

Women's golf back on course

Scintillating Schmidt breaks program record

BRAD BREWER
SPORTS EDITOR

While football and soccer have begun their seasons already, before even kickoff at the Liberty Bowl in Memphis a couple of weekends ago, the Arkansas State women's golf team had already tee'd off its season in Mobile, Ala. for the USA Intercollegiate tournament on September 5-7.

Record breaker

The big story of the weekend was junior Olivia Schmidt, who broke A-State's school record for the lowest single-round score with a seven under-par 65. Schmidt felt comfortable on the Robert Trent Jones' Magnolia Grove Crossings Course, but had no idea she would pull out such a sensational round.

"I've played there two years in a row. I like the course," Schmidt said. "It's really nice and my freshman year, my teammate Grayson Gladden shot a 67, so it's a course that is very scorable. I played pretty good the first couple of days but none of my putts were really dropping. But on the last day, they just fell and that's all I can say. It was kind of a blur. It was amazing and really cool to have my parents there and everyone supporting me. I knew I could shoot well, but I didn't think I could go that low so that was pretty cool."

Red Wolves head coach M.J. Desbiens Shaw has always known Schmidt is a special player and has

potential for great things, but even she didn't expect such results this soon and on this level.

"With golf, you never know," Shaw said. "We knew that Olivia is an exceptional player with the tournaments and the hard work she's put in this summer. We knew at some point this great round and great tournament would be put together and it just so happened to be at the first event. We couldn't be more excited. But with the numbers she's put forward in qualifying and the preparation she put in before leaving this summer, I knew something would definitely pan out for her. But I sure didn't think it would be a 65."

Even though Schmidt had already broken the school record by two strokes, Shaw knows there was and is more left on the table.

"What was so fun about it is that she probably could've birdied two more in the last five holes, but that's how golf goes," Shaw said. "As a golfer it's never enough. But I tell you what, 65 is a wonderful round."

Team depth

Schmidt finished ten positions ahead of her next teammate, sophomore Sydney Leung. The Plano, Texas native shot six strokes behind Schmidt over the weekend: finishing three over-par and in 13th position. The Red Wolves as a team finished fifth out of seven teams.

"As a squad of eight, it's



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE ATHLETICS

Junior Olivia Schmidt had a record breaking weekend at the USA Intercollegiate, shooting seven under-par 65 in the final round

amazing the depth that we have," Shaw said. "That's what is really promising is for coaches. You know you have more than just five that are traveling. The three that are staying home are just as good as the ones traveling, but just didn't post as good of numbers during qualifying which we do prior to every tournament. Someone like Sydney, it was amazing how she came out and put in three really consistent rounds on the board. As far as the rest of the team, it's amazing

because everyone can put up a number just like that."

To the future

Looking ahead to the rest of the season, the Red Wolves have two more tournaments left in the season, including one stacked with competition in the Schooner Fall Classic in Norman, Okla.

"Oklahoma will be the strongest field that we play this year," Shaw said. "I didn't really do my homework as far as how many teams in the top-50 will be at that tournament but I'm pretty

sure all of them are. Talking about opportunities, this is a huge chance for us to go out there and play golf the way we know how and see how the results come out. For the five travelling, I know how excited they will be to compete against the best teams in the nation."

The tournament at the University of Oklahoma will also be a homecoming of sorts for the new single-round record holder Schmidt, who was raised in Oklahoma City and has plenty of experience

at the Belmar Golf Club.

"I'm from Oklahoma City so I've played that golf course a lot," Shaw said. "My teammate actually works there so she knows it better than I do. I am really excited to go to Oklahoma and play in front of my friends and family. It'll almost be like a second home tournament. It's going to be a really good field. We are playing a lot of Big 12 teams and so far the Sun Belt has been wrecking them in football so it's about time that golf does."

Central Arkansas v Arkansas State football delayed

Game is rescheduled for Oct. 10 in Jonesboro

BRAD BREWER
SPORTS EDITOR

COVID-19 strikes its second blow towards Arkansas State athletics, as yet another in-state match-up between A-State and the Central Arkansas Bears has been put on hold. This time it is football.

The Arkansas State athletic department announced the news yesterday afternoon, citing that the Red Wolves football team did not have enough available players to form a two-deep depth chart for Saturday's postponed contest.

This news couldn't have come at a more inopportune time for A-State after stunning the nation last Saturday by upsetting the Big 12's Kansas State Wildcats 35-31 on FOX's Big Noon game.

A-State athletic director Terry Mohajir confirms the disappointed of both himself and the team, but breaks the news that the game will still take place on Oct. 10 at Centennial Bank Stadium.

"We are obviously disappointed for the student-athletes participating from both schools, as well as both coaching staffs and fan bases," Mohajir said in a press release. "We are excited that we've rescheduled this game to be played at Centennial Bank Stadium on Oct. 10."

Mohajir indicated that the team is confident and committed to continuing the season by looking ahead to the Red Wolves' next game against Tulsa.

"While no one wanted this outcome, the health and safety of our student athletes will always come first," Mohajir said. "We will remain diligent in our health and safety protocols, and we look forward to resuming our 2020 schedule next weekend against Tulsa."

The total number of COVID-19 cases on the team was not disclosed, but the press release addressed that it wasn't the number of cases on the team that caused the delay, but a specific position that was specifically affected. Mohajir confirmed that the delay is directly due to COVID-19 to the Arkansas Democrat Gazette's George Stoa.

"The virus is frustrating," Mohajir said, "What else can I say?"

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Opinion: Don't Get Cute

Questionable decisions could derail A-State's season

ALEX GALBRAITH

SPORTS WRITER

There is an old saying in football that if you have two quarterbacks, you have none at all. That is certainly the case for the Arkansas State football team right now. Entering week three of the season, fresh off a stunning 35-31 upset at Kansas State, the Red Wolves still have not settled on a starting quarterback. Logan Bonner and Layne Hatcher have both had their highs and lows. Bonner has thrown for 337 yards, three touchdowns, and three interceptions, while Hatcher has thrown for 227 yards, two touchdowns, and zero interceptions.

It is difficult for an offense to build chemistry with two quarterbacks constantly rotating not just for every game, but for practically every drive. The inconsistency, while it hasn't caught up with the Red Wolves yet, just does not make any sense. A good example of this is Logan Bonner taking the majority of the snaps against Kansas State, but Layne Hatcher being the one sent out for the final drive with under three minutes remaining and the Red Wolves trailing 31-28. Luckily, Hatcher hit Jonathan Adams for a game winning touchdown with 38 seconds remaining. His

final stat line, though, was just six for eight, 61 yards, and two touchdowns.

Arkansas State may be trying something similar to what they did in the 2016 season. Head coach Blake Anderson did not settle on a starting quarterback until week five of the season, which also happened to be the start of Sun Belt Conference play. Chad Voytik started at quarterback for the first two games, Justice Hansen started the next two games, and Arkansas State started the season 0-4 including a 28-23 loss to UCA. The Red Wolves went on to win eight of their final nine games, including a bowl win over UCF, once Hansen was named the full-time starter. A-State is off to a better start than they had in 2016, and a solid start can once again result in a strong finish if they just quit the nonsense and settle on a starter.

While A-State's win last week was nothing short of impressive, the play calling still remains to be an issue. The Kansas State game was the second game where Anderson called for an early onside kick that ultimately failed. The onside kick against Memphis came with the Red Wolves down 21-17 with 11:03 left in the third quarter. The short field allowed Memphis to score quickly and take a 10-point lead, one that A-State



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE ATHLETICS

Senior Jonathon Adams was the major actor in Saturday's victory with 8 catches, 98 yards and three touchdowns.

was never able to overcome. The onside kick against Kansas State came with A-State trailing 21-14 with 6:50 left in the second quarter. Luckily, Kansas State's drive, which began on the A-State 44-yard line, resulted in a missed field goal. A touchdown on that drive could have ended the game right then and there. Trying to catch your opponent by surprise is one thing. Learning from your mistakes is another. Additionally, when it comes to play calling, Mississippi State head coach Mike Leach once said, "There is nothing balanced about the 50 percent run, 50 percent pass because

that's 50 percent stupid." That is not a surprising quote coming from the master of the Air Raid offense, but it is something that A-State should consider. The Red Wolves are most effective when they throw the ball. Every now and then they create a few big run plays, but passing is the strength of this team. They do have two capable quarterbacks after all. However, the Red Wolves try to remain as balanced as possible. Against Memphis they threw the ball 43 times and rushed 36 times. Against Kansas State, they threw the ball 38 times and rushed 33 times. So far this season A-State is

averaging 314.5 passing yards per game and 142 rushing yards per game. The numbers speak for themselves. This problem has gone on for years under Blake Anderson and has been costly in some key games. The most recent would be last year's pivotal home game against Louisiana. The Red Wolves, with Hatcher at quarterback and wide receivers Omar Bayless and Kirk Merritt, were moving the ball with ease through the air. That included quick touchdown drives of both 95 yards and 85 yards. For some reason, though, the Red Wolves continued to run the ball even though it was

ineffective and even though they trailed Louisiana late in the game. A-State finished the game averaging just 3.5 yards per carry on 49 rushing attempts, and were handed an embarrassing 17-point home loss. In football, a team has to shake things up a little bit. Maybe that means trying out two quarterbacks. Maybe that means trying to stay balanced offensively. Eventually, though, something will start to work. And when it does, don't try to get cute. Stick with what is working.

Soccer looks ahead after opening shutout victory

KRISHNAN COLLINS

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The Arkansas State soccer team hosts the University of Louisiana Monroe Sunday to kick off Sun Belt Conference play as the Red Wolves return home after taking down in-state rival Central Arkansas 2-0.

A-State opened its season on Sept. 13 at UCA and despite a rusty looking first half, the Red Wolves pulled away in the second half of the match.

The Bears played one game previously before taking on A-State, so they looked more comfortable on the ball in the first half compared to a Red Wolves team that was playing in its first match of the season.

With the Bears accustomed to game tempo and a young starting back line for the Red Wolves, it took A-State some time to adjust.

"Obviously we were concerned," A-State head soccer coach Brian Dooley said. "It was slow. There was no tempo. In all of our training up to that point we had been playing at a really high rate of speed. We weren't expecting that ... A little bit of nerves, a little bit of spacing issues, grass was a little bit thicker than what we play on. A lot of little things that can contribute to that but I think it's one of the things that we addressed at half time."

Freshman center back

Rachel Kutella looked very calm and well beyond her years in the back line. The Illinois native played the ball out with ease as well as making stellar tackles throughout the match.

"We have a lot of confidence in Rachel," Dooley said. "She's played at a very high level within the club structure. She's come in from the beginning with strong leadership skills for a freshman. As a center back you need to have that assertive mentality. I think she's going to get better and be able to play more quickly. I think she'll gain even more confidence."

Freshmen Lauren Shah

and Hailey Cloud also started in the back line for A-State in a successful debut for the Red Wolves, while freshman Darby Stotts showed great energy in the match Dooley said.

Senior Sarah Sodoma wreaked havoc on the Bears' back line throughout the match as the Preseason SBC Offensive Player of the Year constantly used her pace and dribbling ability to outrun and outmaneuver the retreating UCA defenders.

During A-State's slow first half start, Sodoma beat three UCA defenders and cut in on her left foot before firing a shot forcing the UCA keeper into a diving save.

"Sarah's one of the more unique players I've had the pleasure to coach, the opportunity to coach," Dooley said. "Sarah will try to score, Sarah doesn't need to score. She does whatever her team needs her to do. She'll track back 60 yards to track a defender. She'll make those runs that just shred defenses and then a slot a ball across for someone to finish. She doesn't have to be the one to score. That allows her to play with a little bit more freedom."

The breakthrough came in the 70th minute when Sodoma blew by the Bears' defense and smartly won a corner kick for the Red

Wolves. Junior outside back Haley Husted took an inswinging corner that eventually hit the hand of a UCA player in the box.

Experienced senior holding midfielder Victoria MacIntosh stepped up to the penalty spot and tucked away a cool finish to put A-State ahead 1-0.

The Red Wolves played with even more confidence after the goal and senior Hailey Furio extended the Red Wolves lead to 2-0 in the 79th minute after a mistake in the back by UCA.

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