

A big Hit

Trojan baseball team makes huge splash in first Sun Belt season

In its first season as a member of the Sun Belt Conference, the TROY baseball team racked up the honors.

The Trojans won the regular-season Sun Belt title, compiling a 20-4 conference record, and swept through the conference tournament undefeated for a title sweep.

Junior shortstop Tom King was selected as the Sun Belt Conference's "Newcomer of the Year," and head coach Bobby Pierce earned the conference's "Coach of the Year" honors.

King, who was selected to the Louisville Slugger, College Baseball Foundation and National Collegiate Baseball Writers All America teams, finished the season with 35 doubles, falling just one double shy of setting an NCAA single-season record. He led the NCAA in hits with 117, and his .411 batting average was the 13th best in Division I baseball. King also set Sun Belt Conference records this year for single-season hitting streak

(31 games) and consecutive at bats with a hit (nine, which he accomplished twice).

King was joined on the first-team all conference list by outfielder Mike Felix and utility player Josh Dew, who led the team in home runs with 17. Felix was also named to the second team, all-conference team as a relief pitcher. He was joined on the second team by first baseman Clint Robinson, second baseman Edgar Ramirez and third baseman Jared Keel.

Senior outfielder Blake Green was named Most



Head Coach Bobby Pierce



Web Ball

Fans track Trojans' season via the internet

By Clif Lusk

When it comes to play-by-play action, Trojan fans know Barry McKnight.

The "Voice of the Trojans" energizes the Trojan Athletics

broadcasts of football, basketball and baseball, heard on the Trojan Sports Network. His reach, however, extends far beyond the listening bounds of event this network. His is



The Trojans celebrate after winning the Sun Belt Conference regular-season title with a come-from-behind victory over Middle Tennessee in front of the home fans at Riddle-Pace Field.

Outstanding Player of the Sun Belt Conference tournament and was joined on the All-Tournament team by Dew and Robinson.

In addition, Felix, King and Keel were selected during the 2006 Major League Baseball Amateur Draft in May. Felix was a second round pick by the Pittsburgh Pirates, while King went in the eighth round to San Diego and Keel in round 31 to the Pirates.

After the Trojans' successful run through the conference tournament, TROY moved on to NCAA regional play in Tuscaloosa where they advanced to the championship round before falling to Alabama.

The team finished the year with a 47-16 overall record, marking the third most wins in a season in school history.

The 2006 season also saw the Trojans extend an incredible offensive statistic. The team finished the season without being shut out in 63 games, extending their scoring streak to 84 games dating back to April 2005.

This year's squad set school records this season for at bats, runs, hits, doubles, RBI, total bases and hit by a pitch. Out of 285 teams ranked by the NCAA, TROY finished the season ranked sixth in team batting average at .332, second in scoring at 9.2 runs a game, eighth in home runs per game, fifth in doubles per game and sixth in slugging percentage.

"I'm very proud of our team," Coach Pierce said. "They've had a very good year, probably the best year we've had since our program has been in Division I."

an international voice.

Thanks to the marvels of the internet, McKnight and co-host Jerry Miller have developed a close-knit following that reaches around the globe. This baseball season, the duo have logged emails from Spain, Belgium and, of course, from around Alabama.

"Barry's Boys" and "Pierce's Posse" – center-field mainstays at Riddle-Pace Field – have become regular emailers to

troybaseball@barrymcknight.com, but so have members of the extended TROY family whose only connection this year has been over the troytrojans.com website.

"It's been phenomenal," McKnight said of his emailers. "It really makes you stop and think that you're reaching an international audience."

Along with the audio of the game, web listeners have access to "live stats," a portion of the website that

automatically updates a game's play-by-play statistics.

Here is just a sample of the emails McKnight's received during the Trojans' miraculous season:

"I would just like to thank you for your online broadcast. I'm stationed in Germany right now and keeping up with the Trojans helps me feel closer to home. Go Trojans!" – Terry Brown, with the U.S. Army in Germany

Continued on next page



McKnight broadcasts a Trojan baseball game from Riddle-Pace Field with co-host Jerry Miller (foreground). A veteran radio and TV personality, McKnight's career began in 1985, and has encompassed every facet of radio, as well as over three years as lead TV play-by-play broadcaster. McKnight also serves as the play-by-play voice of Troy University football and basketball.

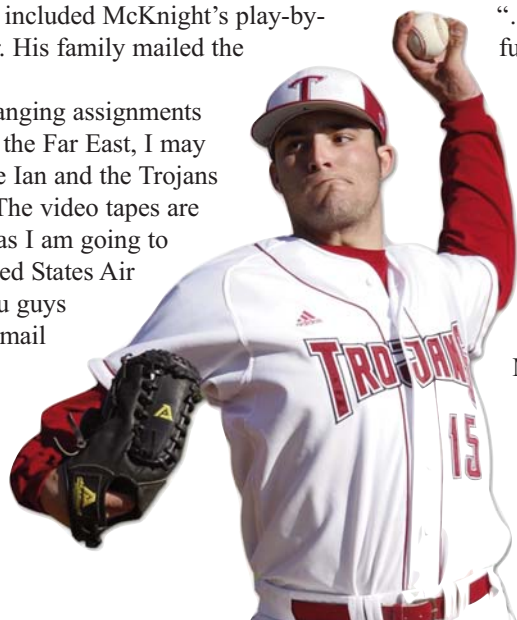
“Hey guys, you’re spoiling us Trojan fans with all the wonderful broadcasts. You can now add Europe to the listening area ... thanks for the broadcast and Go Trojans!” – SSGT Ernie Surber, USAF, Belgium, and uncle to centerfielder Ian Craze

Sometimes, the emails turn into more than just a quick note. In Surber’s case, McKnight was able to turn the Western Kentucky game into more than just another road trip for the Trojans.

Surber emails again: “Although the broadcast sounds great over here at 0430 in the morning, I have a question about the Western Kentucky series ...”

That question resulted in a private production of a game video for Surber, who had been detailed by that time to the Far East from his duty station in Belgium. McKnight and Athletic Media Relations Director Ricky Hazel were able to rig up a video that included McKnight’s play-by-play for Surber. His family mailed the video.

“With me changing assignments and heading to the Far East, I may never get to see Ian and the Trojans play baseball. The video tapes are about as close as I am going to get ... the United States Air Force loves you guys ...,” Surber’s email continued.



When the series happened, Surber’s brother Mark was in the booth with a video camera, wired in to McKnight’s broadcast equipment.

The Craze Clan isn’t the only family that’s used the web to follow their kin. Often, McKnight ferries messages back and forth to the dugout.

“Thanks to you guys, we are able to listen in to our nephew’s ball games. Would it be possible to get this to him: Your Uncle Mike and family from Spain wish you the best!” – Mike Olga, Mike Felix’s uncle in Spain.

And of course, just as in many Trojan baseball games, a few emails carry a tone of apprehension and excitement:

“Barry, Sorry we will miss this series this weekend, but we will be listening to the games from the hospital or from home,” writes Lynda Woods, mother of junior outfielder Ben Woods of Ozark, before the arrival her new grandson.

“... and we’ll notify you of the arrival of our future Trojan, with full stats! Best regards.”

Those stats did come, and McKnight relayed them over the airwaves and across the net to the fans listening in during the Southern Miss series. Ben’s wife Kristi was doing well; baby Hasten Howard had arrived. Baby Hasten himself had his baseball debut scarcely a week later at Riddle-Pace Field to root on his dad and the Trojans in the series against Mississippi Valley State University.

Ana Felix, mother of TROY pitcher and left fielder Mike Felix (shown at left), was a frequent emailer this season, following the internet broadcasts from her Panama City, FL, home.



No huddle No problem

New offensive coordinator Tony Franklin brings new offense to TROY

The summer months for college football fans are usually filled by discussions of the challenges of the upcoming season, incoming recruits and the impact they will have on the program and how many days until kick-off of the opening.

For Trojan fans, the summer talk has centered around road trips to Tallahassee, Atlanta and Lincoln, NE, but the biggest buzz around town and on the internet message boards has centered around one topic – the offense. That discussion is fueled by the December hiring of Tony Franklin as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

In addition to college coaching experience at Kentucky and a stint as head coach and general manager in the National Indoor Football League, Franklin has spent much of his time as an offensive consultant, teaching a wide-open, no-huddle scheme to high school programs in both Alabama and Kentucky.

“I am very proud to be at Troy University and to have this opportunity to work with Larry Blakeney,” Franklin said. “I have heard about what a great person he is for years, both at Kentucky and while working with high schools here in Alabama. He has a great reputation, as does the program here at TROY.”

Franklin described the style of offense the Trojans will run as “fast paced.”

“We will be a no-huddle team that will throw first and run second,” Franklin said. “We will spread the ball around to everyone on the field. It is a very fan-friendly offense and one that if you are a quarterback, receiver or running back, is like waking up in a dream.”

Franklin said he will employ an offensive style very similar to the what is being run at Texas Tech. Over the last three seasons, Texas Tech has led all of Division I in passing offense every year and has also ranked in the top 10 nationally in total offense and scoring each season.

2006 TROY Football Schedule

Sept. 2	ALABAMA STATE, 6 p.m.	Oct. 28	NORTH TEXAS, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Florida State, TBA	Nov. 4	LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE, 2 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Georgia Tech, 1:30 p.m.	Nov. 11	at Florida Atlantic, TBA
Sept. 23	at Nebraska, TBA	Nov. 18	ARKANSAS STATE, 6 p.m.
Sept. 30	at UAB, 6 p.m.	Nov. 25	at Middle Tennessee, TBA
Oct. 14	LOUISIANA-MONROE, 3 p.m.	Dec. 2	at Florida International, 6 p.m.

HOME GAMES in ALL CAPS

All game times and dates are subject to change