. Of course with AI there were a few things that may not make sense, but overall a good movie and kept the audience involved in the story. Made it easy to root for the character and feel the tension he was feeling. I saw the bad critic reviews in advance and was glad I ignored them."

-M.S. (Rotten Tomatoes)
I went into this movie knowing nothing about it. By random coincidence, I rewatched Minority Report (8 stars) exactly a week ago.

And while Mercy doesn't predict the future, there are so many similarities.

A futuristic sci-fi movie with some yummy sci-fi candy, in which we question the moral authority of a supposedly infallible



few plot twists (a lot of them were predictable though), as well as decent character development)

It wasn't the best movie but for 2026 is ain't that bad. One thing about the movie that confused me though is who was the guy with the daughter in the videos? Didn't contribute to the story at all."

-SeadogNZ

legal system, in which the biggest name enforcing that system is now under investigation by said system.

Having said all that, I didn't mind this movie. It's definitely of significantly lower quality than Minority Report, but I was somewhat entertained.

At first it looked like it was headed for a negative rating, but it ramps up nicely with continued escalation to a climax.

I doubt it's something I rewatch, but I've seen much worse."

-Feastmode (IMDb).
"I don't really understand why this movie is so low rated, it was very intense and had a good

(IMDb).

"It's ingenious and watchable stuff, with cheeky twists, although the final escalation to full-on action mayhem is maybe a step too far towards pure absurdity.

The film is also a bit lenient on AI: "Human or AI - we all make mistakes." Uh ... yeah. But I wouldn't be surprised if Raven and Judge Maddox revive their human-digital chemistry for a sequel."


-The Guardian (Metacritic).
"Mercy" is currently being shown at Rialto Cinema nightly.

The showing is at 7 PM if anyone has interest in going and seeing it.

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"I shall hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppled masonry, and time on livid final flame.

-James Joyce

NEWS

What are student gamers into these days?

By **KENNEDY MCGEE**
Student Reporter

A couple of games are catching players' attention, led by new releases and a franchise that returned, mix of nostalgia, competition and updated gameplay.

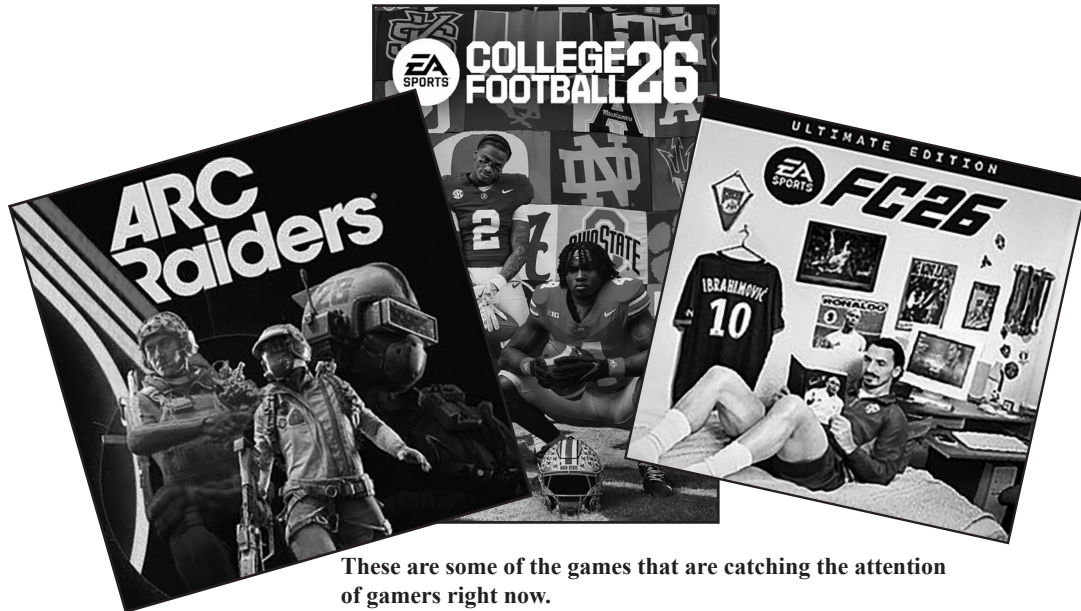
Gamers on campus cited Arc Raiders, College Football 26, FC 26 and Madden as the most popular titles right now, pointing to innovation, community feedback and revived classic series as major reasons for their success.

Arc Raiders has quickly climbed to the top right now, mainly because of its unpredictable multiplayer gameplay.

Easton Hamar said the game stands out because of its fresh concept and the way you interact with other players.

"Teaming up with random people not knowing whether or not they are going to be friendly or stab you in the back makes the game very exciting," Hamar said.

He added that the game has



These are some of the games that are catching the attention of gamers right now.

minor bugs, but they aren't affecting gameplay, and the developers have also been responsive to the community's

Kane Hendricks compared Arc Raiders to the early days of Fortnite, when the game's popularity exploded due to its originality.

Hendricks said the main issue is loading into matches that have already started, which disrupts gameplay flow.

Another major title drawing attention is College Football 26, a revival of a long-dormant franchise.

Camden Broyles said the game's popularity comes from its connection to a widely loved sport and the return of a series many players grew up with.

"It brings a combo of nostalgia and surprising depth," Broyles said, especially in dynasty mode.

He added that designers could improve catch animations, loosen gameplay and expand features in Road to Glory mode.

Sports franchises remain a strong presence overall. Kaedric Cobbs said FC 26, Madden and Arc Raiders are among the most played games right now.

Cobbs said FC 26 has been well received because developers listened to player feedback and made clubs more customizable, though gameplay realism could be improved.

Madden has also seen renewed interest, largely due to improvements in franchise mode. Cobbs said the developers focused more on long-term team building after listening to fans but noted the game relies too heavily on animations. He said a shift toward physics-based gameplay would help with realism in the game.

With a mix of evolving, nostalgia and community-driven updates, these games continue to shape what players are spending their time on.

County to honor local rodeo people

Primp for Prom seeking donations for annual event

By **CORKY HALL**
Senior Reporter

Woods County commissioners will honor four rodeo world champions with ties to Woods County during a public ceremony at 10 a.m. Monday, Feb. 2, at the Woods County Courthouse.

The honorees include Taylor Munsell of Alva, the 2025 Women's Professional Rodeo Association breakaway roping world champion; Jacob Edler of Alva, the 2020 Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association steer wrestling world champion; Kari Nixon of Freedom, a two-time PRCA tie-down roping world champion in 2015 and 2021; and Michele Green Mackey, Miss Rodeo America 1994.

The recognition was proposed by Commissioner Shane Vore, who said the goal is to acknowledge individuals who have competed and succeeded at the highest levels of rodeo.

"When a basketball team or a football team wins a national championship, the whole town celebrates," Vore said. "In rodeo, these athletes are competing on a world stage. Outside of the Olympics, there aren't many sports



Photo provided by Kristen Schurr Photography

Michele Mackey, left, and Taylor Munsell, performing at a rodeo, are among the local rodeo personalities that will be honored next week by the Woods County Commissioners.

where you can truly be the best in the world."

Championship memorabilia, including saddles and buckles, will be displayed inside the courthouse Monday through Friday during regular courthouse hours.

Munsell, who moved to Alva in 2015 to attend Northwestern Oklahoma State University, said the recognition reflects years of local support.

"Alva's been such a great community for me," Munsell said. "There's a ton of local sponsors and people that have supported me."

Mackey, Miss Rodeo Wyoming before winning the Miss Rodeo America title, said the level of achievement represented is significant.

"I don't take it lightly at all, because I know the road it takes to achieve at that level," Mackey said.

This was Munsell's fifth time qualifying for the National Finals Breakaway Roping. Mackey owns Turquoise Creek in Alva, Edler owns H&E Tire, and Nixon continues to compete professionally.

Vore said the commission-

ers are encouraging community members to contact them with names of other Woods County residents who may be eligible for future recognition.

The ceremony will take place during the regularly scheduled commissioners meeting. The public is encouraged to attend.

More than 350 formal dresses in all sizes, styles and colors will await high school students from the northwest tristate area at the 12th annual "Primp for Prom" event sponsored by Northwestern Oklahoma State University's Department of Social Work and Woodward High School. Donations are still being accepted.

Primp for Prom is an annual spring event held in Woodward for area high school students to pick out a formal dress and accessories at no charge. The event will be at the Woodward High School practice gym, located at 13th Street and Downs Avenue in Woodward, on March 12, 1-7 p.m. March 13, 10 a.m. to noon.

The sponsors are still actively seeking formal dresses, shoes and jewelry donations. Donations may be dropped off at the social work offices at the Alva and Enid campus locations.

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SPORTS

Rangers roll over Dawggs

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**
Sports Editor

The men's basketball team defeated the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Bulldogs in a close game, ending in a 73-80 victory for Northwestern in the rivalry game.

The Rangers faced the Bulldogs on January 22 in a home game that was important to the Rangers' playoff hunt. The Rangers entered the game 7-9 in a tight battle with Arkansas Tech and Henderson State for the number five spot in the Great American Conference standings. The stands were filled in Percefull Fieldhouse for whiteout night.

The Bulldogs had a good start, earning five points before the Rangers were able to respond. After a foul from SWOSU, Keyondre Young scored the Rangers' first points with two free throws. After closing the Bulldogs' lead,



Photo by Oaklee Fielder

No. One, G Max Alexander, moves in the offensive zone facing a Southwestern Oklahoma State player at home.

the Rangers took the lead by one. Then, the Rangers went on a run

to extend their lead to double digits.

The Rangers were up by 10 with three minutes left in the half, but the Bulldogs scored two layups to make it a six-point game.

The start of the second half was quick; the Bulldogs scored a layup, which was responded to by one from NWOSU's Robbie Armbruster. Then, Southwestern hit another layup to make it a four-point game.

A three-pointer from Max Alexander extended the Rangers' lead, and then there were three points from Kenny Burns III to make it an eight-point game. Then the two teams battled hard. The Bulldogs would attempt to reel the Rangers in, but the Rangers wouldn't let Southwestern get too close.

In the late stages of the game,

the Rangers were only up by five. After a foul on Northwestern, the Bulldogs hit two free throws to make it a three-point game. Justin Norris hit a shot in the paint and gave the Rangers a two-possession lead with just 23 seconds left in the game. Southwestern attempted two three-pointers, but missed on both shots. They then attempted to purposely foul the Rangers, but there was not enough time for a comeback.

Norris hit two free throws and gave the Rangers a 7-point lead with four seconds left. The Bulldogs attempted another shot, but it was worth nothing, and the Rangers defeated the Bulldogs.

Armbruster was awarded the GAC Defensive Player of the Week for his performance against SWOSU. He had nine defensive rebounds, one offensive rebound, a steal and one blocked

shot. Armbruster scored 10 points against the Bulldogs and has 7.2 rebounds per game, the third-best in the conference. Alexander was nominated for a player of the week but was not selected.

Alexander made eight field goals, two three-pointers and seven free throws against SWOSU. Norris didn't miss a single shot against the Bulldogs, going 4-4 on field goals, 2-2 on three pointer and 2-2 on free throws. Armbruster, Burns III and Dirin Birhiray all recorded one block. Armbruster, Young, and Cam'ron Brown had one steal to their names.

Alexander currently leads the conference in scoring. He has 378 points scored with the most free throws and field goals with 117 and 120. Armbruster is 10th in the conference in scoring with a total of 208 points scored. Armbruster has 101 field goals scored but only just two three-pointers and four free throws. Armbruster is 3rd in the conference in field goal percentage. He's made 101 of the 150 shots he's attempted, giving him a .673 field goal percentage.

Brown is fourth in the conference in assists. Brown has a total of 62 assists throughout the season and an average of 3.6 per game.

The next game for the Rangers is on Thursday against Harding University. Then, they will face Arkansas Tech at home on Saturday. Harding had an overall record of 12-5 and sits in the 3rd position in the GAC standings. Arkansas Tech sits just one spot under the Rangers in the standings as they have the same conference record, but the Arkansas Tech have one more overall loss than NWOSU. NWOSU lost in the last meetings with both teams.



Photo by Oaklee Fielder

Alexander shoots for a three pointer in the closing stages of the game against Southwestern Oklahoma State.

A look into the 2026 season for Lady Ranger softball

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**
Sports Editor

The Lady Ranger softball

season is preparing to start on Friday as they travel to Branson, Missouri, to face five teams, including the University of Central Oklahoma.

The Lady Rangers head into the 2026 season hoping for a better season than years past. They were voted 12th out of twelve in the preseason coaches' poll.

Northwestern has not had a winning softball season in 11 years. A change in coaching staff may be the start of the change they are looking for.

Efrain Barraza was hired as Northwestern's new softball coach in August. Barraza was an assistant coach for Northwestern in 2022. He spent some time coaching Alva High School's baseball team as an assistant coach.

Barraza has history playing softball. He won state and national tournaments for softball clubs. He also played in the International Softball Congress World Tournaments. Barraza played shortstop for NWOSU's baseball team

from 2003 to 2005.

The Lady Rangers have eight returning players for the 2026 season including Makanalei Lopera, Madelyn Cason and Kaitlyn Corn. The Lady Rangers went 14-36 in 2025 with an 8-25 conference record and finished the season in last place in the standings.

We have seen that coaching changes can turn around a program at NWOSU with the soccer team. They had a losing and a statistically bad year in 2024, but in 2025, they turned it around and made the GAC playoffs. There is no doubt hope for the Lady Rangers' 2026 campaign; the only question is, can they turn it around?

The Lady Rangers will play one game on Friday, two on Saturday and two on Sunday. They face known opponents Newman University on Saturday and UCO on Sunday.



Barraza

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SPORTS

Ladies put down the Dawgs

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**
Sports Editor

The Lady Rangers defeated the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Bulldogs 69-56 on Thursday in the home rivalry game at Percefull Fieldhouse.

The nationally ranked number 25 Lady Rangers entered the game 13-3 overall, looking for another win to boost their ranking. They sat 2nd in the Great American Conference standings, just under Arkansas Tech University, who they play next on their schedule after Southwestern and Harding.

The Bulldogs started in the lead, scoring a tip-in and a layup. NWOSU responded with a three-pointer from Catyn Graham. Conley Cayot then shot a field goal, followed by a three-pointer from Kennedy Hight. SWOSU responded by going on a run and taking the lead by six. The Lady Rangers battled back and were able to take the lead right back. At the end of the quarter, Hight hit a buzzer-beating three-pointer to give Northwestern the lead by four.

After the boost in momentum, the Lady Rangers went on a run to earn themselves a lead of 14. The Bulldogs responded with a three-pointer, but it was taken back as the Lady Rangers got their lead right back and then extended it to 16 with three minutes left in the half. Before the half ended, the Bulldogs cut the Lady Rangers' lead to 11.

The two teams were dead even throughout the third quarter. Every time the Bulldogs would cut the Lady Rangers' lead, Northwestern would fight right back and get it right back. Towards the end of the quarter, the Bulldogs got the Lady Rangers' lead into the single digits, but Northwestern fought back and ended the quarter up by 10.



Photo by Oaklee Fielder

No. 3, G Kennedy Hight, a Sophomore from Perry, shoots in the Thursday night game against Southwestern. Hight led the team in three-pointers.

In the fourth quarter, the Bulldogs were aggressive and battled hard. They were able to make it a two-possession game with just over halfway until the game ended. Although the Bulldogs were the more aggressive team to start the quarter, the Lady Rangers didn't give up, and they held onto their lead, never getting within touching distance of Southwestern. They avoided the Bulldogs' attempt at the hack-a-Shaq, a tactic of purposely fouling to manage time and lower the opponents' scoring chances.

After defeating the Bulldogs,

the Lady Rangers jumped up a spot in the national rankings and are now ranked number 24 in the country in division two play.

Kira Bass and Cayot both made six field goals throughout the night. Bass made eight free throws and had a total of 20 points against the Bulldogs. Bass also had the most blocks with four. Hight and Summya Adigun had the most steals with three apiece. Graham had the most three-pointers out of the Lady Rangers with three.

The Lady Rangers sit second in the GAC standings, underneath

Arkansas Tech and above Harding University. The Golden Suns and the Lady Rangers have the same conference record, but Arkansas Tech has the best overall win percentage, so they sit at the top.

Northwestern currently has the best defense in the game, averaging only 54.4 points against them a game. They are also one of the cleanest teams in the conference, only having 249 free throws attempted against them.

Bass is third in scoring leaders in the conference; she has a total of 318 points scored and an aver-

age of 18.7 points per game.

According to the Great American Conference, Northwestern has the largest attendance out of the whole conference, with an average of 733 people attending home games, which is almost 300 more than any other team.

Their next games are against Harding University on Thursday, and then they face Arkansas Tech University on Saturday. Both games will be at home, and both will be incredibly important at the end of the season when it comes time to decide the seeding for the GAC playoffs.

Looking forward to the 2026 season for Ranger baseball

By **MEGAN SPRAY**
Senior Reporter

Northwestern baseball opens its season this week as the Rangers prepare to compete in the Great American Conference with a young and hungry roster.

The Rangers are coming off a season filled with growth and challenges. The team showed resilience throughout the year while facing injuries, roster adjustments and the grind of conference play. Northwestern went 30-22 on the season and 17-16 in conference play last year. The team finished the season as the seventh seed in the Great American Conference (GAC) tournament and graduated

22 senior athletes.

However, this season the Rangers return significant experience on the mound. Head coach Ryan Bowen said several pitchers are in position to take the next step after a productive offseason. "I'm super excited to see all of those guys as they make jumps," he said. "We have a lot of really talented pitchers that have the chance to have big years, and I really want them to have big years." Offensively, Northwestern features a new look. The team is very versatile offensively, being aggressive at the plate and quick to steal bases.

Bowen said the team's athleticism stands out. "I've been coaching since 2009 and it's the

most athletic team I've ever had as far as guys being able to run," he said.

Part of the preseason focused on building chemistry with a roster full of new faces. It took some time to adjust to the growing pains, but over time the team began to mesh.

Newcomer Cole Barton from Justin, Texas is in his junior year looking to play infield for the Rangers this season. Barton said the preseason helped establish confidence and connection. "We had a really good fall," he said. "We learned a lot about our club. We have a lot of new guys, so seeing everyone's strengths on the field was really fun."

Having a team identity helps

differentiate between other competition and makes an immediate impression before the game even starts. Ranger baseball's identity centers on effort and grit.

Bowen described the program as having a blue-collar approach, while Barton said the Rangers have a scrappy style.

"We're going to go out there every day and give you a run for your money," he said. "We're going to hit singles, we're going to steal bases, we're going to play good defense and we're going to put all of our heart out there."

Chase Gordon is a junior from Bristow returning for this third year as a catcher for the Rangers, and he said the environment and community support set North-

western baseball apart. "It's an exciting atmosphere," he said. "Everyone is pumped up and always ready to go. It really gives that community feel."

Following the Rangers this season is their strong, blue-collar approach and their competitive drive for success. Bowen said the goals for this season are to be more consistent, play better on the road and have more success over the top teams in the league.

Northwestern opens the season on the road with a four-game series at Colorado Christian University in Lakewood, Colorado. First pitch is scheduled for Friday at 2:00 PM, as the Rangers look to set the tone early in the pursuit of a successful 2026 season.