

BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT PREVIEW

Men's Basketball looks to ride momentum into Fort Worth

BY SEAN MARTY
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Wichita State's postseason hopes are on the line this weekend in Fort Worth, Texas.

With the only road back to the NCAA Tournament being through winning the conference tournament, the Shockers are preparing to win four games in four days. WSU feels confident entering Thursday's matchup with Tulsa, following a two-game winning streak to close out the regular season.

"It feels like we're starting to pick it back up," freshman Ricky Council IV said. "We wanted to end the season with some momentum going into the conference tournament and I felt like we accomplished that."

After starting off the conference season with four straight losses, the Shockers went 6-5 to close out AAC play, while climbing up to seventh place. WSU closed out the season with back-to-back wins over Tulsa and East Carolina, building momentum for a postseason run.

Head Coach Isaac Brown said the main difference in the past two wins is the aggressiveness from the offense. In the past two games, the Shockers are shooting 59.7% on two-point shot attempts, after going 54-for-117 in the previous three games.

"Number one, [we've been] getting the ball inside to Morris [Udeze]," Head Coach Isaac Brown said. "I think Ricky [Council IV] and Craig Porter Jr. are really driving the basketball. I talk to those guys all the time about, '65% of your shots should be in the paint. The other 35% should be from the three-point line, and I want you guys, every time you catch it, to shot fake and drive it,' and both of those guys have been doing that."

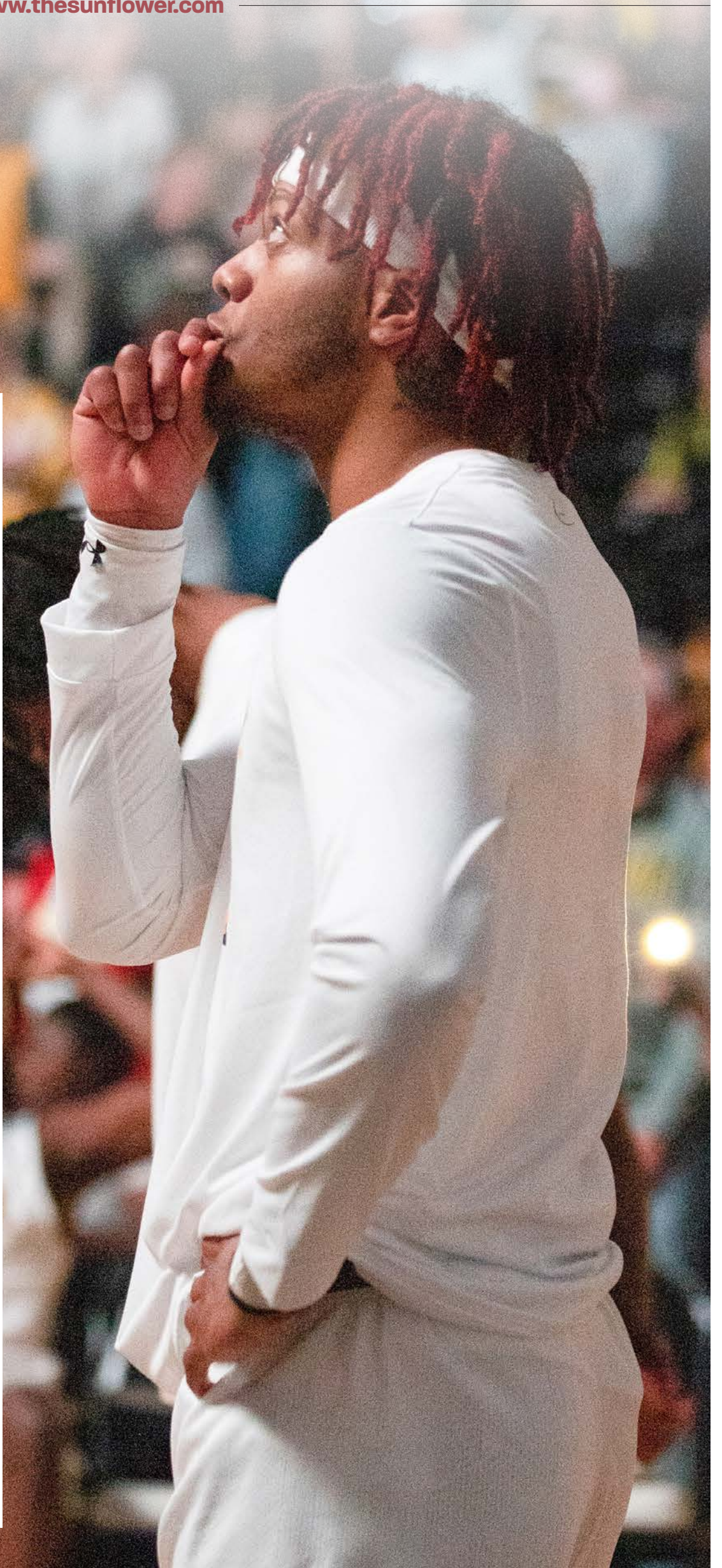
Despite finishing in seventh after the preseason expectations, the Shockers are proud of how they finished the season. WSU's likely path in the tournament features two teams they are 3-0 against this season in Tulsa and SMU.

The Shockers will have to do something they've never done this season in order to return to the Big Dance — win four straight games — but do it in four straight days.

"We've been expecting to go all the way and make it to the championship," junior Craig Porter said. "That's going to take winning four games in four days. So we'll take these last two wins and run with it."

The Shockers were able to close out Saturday's win against ECU, which is a bright spot after struggling to win close games for much of the season. Porter and Council are both playing their best basketball to close out the season, and combined to score 27 of their 35 points in the second half. Porter registered the first double-double of his career with a career-high 10 rebounds to go along with four assists, two blocks and a steal.

SEE **MOMENTUM** PAGE 10



Before the game against the South Florida Bulls on Feb. 12, sophomore Clarence Jackson watches the board before the starting five are announced. | Photo by Mia Hennen / The Sunflower

Students share opinions about new mask rules on campus

BY JULIA NIGHTENGALE AND
LINDSAY SMITH
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Wichita State dropped its mask mandate Thursday and with the decision came both disapproval and praise.

WSU followed closely behind other state universities — like the University of Kansas and Kansas State University — who removed their mask mandate as well while still "strongly encouraging" mask use by people on campus.

Private universities in Wichita dropped their mandates earlier on. Friends University dropped its mask mandate on Jan. 31 and Newman University ended its on Feb. 28.

"I feel like it was the right choice," Pre-dental freshman Bryan Pererz-Moreno said. "There were students not even wearing the mask anyways, but removing the mask mandate could help keep students with the university and keeping them on their side ... instead of forcing them to wear them."

Some students share concerns about what removing the mask

might mean for students' safety.

"With the Omicron surge, a lot of people getting hospitalized [and] a lot of deaths are still happening every day," Biology senior Cameron Madison said. "I don't think it was the right time to remove mask mandates, I think masks save lives."

As of Wednesday, Sedgwick County has a two percent positive test rate. This is a large drop from the highest percentage, which was twenty three percent in January. The county currently has 10 COVID patients in the ICU.

Some students say removing masks could raise these numbers again.

"The recent cases have gone down so much recently because we had the masks on so I think removing them especially in classrooms is just going to make the numbers go up again, so we're going to have to put them back on," WSU student Mary Harbour said.

The CDC recently released new guidelines for wearing masks that are based on hospitalization rates in communities, instead of the rate of COVID-19 infections. This decision is based on widespread population immunity.



Byran Perez-Moreno, pre-dental freshman, tells The Sunflower on March 9 that he thinks WSU made the right move removing the mask mandate, allowing students to choose for themselves. | Photo by Jordan Plowman / The Sunflower

"I think that it is a good thing that they are lifting the mask mandate because we have seen over the past few months that the number of cases have been dramatically decreasing," Chadrack Kamba, a senior studying mechanical engineering.

The university still continues to encourage COVID safety precautions and frequent testing. Students can receive free testing at the Student Health Services

located in the Student Wellness Center at the campus YMCA.

The university could switch back to requiring masks at any moment, depending on requirements, COVID numbers and overall safety.

"The university will continue to monitor the COVID situation on our campus and in our community and will be prepared to pivot back to a mask mandate if the situation warrants," a release stated.

FREE COVID TESTING ON WSU CAMPUS

Members of the WSU community can receive a free COVID-19 test at the Student Wellness Center located in the Steve Clark YMCA. Hours are below:

Mondays: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tuesdays: 9 a.m. - noon

Wednesdays: Noon - 4 p.m.

Thursdays: 9 a.m. - noon

Fridays: Noon - 4 p.m.

All individuals are expected to go through the MDL patient portal to register for testing. They will receive a code from that portal telling them when they are expected to arrive when they go to get tested.

Go to wichita.edu/services/studenthealth for more information.



John Kirk, fine arts representative, looks at the student fees binder during student fees deliberations last week. | Photo by Rachel Rudisill / The Sunflower

Student Fees Committee proposes 2.7% increase

BY JULIA NIGHTENGALE
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The Student Fees Committee's proposed budget includes a 2.7% student fees increase, which is an increase of \$10.17 per tier one student — an undergraduate student enrolled in 9 credit hours or more.

This is the first year of a staggered review cycle. Instead of student fees funding being allocated yearly, organizations will now be guaranteed their funding for three years. Instead of going before the committee every year, organizations are assigned a specific year — A, B or C.

Organizations also have the option of breaking their cycle if they want to request a different amount of money.

The committee met last week to finalize a proposed budget that will be sent to the student government's budget and finance committee for review, then SGA's student senate for a three-read process before being sent to the university president to be signed.

THE BIG CUTS

Many groups received less money than they requested.

Student Engagement, Advocacy, and Leadership (SEAL) initially

received their full amount requested (\$725,465), with Representative and Speaker of the Senate Jacob Tubach seconding the motion, saying that it is a great program that is unique to WSU. The committee went back after making initial decisions and reduced their funding to \$701,748.

"It's a good amount for them to still use," Representative and Treasurer Zachary James said.

Campus recreation received \$1,003,894 after requesting \$1,038,266. The group's amount was decreased two separate times, with Tubach commenting on the \$20,000 increase from 2022.

"It's hard for me to approach that figure and say I'm OK with adding \$30,000 to that when \$40,000 is already in the reserves," Tubach said.

Campus activities received \$259,833, a decrease in \$60,000 from their request. James motioned for this amount, saying that it would be easier to spread the remainder of the request out for the three years, giving them \$20,000 in year two and \$10,000 in year three. Teri Hall, vice president for student affairs, pushed for the request due to wanting to have two concerts next year.

ShiftSpace gallery's request was debated heavily, after

questioning their Registered Student Organization status, which is "frozen" because they did not renew it for this year. A motion was made initially by representative Kirk to give them \$0 due to questionable RSO status.

"I would share my concern of eliminating funding for a position without at least some time to prepare for that," Gabriel Fonseca, SGA advisor, said.

The motion to fund \$23,000 and not their full request of \$67,445 was made by James. The vote on the motion was tied, and James voted in favor to break it.

"Giving them at least a year [to see] how they will pay for this position is [the] right to do," James said. "I'm really just looking to pay for the gallery itself."

The most heavily debated organization was Varsity Esports, with the debate period being extended to come to a solution. The organization requested \$85,000. Representative Tubach initially motioned to give them \$0 due to them being housed under the college of applied studies and having access to university funding.

Hall said that the organization could be easily moved to campus recreation and that they were trying to find the right "home" for it.

"I'd like to remind you that we are trying to build a program ... If we aren't part of that we are going to be left behind [in D-1 esports teams]," Hall said. "At least give them the same funding."

A new motion to fund \$67,317 for salaries of the coach and two student employees was then discussed. Representative Gladys Heitzman spoke in negation, saying that this organization doesn't benefit the majority of students on campus.

"I find it really hard to believe that students would want their student fee money to go towards this," Representative John Ramey said.

Others felt that not giving the organization any funding would "tank" the program before they had a chance to grow, have good coaching and become more self-sustaining.

A new motion was presented by James to fund \$67,317 for this year only and to have them come back next year with results, which was voted through. Later, the group cut the funding to \$46,317 for 2023, which allowed for the coaches salary to be covered but not two student employees.

"It would be really bad to tank something that could create revenue in the future," Representative Heitzman said. "Give them time."

The Tilford Commission requested \$55,000, and received \$10,000 for this year, as well as for the next two years. At first, representative Kirk motioned to fully fund it because it is a great opportunity for all students. Representative James spoke in negation.

"The way that they prioritize their budget could be better, but it's a great thing to have here," James said. "It's already funded from somewhere else, we don't know where ... There are other places that could fund it."

SGA Vice President and Representative Kamilah Gumbs also spoke in negation.

"Sometimes some services should just be catered to us and we shouldn't have to fund them to get them," Gumbs said. "I feel like this is not as consistent and daily as a service like student health ... this isn't something that I believe our fees should be dedicated to ... they have access to other various funds."

The committee decided to suspend the deposit for this year.

The only line item that received full funding was the WSU Student Scholarship of the Year. They received \$2,430.

We're hiring.

- Editor-in-Chief
- Ad Manager

Applications due by
Monday, April 4

The Sunflower

The Sunflower, founded in 1896, is the student-run newspaper covering Wichita State University. The print edition is published Monday during the fall and spring semesters. The staff publishes daily online at www.thesunflower.com.

MISSION

The Sunflower — both in print and online — will be a timely resource of information about the Wichita State University community. It will report on news, issues, activities, academics and athletics, in addition to offering a forum for discussion, reviews and commentary. It will also be an effective learning experience for students, who will have the final authority over what is published.

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Arts & Entertainment

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

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Starbucks features the pistachio frappuccino, a nutty spring drink which is able to be made hot, iced, or blended and with milk substitutes. | Photo by Jacinda Hall / The Sunflower

Drink of the Week: pistachio oat milk frappuccino with sweet cream foam

BY JACINDA HALL
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With all this winter weather, it's crazy to think that spring break is coming up just around the corner. But, spring break means a time away from (most) school work and enjoying time with friends, family or with ourselves before we prepare for finals.

For those wanting to try something a little different than their usual order, try this holiday-themed drink.

St. Patrick's day falls in the middle of spring break, so let's make an early toast to the holiday with a pistachio frappuccino.

Instead of getting the regular pistachio frappuccino, try it with oat milk. It actually brings out the pistachio flavor even more. Another alternative you can try is topping the drink off with the sweet cream cold foam and caramel drizzle, instead of whipped cream.

The cold foam and drizzle adds more sweetness to the drink, without having it be super sweet. They still add the pistachio topping to the drink, even if you get the foam instead.

I would recommend this as a treat to any student who is exhausted from studying for mid-terms or if you are looking to celebrate St. Patrick's day.

Students escape midterm stress with virtual reality and laser tag at Gamefest



Jamey Marshall plays laser tag. The event was hosted by SAC on March 5 in the RSC. | Photo by Nithin Reddy-Nagapur / The Sunflower



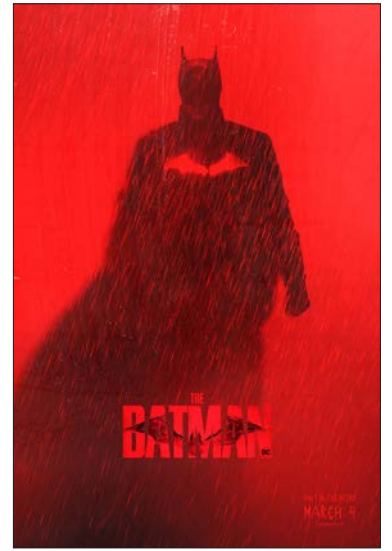
Caitlyn Sherman plays Jenga. The event was hosted by SAC on March 5 in the RSC. | Photo by Nithin Reddy-Nagapur / The Sunflower



Caroline Ruden and Chloe Ciecko play hungry hippos. The event was hosted by SAC on 5 March 5 in the RSC. | Photo by Nithin Reddy-Nagapur / The Sunflower



Radeef Karim shoots his gun in Laser Tag. The event was hosted by SAC on March 5 in the RSC. | Photo by Nithin Reddy-Nagapur / The Sunflower



Courtesy of DC Studios

The Batman: Beautiful but disrespectful of the Batman legacy

BY ALLISON CAMPBELL
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The Batman, directed by Matt Reeves, dropped in theaters earlier this week much to the joy of hundreds of thousands of long term DC fans around the world, including myself. So you can hardly imagine my disappointment when the \$100 million budget film with a 85% score on Rotten Tomatoes was utterly average. Reeves dropped the ball big time on this film that had so much potential with stars such as Robert Pattinson, Zoë Kravitz, Jeffrey Wright and Colin Farrell.

While the cinematography was stunning and was coupled with some of the best music you will ever hear, it does little to make up for the needlessly complex, heavily drawn out three-hour spanning bellyflop of a plot. What's the point of making a visually stunning movie if your audience can hardly stay awake through it, much less know what is actually going on?

We know and love Batman for the fighting scenes, Bruce Wayne's internal and external struggles and his cool tech, but this film was nothing more than a play-detective snoozefest. There were dozens of names and useless characters tossed around during the film that had little connection to the actual plot.

The screenwriters worked so hard on trying to make all of the pieces of The Riddlers puzzle fit together, that they somehow forgot how real people actually talk. A good hour of the film could have been cut if they had just scrapped the repetitive dialog between characters and Bruce's poor ramblings about justice, darkness and so forth.

Most of the dialog was a joke, excluding anything said by The Penguin (Jeffrey Wright) who single handedly saved this film with his comical dialog. His character was one of few that stayed true to the originals without coming across as cliché or cheap. Thank goodness Warner Bros didn't tarnish our favorite little snarky mob boss.

Even Kravitz as Cat Woman didn't have a terrible performance, but it was clear that she was solely included to move the plot along to its droning end.

By the time I left the theater, it was clear that everyone else with me was just as glad that it had finally ended. To then search the internet for other negative reviews and find only the loving ravings of longtime DC fans who support the franchise to the death was so disappointing. I was baffled when, upon looking up reviews online, how much people loved it. I'm not sure what movie they saw, but no one in the theater was praising DC after the three hour train-wreck we had to endure.

I love Robert Pattinson, and The Batman gave him a great upgrade from his broody, elementary role of Edward Cullen in the Twilight saga. I see a lot of potential for him, especially in the expected Batman sequel, but until DC Entertainment Inc. gets their affairs and sloppy storylines in order, you won't be seeing me in the theaters for a Warner Bros film anytime soon.



Wichita-based artist, Ann Resnick talked at the Ulrich Museum's Artist Talk series on Tuesday March 8, featuring her current exhibition "Chapter and Verse." | Photo by Devon Sipes / The Sunflower

Wichita-based artist talks love and loss with current exhibition

BY JACINDA HALL
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Love and loss are heavy emotions that often leave people with unused passion. Wichita-based artist, Ann Resnick, uses this passion to drive her art.

On Tuesday, March 8, Resnick was the spotlight for Ulrich Museum's Artist Talk for her current exhibition, Chapter and Verse.

Resnick is known for her conceptually complex and visually extravagant art, which she has been creating for over 40 years.

A lot of her inspiration for her works comes from her friends, family and a time of grief and loss. She is influenced by her late husband and artist, Kevin Mullins, who died in 2018. Resnick described her relationship with her late husband as "very organic."

"We live and work," she said. "Every conversation came back one way or another."

She also described her late husband as her creative partner and would often bounce ideas off of him, and vice versa.

"There was a lot of osmosis in the studio," she said

Resnick talked about a specific piece in her exhibition called "Dear Ann, Love" created in 2011 about how love and affection play a role in her art.

"These are all people who are important in my life," she said. "It gives me pleasure to see those signatures now."

Resnick feels that she has no doubt about her work.

"A lot of it is intuition and experience," she said. "Just trust the process."

She said that she gives serious advice to young artists. Resnick herself is always thinking of ideas and creating art, and wants young artists to do the same.

"Work. Work. Work. Work. Work," she said. "Just always be making stuff, that's really the key."

Seventh annual diverse women's summit brings in over 100 virtual participants

BY KYRAN CRIST
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Wichita State University administrators, faculty, students and alumni gathered virtually on Monday, March 7, for the 7th annual Diverse Women's Summit.

The summit brings together presenters of various groups from different backgrounds on issues affecting women locally, nationally and globally. Monday's all-day event began at 9 a.m. and went into the evening until about 9 p.m., with presentations from current WSU members and also former ones zooming in from across the country.

This year's summit theme was "Intersectionality at Wichita State University," with presentations such as "Poverty amongst college students" by Gabi Glidewell, Jae Paget, Neena Goodman, & Hannah Allen, and keynote speakers such as Shirley Lefever, interim executive vice president and provost.

Center for Women's Studies director Chinyere Okafor said that for such a busy working day, she was surprised and delighted to see that the event brought in more than one hundred and thirty participants.

"There were ten group presentations by thirty-three students from various departments and

colleges as well as fourteen individual papers and presentations by faculty, administrators, and alumni," Okafor said. "The planning committee consisted primarily of myself and Dr. Debbie Gordon of women's studies, Dr. Robin Henry of history department, and Joyce DalPorto-Ward from office of the dean of LAS."

Last year's summit was focused on the theme of COVID-19 and featured governor Laura Kelly as the keynote speaker. Okafor said that the event was enlightening and vibrant.

"A panel of three extraordinary professors from three different colleges spoke about intersectionality from the perspective of their colleges," Okafor said. "This was followed by a vibrant discussion that included issues from earlier papers and presentations. Dr. Andrew Hippisley, the dean of LAS shared his perspectives with closing remarks."

Okafor started the summit with an opening speech over a paper titled, "Debriefing Intersectionality Horizontally and Vertically." She described the day as an overall success.

Opinion

HAVE AN OPINION?

contact The Sunflower's
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Street SPEAK

WHAT ARE YOUR
THOUGHTS ABOUT
WSU LIFTING THE
MASK MANDATE?



ERIC SON

Sophomore, Business Major

"I think the mask mandate has been lifted a little too early because I think that COVID is still easily spreadable and I still think that it is very easy to get. I think it is a little adventurous to lift it too early."



CHRISTIAN MUNOZ

Junior, Business Management

"I think we should wait until post spring break until we really make these kind of decisions regarding whether or not to make masks a mandatory thing that we should wear in classrooms and on campus."



ETHAN LE

Sophomore, Mechanical Engineering

"I can understand why but I still think we don't really have enough under control to do it right now. I think we should wait a little more for something more conclusive before making the decision."



CHADRACK KAMBA

Senior, Mechanical Engineering

"I think that it is a good thing that they are lifting the mask mandate because we have seen over the past few months that the number of cases have been dramatically decreasing. I think this is the perfect time for WSU to lift the mask mandate."



LEONARDO SANDINO

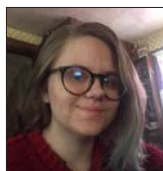
Senior, Finance

"It is a good time to take the next step to leave the mask mandate because we have already been isolated for a long time. Since there has been different measurements and steps that we have taken, I think that it is a good time to do it."



Brett Foraker pours milk to make coffee at Fairmount Coffee Company on March 8th. | Photo by Baswanth Naidu / The Sunflower

Charging for alternative dairy products is an inconvenience



Jacinda Hall

Columnist
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Coffee is meant to be an on-the-go treat. Whether you make it at home or you stop at your local coffee shop, it's a nice way to wake up.

But, for some of us who like our coffee creamy and sweet without using dairy, it can be hard to afford our coffee runs, even if we don't go all the time. Dairy alternatives are essential to those who are vegan, lactose intolerant or those that just don't like drinking milk at all.

According to an article from The Guardian, 36 percent of the US population are lactose intolerant and milk consumption is declining at an average of 2.6 percent per year, while consumption of plant-based milks are on the rise.

Starbucks is one of the biggest coffee chains worldwide. This coffee shop chain charges 70 cents for dairy alternatives per drink. This means a grande iced latte would be \$5.25 before, but if you use oat milk, it now costs \$5.95, and after taxes, your drink costs \$6.40. Of the many students and faculty at Wichita State that go to Starbucks, an employee at the RSC Starbucks located on campus estimated about 15-20 percent of their customers order plant-based alternatives a day.

Fairmount Coffee Company is a locally owned coffee shop located on 17th street across from Wichita State. This location brings in many students from WSU. Fairmount charges 75 cents for milk alternatives. An employee from Fairmount estimated that about 30-40 percent of their daily customers ask for these milk alternatives.

Milk alternatives at large chain retailers such as Walmart and Dillons cost more than whole milk. A half gallon of almond milk at Walmart is \$2.78 and a half gallon of whole milk is \$1.78.

At Dillons, a half gallon of whole milk is \$1.99 and a half gallon of almond milk ranges between \$2.79-4.29, depending on the brand.

Most of the coffee shops here in Wichita charge for dairy alternatives. The only place that does not charge for plant-based milks is Caffe Americana and they charge 50 cents for additional flavors.

One way coffee shops can stop charging for dairy alternatives is only charging for syrups. Starbucks charges 80 cents for each additional flavor and Fairmount charges 75 cents to \$1.

Starbucks and Fairmount charge the same amount or more for additional flavors than they do milk alternatives. If they decide to drop charges on milk alternatives, they should keep the charges on additional flavors.

City 101: Valuable information I learned when traveling



Emmie Boese

Opinion editor
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I've traveled a lot throughout my life. Between me and my sister's soccer tournaments, traveling to see my grandparents in Oklahoma and seeing my cousins in Florida — The list doesn't stop there.

Traveling has taught me a lot of life skills. Skills that we can all use in everyday life like talking to different people, being aware of your surroundings while driving and budgeting your money.

However, traveling to Long Beach, California this past week for the Associated Collegiate Press conference with some of my co-workers at The Sunflower and our adviser has brought on a whole different perspective. California and Kansas are two completely different places and atmospheres and with that comes a lot of tips and tricks that living in Kansas I never thought of.

The day after our arrival we took a ride on the metro all the way to Hollywood in Los Angeles, roughly a two hour commute. Right before we got on the metro, a kind police officer gave us a lot of safety tips. He told us that sitting in the front is the safest option. He also told us to hide our phones and to not be on them on the ride. As someone who had never rode the metro before, this was valuable information that I can use in future adventures.

Being aware of your surroundings does not just end with riding on the metro or on a bus. Walking on the streets in heavily populated areas and popular tourist attractions calls for being extra careful for your own safety.

On Hollywood Boulevard, many people came up to us and asked if we could donate money in order



Design director Thy Vo, Editor-in-chief Lindsay Smith, and Opinion editor Emmie Boese at the Hollywood Walk of Fame. | Courtesy of Amy DeVault.

to start a music or acting career. These people were just trying to make a buck. However, everytime we said no, they would come back again.

One man dressed up like a stormtrooper from Star Wars came and grabbed one of my co-workers without asking if she wanted a photo in the first place. Even though we were uncomfortable with a stranger touching us, we played along so he would leave us alone. We quickly left him right after.

Me and my co-workers all agreed that the time we spent together at the conference and learning new skills to become a better journalist is something that we will put to good use for the rest of our careers. Traveling is an important skill that many journalists will need while covering stories. However, our "City 101" lessons will be put to good use even after our journalism careers end. Life experience — in the classroom and beyond — is irreplaceable.

Shocker Hall door guards are cheap substitute for real security



Allison Campbell

Columnist
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Campus housing and residence life began locking all exterior doors except the front doors of The Suites, The Flats and the A1 and Bo doors in Shocker Hall after 10 p.m. This policy came into effect on January 14. These efforts are not only ineffective and inefficient, but avoid the root of the issue: once an individual is in the dorms, there is no stopping them.

One of the very first noticeable flaws of these precautions is the fact that they simply don't work. Within the first several weeks, many of the doors could still be accessed after the late night hours and before the early morning hours. Stairwell doors were either locked as usual or remained locked during the day when they are supposed to be accessible.

As a woman on campus my first concern is that if I am being followed or pursued, there will be no refuge until I either activate a blue light — which still needs a few minutes for response time — or I can make it to an unlocked door that may be inaccessible.



A connecting hallway between the two buildings that comprise Shocker Hall. | Photo by Khanh Nguyen / The Sunflower

Another issue is that the door guards can only keep watch from their enclosed posts just inside the building thresholds. Sure, this can keep potential threats at bay, but it has little effect if they can still infiltrate the building via other unguarded doors. The guards have no means of knowing if there is danger on any floor aside from the one they are stationed at. What can solve this problem? Security cameras are an easy start.

Ceiling cameras in each hallway

and block would be an easy way to monitor housing on-goings while being minimally invasive. A reliable electronic means of documenting the comings and goings of students and visitors is far more sound than the testimonial of an underpaid "security" guard, of which there are only two or three per building. Cameras can create time-verifiable records. If something were to ever happen, this type of security could lead to solid identifications and subsequent arr

ests.

The sad reality is that WSU prioritizes saving a few dollars over installing security cameras that will deter and record individuals with malicious intentions. While there have not been any recent reports of dormitory invasions or assaults, I fear it is only a matter of time before something tragic happens while guards unknowingly remain "watchful" at their posts.

Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters should concentrate on issues, not personalities, and must be fewer than 400 words. Letters may be edited for accuracy, clarity and length. Please include your name, WSU affiliation and a phone number for verification purposes. To submit letters, email opinion@thesunflower.com or submit at www.thesunflower.com.

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STUDENT OPINION OF THE WEEK



JUSTICE MURRAY

FRESHMAN, GAME DESIGN

Q: What is it like to live in your local community?

A: "I think it is good for job opportunities. I like small towns because it is much more peaceful. Do I feel safe in Wichita? No, not really because I have been in a bad car crash and I hear gun shots all the time. I think it has job opportunities but safety wise it is 50 out of 50."

Sports

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

contact The Sunflower's sports editor, Sean Marty
sports@thesunflower.com

SPRING CLEANING



Nicolas Acevedo celebrates after a point during the match against Omaha on March 3 at the Coleman Tennis Complex. The Chile native picked up his first win at No.1 singles since Feb. 12 against Nebraska. | Photo by Sean Marty / The Sunflower

Men's Tennis snaps losing streak with 7-0 sweep in outdoor home opener

BY SEAN MARTY
sports@thesunflower.com

After dropping two straight seven set matches on the road, the Wichita State men's tennis team secured a 7-0 sweep over Omaha to open up the home outdoor season.

Zach Grueber and Orel Ovil picked up the first doubles win at court three, but the pairing of Alex Richards and Kristof Minarik lost for the first time since Jan. 29 against Tulsa. Nicolas Acevedo and Jackie Lin secured the doubles point, with a 7-6 tiebreaking win.

Richards kept the momentum going in singles with a 6-2, 6-2 win at court four, and Lin and Grueber followed with their own straight-sets victories at five and six to secure the win.

"We were challenged," Head Coach Danny Bryan said. "Omaha's got a good team. We won a lot of close matches, which hopefully gives the guys some confidence."

Minarik came from behind to win in three sets, despite dealing with an upper arm injury throughout. Minarik served underhand in the final set, and delivered a 7-5 win, helping to build the Shocker lead.

"It was a great effort," Bryan said. "The guy's tough. He's only been here three months, but I'm not that surprised he's already proven he's someone we can count on to give us everything he's got. It was really impressive to find a way to win having to serve like that."

Acevedo battled back after dropping the first set and taking the second set to a tiebreaker. Acevedo used that momentum to coast to a third set win, 6-2. The Chile native picked up his first win at No. 1 singles since Feb. 12 against Nebraska.

"It was tough," Acevedo said. "The guy's game style was random, he was slapping the ball all the time, so it was just trying to touch every ball. It was a good feeling for sure."

Orel Ovil completed the sweep at court three with a 6-2, 5-7, 7-5 win.

"We just dropped two matches but it's going to be good," Acevedo said. "We have a good feeling about the team's we're going to play against."



Nicolas Acevedo hits the ball during a point during the match against Omaha on March 3 at the Coleman Tennis Complex. | Photo by Sean Marty / The Sunflower



Jackie Lin serves the ball during the match against Omaha on March 3 at the Coleman Tennis Complex. | Photo by Sean Marty / The Sunflower



Alex Richards celebrates with Kristof Minarik after a point during the match against Omaha on March 3 at the Coleman Tennis Complex. The duo lost their first doubles match since Jan. 29. | Photo by Sean Marty / The Sunflower

Softball splits four games in Nebraska

BY EMMIE BOESE
opinion@thesunflower.com

The women's softball program swept South Dakota State but fell short to the Nebraska Cornhuskers in Lincoln, Nebraska, along with Sophomore Addison Barnard moving up in the record book with eight home runs and over ten stolen bases so far this season.

The Shockers started off the week with a 4-10 loss to No. 6 Nebraska on Thursday. Sophomore Lauren Lucas homered again this week to open up the scoring for the Shockers. However, after the third inning, the Shockers struggled to put runs on the board.

After a loss on Friday, the Shockers bounced back in a tight win against South Dakota. Freshman Jordyn Pipkin got the start in the circle. However, the Shockers cycled through the bullpen with freshman Kenzie Schopfer and senior Caitlin Bingham. Despite struggles in the circle, the Shockers produced offensively, with an 8-7 win.

South Dakota scored four runs in the bottom of the sixth which meant WSU needed a significant inning of play at the plate in the seventh. Zoe Jones hit a ground ball to the opposing team's shortstop that resulted in an error for South Dakota. This opened the scoring wide open for the Shockers to seal the win.

The doubleheader on Friday resulted in another devastating performance to Nebraska. The Cornhuskers started hot right off the bat with seven runs scored in the second. They held the Shockers to only four runs scored on six hits to produce a whopping 4-12 final score. Freshman Alison Cooper got the start on the mound against another nationally ranked team. However, Erin McDonald took over to pitch the last four innings of the game.

WSU finished out the week on a high note after a 7-1 win against South Dakota on Saturday. Bingham threw her third complete game of the season. WSU started to seal the game in the fifth with seven runs scored.

Up next, softball will play at Missouri on March 9 at 4 p.m. before heading to the Jayhawk Invitational two days later in Lawrence, Kansas.

SPORTS IN BRIEFS

BASTIN NAMED AMBASSADOR AWARD WINNER

WSU senior guard Seraphine Bastin has been named the AAC Ambassador Award winner. The Ambassador Award is awarded to the student-athlete who reflects and celebrates the ideals of sportsmanship on and off the court. Emphasis on ethical behavior, fair play and integrity and community service are considered when selecting the winner of the award.

WOMEN'S TENNIS FALLS SHORT IN ARLINGTON

The Shockers tennis team finished a weekend in Texas, with a 4-0 sweep to UT Arlington on Sunday. The Mavericks won a close doubles point and put three quick singles wins on the board to clinch the match. Three other singles contests went unfinished, including No. 1 singles where WSU's LingWei Kong held a second-set lead.



Junior Nate Vann reflects on his journey of finding a tumor on his rib at Cessna Stadium on March 3. | Photo by Khanh Nguyen / The Sunflower

BY SEAN MARTY
sports@thesunflower.com

'I'm not done yet'

Vann battles back from cancer diagnosis

Nate Vann had just completed a track meet when he felt some pain on his right side, but he didn't think much of it. Soon, Vann's world would be flipped upside down.

After being examined the following Monday, Vann was told he had a dislocated rib and had it popped back in. The doctors also ordered an X-ray. In early February, Vann was told he had a fractured rib and it had something else on it. To get a closer look at it, a CT scan was ordered. Vann was then told there was a tumor on his rib.

"It was an accidental find, is what the doctor called it," Vann said. "I will say God was looking out for me then and I think throughout the whole thing. He's just trying to teach me a lesson, nobody's above anything."

Following the CT scan results, an MRI was ordered to get a closer look at the tumor. The doctor told him the tumor was a cancerous one called Chondrosarcoma, a type of bone cancer, and it was removed in March 2020.

Vann found himself in a dark place during that time. He

was a junior in college and just found out he was diagnosed with cancer. On top of that, Vann's diagnosis came in the middle of the pandemic. He began to isolate himself and question why this happened to him.

"I'm not going to lie, that's something I haven't opened up with a lot of people," Vann said. "People know about it but they don't know how I was doing after that. I really appreciate my friends, my family for checking in on me. Mentally that was a big block because I was 19, 20 years old at the time and I was told I have cancer."

The pandemic ended up being a blessing in disguise for Vann, which allowed him to spend more time getting back to full health. Vann started to run again just a couple days after his surgery, despite still having the stitches in.

Vann also found unique ways to stay in shape, while quarantining with limited resources available to him. He decided to go to Home Depot and built his own dumbbells

out of concrete to continue his rehab process.

"The process was actually really tough," Vann said. "With it being over Covid, all the gyms were closed. It was kind of tough not being able to lift or practice pole vault and stuff like that. So after Covid it was back to ground zero and started back over."

After he returned to campus

"Mentally that was a big block for me because I was 19, 20 years old at the time and I was told I had cancer."

- Nate Vann

next fall, Vann put in the work to get back to the level he was at previously. Vann's efforts resulted in his best season with the Shockers, despite battling numerous injuries throughout the year.

Vann competed in five meets and secured a second place finish in the decathlon at the AAC Outdoor Championships.

He also competed in the pole vault and finished in 14th at the same meet.

"I'm definitely proud of the work that I do, I've always been a hard worker but never being satisfied is a thing I've been taught," Vann said. "This past track season, even the indoor season sucked. I was injured pretty much the whole season, trying to compete on a bad heel, bad hamstring, messed up knee. I've still got a lot left to prove, I'm not done yet."

Vann has been known for toughness, battling through various ailments since arriving in 2019 as a junior college transfer. During the conference meet in late February, Vann couldn't finish the meet after suffering a hamstring injury, which came as a surprise with how often he's battled through injuries in his career.

"He's a guy I've really been proud of consistently," Director of Track and Field Steve Rainbolt said. "He's had a lot of injuries, that one was a serious health challenge but he's had a lot of aches and pains that have

challenged him. Sometimes seeming like some sort of a walking problem waiting to happen. He battles through them as tough as anybody that I have ever been around."

Rainbolt said Vann was even-keeled throughout the process, always staying optimistic after the diagnosis. He said that's how Vann has always been since he arrived at WSU.

"I could easily imagine Nate being pretty darn good buddies with some of the younger athletes and them having no idea this ever happened," Rainbolt said.

Vann still has to test regularly but since the tumor was removed, there hasn't been any new growth, with all tests coming back negative. Vann will remain on a watchlist for the rest of his life but said the support he's received throughout the process has motivated him even more.

"I'm forever grateful. Pat Wilson, Coach Bolt, they were checking up on me, I heard from them every day," Rainbolt said. "My mom was my rock. Number one fan, wouldn't be where I'm at without her and I really just appreciate her taking the time out of her work schedule and taking time off to come up to Wichita and making sure I'm fine."

Baseball takes home opener over ORU, extends winning streak to four games

BY RACHEL RUDISILL
rrudisill@shockers.wichita.edu

After losing to Oral Roberts earlier this season, the Shockers were eager to redeem themselves for the home opener.

On Tuesday afternoon, Wichita State scored four runs in the bottom of the second inning and never trailed the Golden Eagles, leading to a final score of 6-4.

The Shockers picked up their fourth consecutive win as they ended ORU's eight-game winning streak.

"Offensively, we had a big inning and we held on till the end," Head Coach Eric Wedge said.

Joining the starting lineup for WSU was freshman Will Stark. Stark delivered a two out RBI single into left center, earning the first two runs of the game. Stark went 3-for-4 at bat, his first hits of his collegiate career.

"I was able to get in and do my job for this team, to get the job done in left field and in the box at the same time, and it was a great feeling," Stark said.

With junior Andrew Stewart, the two paced a 14-hit attack. Stewart, who also went 3-for-4, picked up one more run after his RBI.

"For a true freshman going out

for his first start, he (Stark) did a fantastic job," Wedge said.

Sophomore Cameron Bye made his first start, after four previous appearances out of the bullpen this season. Bye delivered three innings pitched, allowing only two hits and one unearned run.

"I thought he did a nice job of starting the game and getting deeper into the game for us," Wedge said.

Oral Roberts put up their first run at the top of the fourth with Alec Jones's two-out RBI single.

In the bottom of the fifth, freshman Payton Tolle responded right back to the Golden Eagles with his second homer of the season. Tolle hit the ball straight over the center field fence. Previously, Tolle had two strikeouts, but he did not let that affect his confidence. He continued to pick two extra-base hits for the evening.

"My first two at bats were alright," Tolle said. "I felt like I was on time. Third at bat, I went up there with confidence and tried and put the ball in play, and did that, and it went far for me."

Tolle was a huge factor in winning the Frisco Classic Tournament and improving his earned run average (ERA) to 0.93. Tolle went 4-for-7 at the plate last

UP NEXT

FRIDAY, MARCH 11
WSU vs South Dakota State
3 p.m.
Eck Stadium

weekend, with five RBIs and his towering home run in the seventh inning to pull the Shockers ahead of Texas A&M.

"I try to have as much fun as possible," Tolle said. "It's not the end of the world if I strike out, and I know I'll get another AB. I've been trying to keep my head up the entire season even whenever I am struggling, but just knowing that hits are coming. You've got to love the game and you've got to have fun."

Coming off a big win in the Frisco Classic Tournament, the Shockers carried that confidence with them as they traveled back to Wichita.

"We played very good teams there," Wedge said. "Obviously, the Frisco Classic is a very prestigious tourney. For us to win there I think these men developed a lot of confidence in themselves, and, particularly, we had to come back a couple different times, so it was nice to jump out and lead today. That's something we hadn't done yet."

Bryan prepares for NCAA Championships

BY SEAN MARTY
sports@thesunflower.com

Senior Michael Bryan was the lone Shocker to qualify to the NCAA Division I Indoor Track and Field Championships in Birmingham, Alabama at last week's conference championship meet. Bryan's conference-winning mark of 22.58m/74-1 in the weight throw clinched a spot as the No. 8 seed for next week's championships.

Bryan has won five of the six meets he has competed in this indoor season, breaking his own conference record in the event at the conference championships.

"I feel anxious in the form of excitement," Bryan said. "Going to the NCAA meet outdoors versus indoors is a lot easier. It's just one flight all the way through until finals which is kind of intimidating because we're all so close to each other distance wise to the point where it's within one foot."

Bryan's journey throughout his collegiate career has even surprised himself. He was originally left off the roster with WSU but last year ended up breaking the school record in the hammer throw four different times.

After he broke his school record in the weight throw multiple times

this indoor season, Bryan said he feels confident heading into the NCAA meet.

"I'm just trying to enjoy it," Bryan said. "At conference, I threw 22.58m and if I were to replicate that, then I should make it to the finals. That's what Coach (Hetzendorf) was telling me and what I was thinking too."

Bryan will now have the opportunity to throw in the same venue that the American Championships were held at last week. He typically practices without a net but said that the experience gained in Birmingham from a week prior has made him more calm.

"I definitely don't feel as nervous as during conference. I feel comfortable with the ring and the atmosphere of having the net around me. It's a different feeling but now that I have the feeling of the cement ring and the huge net around that ring, it feels more comfortable."

This will be the second championship meet that Bryan will compete in as a Shocker. Last spring, Bryan fell 30 centimeters away from advancing to the finals of the hammer throw, despite crossing the 70-meter benchmark and finishing fourth in his flight.

Bryan will be the sixth-straight Shocker to compete in the indoor national championships. The meet will stream on ESPN3 starting at 10 a.m. on Friday and starting at 10:30 on Saturday.



BRYAN

2022 BASKETBALL PREVIEW





Freshman Ricky Council IV earns two points for the Shockers with a slam dunk on East Carolina on March 5. | Photo by Mia Hennen / The Sunflower

Council brings offensive spark off the bench during freshman season

BY SEAN MARTY
sports@thesunflower.com

Despite only starting six games this season for WSU, freshman guard Ricky Council IV has always found himself on the court during crunch time.

Council is averaging 11.7 points per game, the second most on the team, while playing 26.8 minutes per game. Council has been more aggressive in attacking the basket in his second collegiate season, shooting 51.5% on two-pointers in conference play.

"He started taking care of the basketball, he started driving and attacking," Head Coach Isaac Brown said. "No doubt in my mind he should be sixth man of the year. When he comes off the bench it's like instant offense."

"He started taking care of the basketball, he started driving and attacking. No doubt in my mind he should be sixth man of the year. When he comes off the bench it's like instant offense."

- Isaac Brown

Council's play has been crucial down the stretch this season, reaching double figures in five of WSU's last six games. Council reached the 20 point mark for the third time this season on Saturday against East Carolina on 8-for-15 shooting.

The freshman guard's recent play has been pivotal in the team's results. The Shockers have gone 10-6 when Council scores double figures.



Freshman Ricky Council IV shoots a three-pointer against Memphis on Jan. 1 inside Charles Koch Arena. | Photo by Sean Marty / The Sunflower

"I said that from the beginning of the season, if Ricky doesn't have a good game, it's going to be tough for us to win," sophomore Tyson Etienne said of Council. "When he has big games like this, big nights where he's able to step up, put the ball in the rim, we usually come out successful."

Council's also put in work over the offseason at the free-throw stripe. Last season, the freshman guard shot 65.8% on free-throws but that number is up to 83.8% this season.

Council changed his routine over the summer and now takes two dribbles and shoots the free throw. The change has been effective, with Council shooting 87.1% in conference play, the second best mark in the American.

"My mindset is the more you hold it in your hand, the more you think about it in a tough situation," Council said. "If you think about one little negative thought, my form will get shot."

Junior Dexter Dennis said that Council's scoring potential helps add another dimension to the Shocker offense. Council is now averaging 13.4 points per game in conference play. He's also averaging 5.6 rebounds, the second most of any Shocker during that stretch.

"When he gets it going, it definitely adds to our team," Dennis said. "We've already got a few guys in there that are possible threats. When he comes in and gets it going, it definitely creates problems for other teams."

Council's performance in the AAC Tournament will be pivotal to WSU making a return trip to the NCAA Tournament this March. The Shockers feel that the momentum created after wins against Tulsa and East Carolina last week.

"I feel like we're starting to pick it back up," Council said. "We wanted to end the season with some momentum going into the conference tournament and I felt like we accomplished that."



Freshman Kenny Pohto goes up for a lay-up on the East Carolina Pirates on March 5. | Photo by Mia Hennen / The Sunflower

Pohto blossoms in debut season

BY SEAN MARTY
sports@thesunflower.com

It isn't typical for a freshman center to earn playing time at Wichita State, but Kenny Pohto is the rare exception.

Pohto is still trying to adjust to playing in one of the most physical basketball conferences, the American Athletic Conference, but the 6'11 freshman is starting to fit in. Pohto brings a unique skill-set to the table, stretching the defense with his outside shooting ability.

"I've been kind of soft but I'm trying to work on that," Pohto said. "The coaches tell me every day to be more aggressive, so I'm trying to be more aggressive in games."

Pohto grew up learning the game of basketball in Sweden, which helped prepare him for the Division-I level, along with two years at Sunrise Academy. That experience gave him a taste of what the physicality of the AAC is like, but it still has been an adjustment.

Coming off the bench in all 27 games, Pohto is averaging 5.4 points and 2.7 rebounds per game. Pohto's minutes have taken a dip since the start of conference play, but he's still been effective from deep, shooting 30.2% on three-pointers.

"He's getting better and better every day," Head Coach Isaac Brown said. "He's a hard-working kid that's got toughness. He comes to practice every day and practices through pain. He's going to be a great one."

Pohto has developed a knack for offensive rebounding in his limited minutes, grabbing 11.6% available rebounds on that end. That number is the highest of any Shocker this season.

Pohto has gone 11-for-14 (78.6%) on his offensive putbacks this season, which is good enough for 1.238 points per possession. Despite WSU's struggles on two-pointers this season, Pohto has been the exception, shooting a team-high 59.4% from inside the arc.

"He's pretty much unguardable," freshman Ricky Council IV said. "I tell him all the time. He's got to realize that."

Junior Dexter Dennis said that Council's scoring potential helps add another dimension to the Shocker offense. Council is now averaging 13.4 points per game in conference play. He's also averaging 5.6 rebounds, the second most of any Shocker during that stretch.

"The No. 1 reason that he's playing a lot of minutes is because he can defend at a high level. When he came in, he was already great at defending," Brown said. "He came in and picked up our defensive system very quick, and that got him on the floor. He's getting a lot of confidence, and he's a guy that we're playing a lot at the five, but he can play the four and the five."

With his offensive versatility, Pohto has also been effective on the defensive end, with opponents shooting 9-for-18 on post-ups this season against him. He's also collected nine blocks this season, the sixth most on the team.

"He's one of the best shooters on the team," Council said. "He's gonna be dangerous. Once he gets more inside and starts finishing, it's going to be crazy."

COUNCIL'S OFFENSIVE STATISTICS

51.5%
Shooting on
two-pointers

87.1%
On free throws in
conference play

65.8%
Minutes played

Infographic by Thy Vo / The Sunflower



Senior Mariah McCully goes up for a two-point on Tulane on March 2. McCully scored 19 points during the game. | Photo by Mia Hennen / The Sunflower

Women's Basketball's season wraps up with loss to Tulsa

BY RACHEL RUDISILL
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In the first round of the American Athletic Conference Championship, WSU faced their rival team Tulsa. After battling for 45 minutes, the Shockers (14-16) had their season come to a close when the Golden Hurricane's took the lead in overtime 88-86 on Monday afternoon in Dickies Arena.

For the first time in the history of the series, Tulsa has defeated the Shockers in all three matchups this season.

For the second time this season, the Shockers had five players hit double digits. Carla Bremaud and Jane Asinde finished with 10, Seraphine Bastin with 16, Mariah McCully with 17 and Asia Strong hit 20 points for her second game in a row. The five totaled 73 of the team's 86 points. Strong was 7-for-13 on the floor, 3-of-5 in three-pointers and had six successful rebounds.

"I'm proud of our team in terms of what kind of ladies we had on our team this year. A really good group of young people. They played hard all year and gave me great effort."

- Keitha Adams

"I'm really proud of my teammates," Senior Asia Strong said. "You know, this is like, basically, my last game playing as like a senior you know, so it's just like bittersweet."

The Shockers had their best scoring percentage of the season with 57% as well as three-point percentage 53%. The team also made 12-of-15 free throws on the line.

"I think for our first game in the tournament, we definitely started out with a bang," Head Coach Keitha Adams said.

In the end, Tulsa took advantage of the Shockers turnovers. WSU committed 27 turnovers, allowing Tulsa to steal 32 fast break

points and outscore the Shockers off turnovers, 27-12.

"Our goal was to have 13 or less turnovers," Adams said. "We felt like we needed to take really good care of the ball. I feel like that was really the difference. If we would have taken better care of it and had more shots."

Opening in the second quarter, Tulsa converted 4-of-6 on triples and shot 55.6% from the floor. WSU shot 46.2% on the court, but its six turnovers hurt their offensive output. Six Shockers, led by Strong, opened with scoring at least five points. However, going into halftime, Tulsa led 40-38.

"You know, you've got to give credit to Tulsa for hitting some big shots and making some plays," Adams said. "They've got a very very nice, very good team."

There was no third quarter slump for the Shockers as they managed to outshoot the Golden Hurricane's 66.7% to 61.5%. The teams scored a total of 43 points and the Shockers captured their first lead in 30 minutes, 61-60.

Tulsa took a five-point lead late in the fourth quarter, but McCully and Bastin managed to tie the score 78-78. The Shockers had a chance to take the lead with 32 seconds left, but McCully's last second shot bounced off the rim.

In overtime, Tulsa hit two free throws and a three-pointer right off the bat, taking a 83-79 advantage. After being fouled, Bastin's two successful free throws changed the score 83-81 moments before the teams both made layups, 85-83 Tulsa.

With 21 seconds to go, Tulsa's Temira Poindexter took their lead even further with a successful three-pointer. With 1.7 seconds left in the matchup, Strong's three-pointer cut the deficit to 88-86.

"I'm proud of our team in terms of what kind of ladies we had on our team this year," Adams said. "A really good group of young people. They played hard all year and gave me great effort. They were great teammates, they were great with one another. Very very competitive and we played hard."



Freshman Ricky Council IV attempts to shoot on the East Carolina Pirates on March 5. | Photo by Mia Hennen / The Sunflower

Shockers close out regular season with win over ECU

BY RACHEL RUDISILL
rrudisill@shockers.wichita.edu

The Shockers won their regular season finale on Saturday, defeating East Carolina University 70-62. This is WSU's 750th win in the Roundhouse.

Sophomore Tyson Etienne opened the Shocker's offense with a three-pointer, capturing an early lead. This was Etienne's 196th three-pointer of his Shocker career. He is currently tied with Jason Perez for fifth on the all-time list.

"We're playing with confidence which is something we haven't really played with from a collective through the whole season," Etienne said.

Etienne sparked a fire under the Shockers offense, grabbing them the first run of the game 9-0. Since their run, the Shockers struggled offensively.

ECU cut the Shocker advantage to three before the end of the half. The Shockers were determined to get their strong lead back and went into halftime with a five-point lead 34-29.

Once the Shockers got their offensive rhythm, Ricky Council IV regained the Shocker lead with a layup followed up by a two point jumpshot. Junior Craig Porter Jr. followed Council by obtaining the lead for a second time with two jump shots.

"The crowd, once they get to going, they can really get us going in any game no matter who we play against," Porter said. "Really, I feel like the crowd took over and that helped us a lot."

The second half of the game was run by Council, Porter and junior Morris Udeze. The three players all led to a 10-0 run against ECU who went over four minutes without making a shot.

"Tonight, we drove the basketball," said Brown. "I think we had 42 points in the paint. I told certain guys on this team you need to think 65% of your shots need to come in the paint. The other 35% need to be stationary 3's. When we figured it out we're a pretty good basketball team."

The Shockers put up double digits from Udeze, Eitenne, Porter and Council. The Pirates, on the other hand, struggled to make big plays and only had two players in double digits, Vance Jackson and Tristen Newton.

"I felt like Tristen Newton had it going on offense and he wasn't having to guard," Brown said. "He was guarding Porter who was making the pass and cutting through, so their leading

AAC TOURNAMENT

LOCATION

Fort Worth, Texas

OPPONENT

Tulsa

DATE

March 10

TIME

2 p.m. CT

TV

ESPNU

scorer had to play both defense, and we wanted to attack him, so we started attacking and we were able to get to the rim get some wide open shots and I thought it affected his offense on the other end."

Council led with 20 points and seven rebounds for the Shockers, despite only scoring four points in the first half.

"He started taking care of the basketball, he started driving and attacking," Brown said. "No doubt in my mind he should be sixth man of the year. When he comes off the bench it's like instant offense."

Porter had a big day for the team obtaining his first double-double of the season with 15 points and 10 rebounds.

The Shockers finished their conference season with a record of 6-11 and are currently on a 2-0 winning streak. Going into the AAC Championship in Fort Worth, the team must win all four games in four days to make it to an NCAA Tournament.

"We all have one common goal to make it to the NCAA Tournament and we can't do that unless we win four in four days, so we've just got to stay locked in," Council said.

The Shockers struggled throughout their conference season, but are hopeful to end on another high. After a difficult loss to Memphis, the Shockers have increased their two point percentage. They sat down and had a conversation on what needs to change. Since then, the Shockers have clicked and come together as a team collectively.

"We've won four games before," Brown said. "We went on a streak where we won in Vegas, we won on the road, we won two in the SEC, the Big12. We've got enough guys on our team in order to do that. We're gonna take it one game at a time."

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Wichita State's Community Engagement Institute is engaging citizens in opportunities to serve and alleviate poverty in the community. For information about service opportunities, go to communityengagementinstitute.org/vista.



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INSTITUTE



AmeriCorps



Shockers earn AAC accolades before postseason berth

BY EMMIE BOESE
elboese15@gmail.com

The men's basketball program earned several conference accolades after posting their worst regular season record since the Shockers joined the American Athletic Conference in 2017.

Junior Tyson Etienne followed in the footsteps of his pre-season acoocless after being named Third Team all Conference this season.



ETIENNE

Junior Dexter Dennis was named AAC Defensive Player of the Year. Dennis guarded the 1-4 spots throughout the season and had 24 blocks and 23 steals total this season.

When Dennis started his career at WSU, he and his teammates were told by former Head Coach Greg Marshall that they needed to find another way to contribute to the team if they weren't going to be significant contributors on offense.

"Me and the freshman at the



DENNIS

time kind of like agreed that you know defense, rebounding and getting the ball to Markis McDuffie and Samajae (Haynes-Jones) so that was our kind of thing," Dennis said. "And over time the more you practice the more you try to perfect your craft the more you get better at things just like we did at the end of the year."

Dennis was one of the lowest on the stat book in terms of steals and blocks this season. However, the coaches in the conference added in other factors when selecting him as defensive player of the year.

"I think a lot of people think that defense is just about blocks or

steals which it kind of is to some degree but a lot of defense is just trying not to let someone get a shot off or just contesting," Dennis said.

Freshman

Ricky Council IV transitioned from being named to the All-Freshman team last season to being named Sixth-Man of the Year. The Durham, North Carolina native averaged 11.7 points in 26.7 minutes per game.

"He has the highest ceiling," Etienne said. "The only thing that can get in front of him is himself."

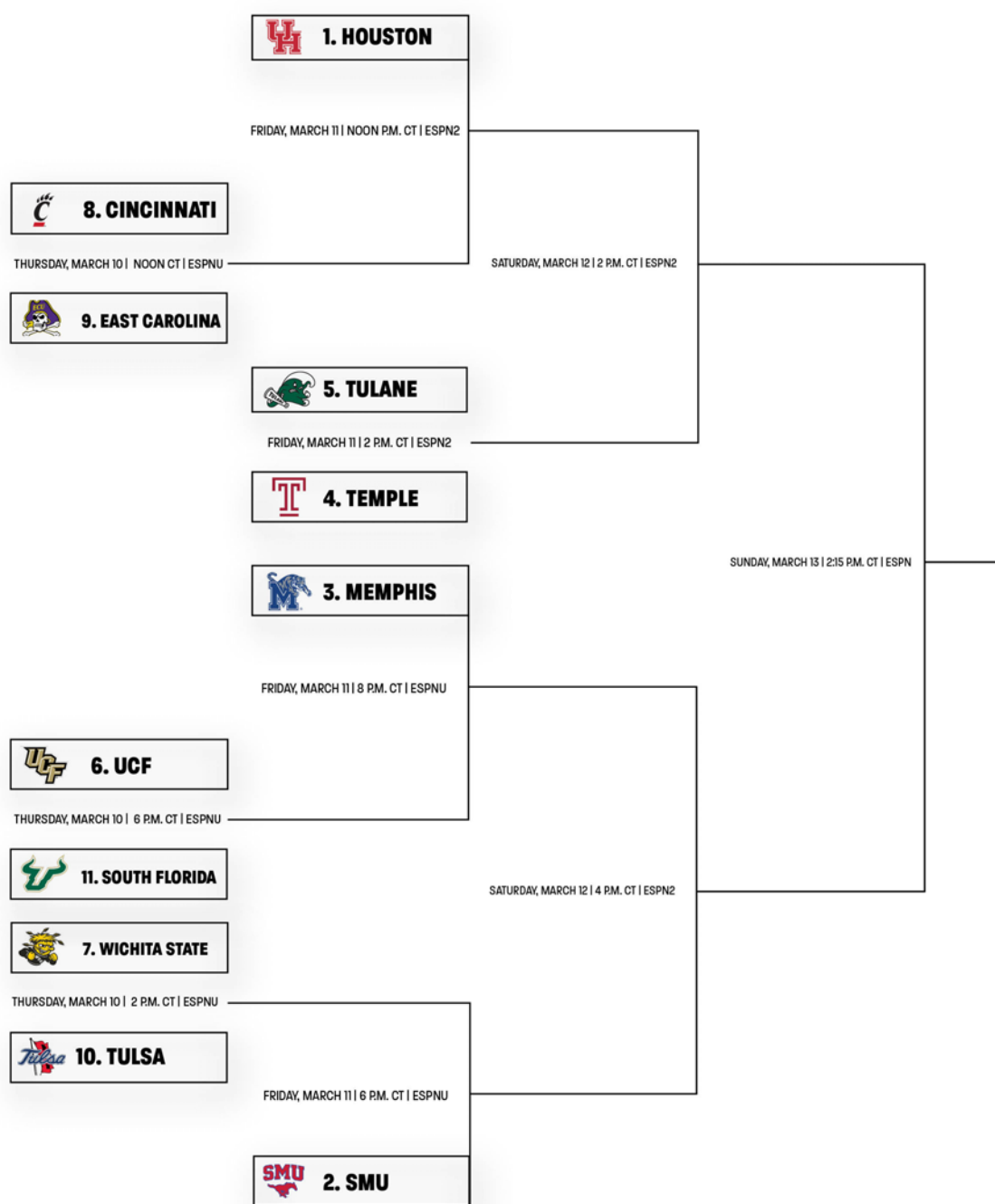
Council IV said at the beginning of the season he predicated himself to be in the starting lineup. However, after finding out he wouldn't be a consistent starter this season, he said he had to wrap his mind around just "putting the work in."

"At first I didn't like it as honestly as I can say that," Council said. "But I just kept working. I figured out that coming off the bench wasn't that bad. I was still playing starting minutes and I continued to work, and it paid off."



COUNCIL

PATH TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP



Shockers enter AAC Tournament as the No. 7 seed

BY SEAN MARTY
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Wichita State will take on 10th-seeded Tulsa in the first round of the American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship, to be held March 10-13 at Dickies Arena in Fort Worth, Texas.

Thursday's WSU-Tulsa tipoff is set for a little after 2 p.m. CT and the game will air on ESPNU. The winner advances to Friday's quarterfinal round against No. 2 seed SMU (6 p.m. CT, ESPNU).

The Shockers started league play with four-straight losses but have since won six of their last 11 to rise to the No. 7 spot. They defeated Tulsa twice (10-19, 4-14) during the regular season and won their lone matchup with SMU (21-7, 12-5) in Wichita.

WSU's postseason chances look bleak, as the Shockers will

"It's happened before, maybe not in our conference, but I've seen it where teams have won four games. You've got to take it one game at a time."

- Isaac Brown

need to win four games in four days in order to advance to back-to-back NCAA Tournaments. They would be the first team since the AAC was formed to accomplish that feat.

"It's happened before, maybe not in our conference, but I've seen it where teams have won four games," Head Coach Isaac Brown said. "You've got to take it one game at a time. Right now,



Wichita State sophomore Tyson Etienne communicates with a teammate during the last year's AAC Tournament against USF at Dickies Arena on March 12. | File Photo by Khanh Nguyen / The Sunflower

you can throw out the records. I think these guys are confident. They feel like we can beat anyone when we play well, and when we don't, we can lose to anyone."

The 137th meeting between WSU and Tulsa will be the seventh in a postseason setting and the first since the quarterfinals of the 1995 Missouri Valley Conference tournament in St. Louis. The schools split six MVC tournament contests between 1984 and 1995, highlighted by Shocker wins in the 1985 and 1987 title games.

WSU has a chance to sweep three games from its longtime rival for only the second time in series history. The 1988 Shockers defeated Tulsa three times in a span of 16 days, capped by an MVC quarterfinal win in Peoria, Ill.

"We just know we've got to defend at a high level," Brown said. "The team that's going to win the conference tournament is going to defend, rebound and play with toughness. Sometimes, when you're in a conference tournament, your shots don't always fall, so you've got to be able to defend at a high level."

WSU will be competing in the first round for only the second time since joining the American. Their No. 7 seed is its lowest since the 2009 MVC tournament when it finished in a three-way tie for fifth-place but landed on the No. 7 line due to tiebreakers.

The Shockers have at least one game in every conference tournament since 2009 and have advanced to the semifinal round in every year since 2010.



Junior Dexter Dennis looks to pass during the game against Tulsa on Feb. 1 inside Charles Koch Arena. | Photo by Sean Marty / The Sunflower

'I don't think anybody is going on that bus to play one game:' Shockers feel prepared to take on conference tournament competition

BY EMMIE BOESE
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WSU shut Tulsa down twice this season, but sophomore guard Tyson Etienne said it's all for nothing if they can't shut them out in the opening round of the American Athletic Conference Championship.

"I think in order for us to advance you know we gotta play 'our basketball game,'" Etienne said. "You know it's no more time for we should have done this or we could have done this. Everything that needs to be done needs to be done in that forty minute period."

The men's basketball program is the No. 7 seed in the tournament and will play Tulsa in the opening round of the tournament tomorrow afternoon. Tulsa is set as the No. 10 seed.

The Shockers are heading into the tournament with a 6-9 conference record — last season they posted an 11-2 record that led to an NCAA tournament bid. In order for WSU to get in the NCAA tournament, they will need to win all four games of the conference tournament.

"You've got to take it one game at a time," Brown said. "Right now, you can throw out the records. I think these guys are confident."

MOMENTUM FROM PAGE 1

The win over the Pirates provided some confidence after a 24-point loss at Memphis last month.

"This team has great character," Brown said. "We've got good kids around our program and those guys don't point fingers, they don't listen to outside noise. They come into practice every day and they can take coaching. We talked about that Memphis game, that film, it stung a lot, but those guys learned from the film and they got better." There were some encouraging

They feel like we can beat anyone when we play well, and when we don't, we can lose to anyone."

Brown said every player will need to defend the ball at a high level. Brown believes that freshman Ricky Council IV's improved ability to defend well is going to be a nice advantage heading into the tournament.

"He's keeping guys in front, he's rebounding and he's getting better at taking care of the basketball," Brown said. "That's the thing he has to work on now, just valuing the basketball, having a better assist-to-turnover ratio. But he's one of the best players in the league and one of the most-talented guys at going to the rim. He can really score. He's had some big games."

Tomorrow afternoon's matchup is set for 2 p.m. on ESPNU at Dickies Arena in Fort Worth, Texas. The conference tournament is single elimination—If the Shockers lose, their season will be over.

"I don't think anybody is going on that bus to play one game," Etienne said. "I told the guys before we started practice today; you didn't come here for a day. We didn't come here for two days. We came back to bring it all the way back to Wichita."

signs from Saturday's performance, but WSU's turnovers and offensive struggles have continued. While the win covered up blowing a 16-point lead, Brown said that WSU will have to improve on finishing up close games if they want to have a chance of moving on.

"It's very aggravating because if you want to be a good team, you've got to play for 40 minutes," Brown said. "You can't have spurts like that. You've got to be able to put your foot on the gas and stay solid on defense and not turn it over. We just had some slippage there. For them to make a run like that, that's just not good basketball. We've got to want it more."