

# Pack Day addition: A-State to hold a free youth football clinic



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

An A-State player with a child during the 2023 Pack Day.

**ANNA COX**

**SPORTS EDITOR**

Players in the Arkansas State University football team are scheduled to host a free youth clinic on Pack Day, prior to their kickoff.

Pack Day will be hosted Saturday. Tailgating is encouraged at the south side of the Halsey thrasher Harpole Tailgate City.

The clinic will be hosted in Centennial Bank Stadium, with head coach Butch Jones

leading. Parents can register their children online at [ArkansasStateFootballCamps.com](https://www.arkansasstatefootballcamps.com), their child needs to be in grades 1-8.

Apart from the clinic, other events will be held as well, including an autograph signing with former A-State football players J.D. McKissic and Blake Grupe.

McKissic is currently a free agent but has played for the Atlanta Falcons, Seattle Seahawks, Detroit Lions and Washington Commanders.

During his time at A-State McKissic set the record for most career receptions in the Sun Belt Conference with 289.

Grupe is currently signed to the New Orleans Saints and during his career at A-State was second in the SBC for points by kicks and 13th nationally.

If students attend the games, they have a chance to scan a QR code for the chance to win prizes for the 24-25 season. To do this, they will need to scan through the A-State App.

In addition to the game,

team awards, the Larry Lacey MVP and Withrow Awards will be presented at the game.

The schedule for Pack Day is as follows:

- Track and Field: 9:30 a.m. running events, 10:30 a.m. field events
- Tennis: 10 a.m. vs Southern Mississippi, Senior Day
- Football: 1:15 p.m. Kickoff
- Baseball: 4 p.m. vs Appalachian State

## Patchell to be in Hall of Honor

WILL LIVINGSTON

STAFF WRITER

The Arkansas Track and Field Hall of fame is set to induct Director of Track and Field and Cross Country Jim Patchell, P.h.D. Patchell will be the Red Wolves 12th member of the Hall of Fame.

Patchell came to Arkansas State as a track athlete and undergraduate from Heber Springs, Arkansas.

Patchell started his coaching career as a graduate assistant for the Red Wolves, he then moved to the University of Arkansas for three seasons. After a three season-stint at the University of Tulane, he landed his first head coaching position at Campbell University. He returned to Jonesboro in 2011 after eight seasons with the Fighting Camels.

In his career, Patchell captured 29 Sun Belt Conference titles for men's and



PHOTO COURTESY OF A-STATE ATHLETICS  
**Jim Patchell**

women's track and field. He has won SBC Coach of the Year 22 times, and has coached 16 first team All-Americans, and 45 All-American athletes in total. Patchell has the most wins for a head coach in Track and Field and Cross Country program history.

Patchell will be one of eight inductees to this year's class. The ceremony and banquet will be held in North Little Rock on May 31.

## Golf goes up in SBC Championship



PHOTOS COURTESY OF A-STATE ATHLETICS

The Red Wolves moved up three spots, ranking sixth at the end of day two of the Sun Belt Conference Women's Golf Championship. This was led by freshman Ashley Kim scoring the lowest out of all players.

Kim also scored the first eagle for Arkansas State University and for her career.

The championship will continue Wednesday with the final round set to start at 8 a.m.

# Next generation of players can revive the WNBA

**COLUMN BY  
WILL LIVINGSTON**

STAFF WRITER

Women's basketball has an opportunity that they've never had before: getting viewers.

This year, many more sports headlines have been about the women's basketball tournament than usual, especially Iowa Hawkeyes star point guard Caitlin Clark. Clark broke several major records during her college career, including "Pistol" Pete Maravich's all-time scoring record.

For the first time, the women's NCAA tournament received more viewers than the men's tournament, receiving 18.9 million views according to AP News.

For the first time I can remember, people are invested in the rivalry between female players. Players like Clark and Louisiana State University forward Angel Reese, and University of Connecticut point guard Paige Bueckers and guard JuJu Watkins of the University of Southern California have gathered attention for their

rivalries over the past year, and it's easy to see hope for women's basketball.

The problem with women's basketball is its professional level, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). While fans talk with a degree of respect about the college level of women's basketball, that respect is missing for the WNBA.

The league is the butt of countless jokes. According to a comparison done by the World Sports Network it brings in \$60 million in annual revenue compared to the National Basketball Association's \$10 billion.

There are few stars in the league, among which are Sabrina Ionescu, a prolific three-point shooter, and Brittney Griner, who might be more well-known for her arrest by the Russian government for marijuana possession than her basketball skills.

The league has started to make a turn for the better. According to the WNBA, league viewership hit its highest mark in 21 years in 2023, and attendance is up 16%. The



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATED  
**Angel Reese (right) pointing at her ring finger to Caitlin Clark (left) during the 2023 women's NCAA tournament.**

WNBA needs to keep this momentum at all costs. The first thing they need to do is keep up the rivalry between Reese and Clark.

The Clark-Reese rivalry mirrors another rivalry that defined the National Basketball Association.

In 1979, the men's national championship game between the Michigan State Spartans, led

by point guard Earvin "Magic" Johnson and the Indiana State Sycamores forward Larry Bird, became (and still is, according to Sports Media Watch) the most-watched men's college basketball game of all time.

The game established a rivalry between the two men, and the NBA took advantage of this by making sure to market their rivalry immediately, and

the league took a huge leap in popularity because of it.

Since Clark, drafted first overall by the Indiana Fever, and Reese, drafted seventh overall by the Chicago Sky, will both be entering the WNBA at the same time: they will easily be able to continue their rivalry into the WNBA.

This means the WNBA can market the rivalry.

The WNBA needs to be sure to market every game that Reese and Clark play against each other in the WNBA.

These two teams are a mere 3-hour drive from each other. If the WNBA wants people to watch the games, they'll make sure a Fever-Sky game is on primetime television, and they'll make sure that fans of the two teams despise each other.

This is what builds a rivalry.

The WNBA may not need to do much with their social media marketing of the new group of rookies. TikTok has already latched on to players like Clark, Bueckers, and most of the LSU squad. Like the NBA in the '80s, players with distinct (marketable) personalities are coming into the league, and fans are following these players because of it.

Reese and Clark, while friends, can use their professional rivalry to build a rivalry between their respective teams and fanbases, and thus build a real following for the WNBA.