

# Baseball team gears up for Sun Belt Conference play



**Senior Nick Smith will handle the primary catching duties for the Trojans.**

The Troy University baseball team realized one of its goals in the 2005 season by capturing the Atlantic Sun Conference title. However, one major goal was not reached in 2005, and failing to reach an NCAA Regional still stings for Coach Bobby Pierce, who enters his fourth season as Trojans head coach this spring.

To reach that goal in 2006, the Trojans will take a new path – a path that now runs through the Sun Belt Conference, which is a much more tradition rich baseball league. Eight of the nine current baseball playing members have made trips to the NCAA Tournament and two - Louisiana-Lafayette and New Orleans – have advanced all the way to the College World Series in Omaha, NE.

### **Rebuilt Pitching Staff Will Be Key**

Few coaches in college baseball have the luxury Pierce enjoyed in 2005. Landon Brazell, a Florida Marlins signee, and Brent Adcock, the A-Sun Pitcher of the Year, combined to work 46.3 percent of all the innings pitched for TROY in 2005, going at least eight innings in 17 of their 32 starts.

The right-handed power pitchers will be replaced by a group of talented, yet unproven, left-handers.

The biggest move during fall practice came from senior Jon Gianquitti. In addition to Gianquitti, the Trojans had another left-hander, Mike Felix, come in and pitch well during the fall. He also hit .517 with a pair of homers, meaning he will be a two-way player for the Trojans.

Between Gianquitti and Felix in the rotation should be sophomore right-hander Ryan Ellison.

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**Tony Falls returns for the Trojans after off-season Tommy John surgery.**

With that trio currently scheduled for the weekend rotation, that leaves sophomore Steven Morelock. The other strong candidate to work as a starter mid-week is junior college transfer Joe Hallahan.

The bullpen will receive a big boost with the return of Tony Falls from off-season Tommy John surgery. The Trojans also have sophomore Pete Van Horn, an A-Sun All Freshman selection last year, back to work out of the pen.

As many as seven first-year players will be in the mix for time on the mound, along with junior Bert Elliott, who had his 2005 season cut short by a knee injury. Others who will contend for time on the mound include junior right-hander J.J. Whetsel, sophomore right-hander Jeff Green, junior right-hander Clegg Snipes, redshirt freshman left-hander Matt Thomas, junior left-hander Jonathan Sabat and junior left-hander Nolan Chestnut.

Junior right-hander Josh Dew may also factor into the closing role, while spending time as a backup first baseman and designated hitter.

### **New Trojans Have Big Shoes To Fill**

Not only must the Trojans find a way to replace the base-stealing prowess of 2005 A-Sun Conference Player of the Year Adam Godwin, but also the bat of departed catcher Henry Gutierrez.

Ian Craze was brought in to share that burden. Returning seniors Dru Rymer and Blake Green will shoulder some of that load, as will Felix, who will spend his days between starts in the outfield.

Three of the four starting infielders return this spring. Junior Clint Robinson returns at first, with seniors Jared Keel and Bryan Madril back at third and second base respectively. Junior Tom King, a South Carolina transfer, takes over for the departed Chase Amis at short.

Senior Nick Smith will take over the primary catching duties this spring after earning All-A-Sun honors as a designated hitter last year. On days when Smith isn't behind the plate, the job will be filled by a trio of players -- sophomore Josh Blackwell, junior Ben Woods and true freshman Beau Brooks.

*See the Trojans' schedule at [www.troytrojans.com](http://www.troytrojans.com)*



## 2006 softball team to rely heavily on young players

By Jessica Stauffacher

Coming off a strong season and winning the conference title in its final season as a member of the Atlantic Sun conference, the 2006 Troy University softball team is poised to move into the Sun Belt Conference.

“Coming off a conference championship in our last year in the A-Sun, our kids have lofty goals for continued success as we strive to move our program forward,” head coach Melanie Davis said.

With nine underclassmen on the team and only three seniors, TROY will rely on its youth for a successful season and a run at the conference title in

May.

Seniors Sally Jones, Jocelyn McCallum and Candace Sasser will look to end their collegiate careers on a high note by winning the Sun Belt and making a run at the NAAs. For Jones, this season will be her fourth as a starter.

The TROY pitching staff is composed of McCallum, juniors Laine Harcourt and Michelle Grinage and newcomer Angela Lopez.

McCallum led the pitching staff last season breaking the regular season strikeout record with 304. She also broke the school record for strikeouts in a game with 19 against former conference foe Belmont.

Harcourt and Grinage did not see much action in 2005 as they appeared in 28 games starting 11 for a combined record of 7-2 with one save.

The infield will see some new faces this season with the graduation of first baseman Bonnie Belin and

catcher Tamra Howren. Second and third bases will remain the same as in 2005 with junior Brittany Krbec and sophomore Caurie Miller.

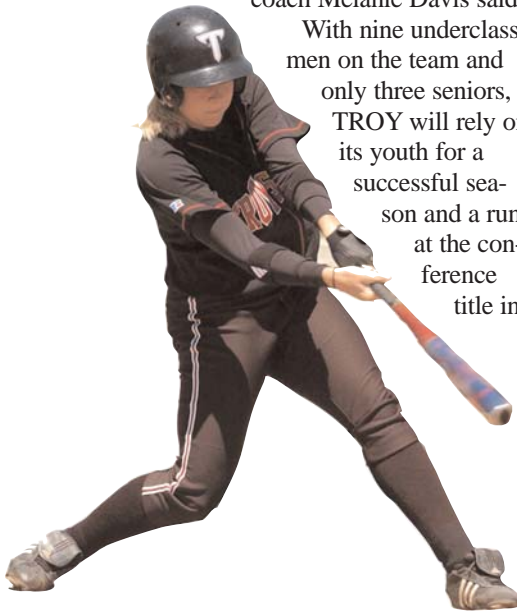
Joining Krbec and Miller will be newcomers Amanda Skidmore, Felicia Hammer, Kim Kelly, Katie Taber and Lopez. The Trojans will also utilize returning players Cassie Newman and Jessica Lyle in the infield.

The outfield will see the return of Jones and two-year starter Stacey Dwyer. Assisting Jones and Dwyer in the outfield will be freshman Heidi Johnson and junior Angie Coteat.

Despite the youth of this year's team, the Trojans have high expectations for the 2006 season.

“This year's squad will be very young, but they have a tremendous passion for our great game, as well as talent and a strong work ethic,” Davis said. “As they mature, the group should prove to provide a strong nucleus for continued success.”

*Jessica Stauffacher of Spanish Fort, AL, graduated in December with a degree in Broadcast Journalism.*



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**Senior Sally Jones looks to end her collegiate career on a high note with the 2006 Trojans.**

## Pair of TROY alums have big NFL seasons

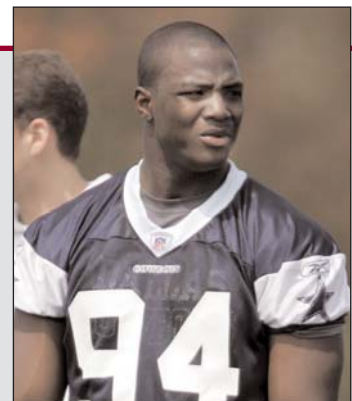
Two former Trojan football standouts made their presences known in the NFL this past season.

Osi Umenyiora, a defensive end with the New York Giants, was selected to this year's Pro Bowl. Umenyiora, who is in his third year with the Giants, finished second in the league in sacks with 14.5. He also recorded 48 tackles, 22 assists and

three pass deflections.

Demarcus Ware made a splash with the Dallas Cowboys in his rookie season.

Ware, who became TROY's first ever first-round draft choice last spring, recorded 47 tackles, 11 assists and eight sacks as a rookie for the Cowboys. He also forced three fumbles during the year.



Ware