



PATRIOT FALL//SPRING ATHLETICS **RECAP**

Volleyball

After winning the Heartland Conference Tournament Championship and making an appearance in the NCAA Regional Tournament in 2013, the Dallas Baptist Lady Patriot Volleyball team would be unable to follow up on those results in an injury-marred 2014 season. "This season is not what we wanted for our 2014 year," said DBU Head Coach Cathy Kokel. "We had higher expectations for our program. Due to injuries starting in our very first practice and never ending, our season was very inconsistent and finding a set roster was nearly impossible. We can only take the lessons from this year and learn from them."

Senior middle blocker Tiara Gipson would stand out for the Lady Patriots all year long. Gipson's hard work earned her the 2014 Heartland Conference Offensive Player of the Year and a selection to the 2014 All-Heartland Conference First Team. Gipson led the Lady Patriots in kills (324) and total blocks (83) and also ranked second in the Heartland Conference in hitting percentage (.313), third in kills per sets (3.33), and second overall in total points scored with 221.5 averaging, 4.10 per set.

The 2014 season would start off differently from any other season as DBU opened up on the road with back-to-back Heartland Conference matches. Despite the early conference matches and a rocky start, the Lady Patriots would find their footing after going 2-1 at the A&M-Commerce Classic, which would lead to a three match win streak for DBU.

After suffering a mid-season non-conference loss to Southeastern Oklahoma State, the Lady Patriots went on to win five of their next six matches, with their only loss of the stretch coming at the hands of nationally ranked Tarleton State. During those wins, DBU would have a dominant set record of 15-1.

After winning three straight matches during a three-game home stand in early October, DBU played nine of their final 10 matches on the road.

With matches that stretched from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Odessa, Texas, it would be a rough outing for the Lady Patriots, as they dropped eight of their last 10 matches, eliminating them from post-season play and keeping them from defending their Heartland Conference crown.

DBU concluded their regular season schedule with an overall record of 11-16, 7-9 in the Heartland Conference. Even though the season did not end the way the team wanted, Coach Kokel stated there were many positives that still came from this year. "There were some individuals who did an amazing job all year long. Kaycie Bird did an outstanding job setting this team, and Carly Hess was probably our most consistent and reliable player all year long. Tiara's performance was honored in the conference, as she is such a powerhouse offensively, and Tadam Mergener stepped in to the libero role well and will do amazing things for us next year. Erika Papadeas' leadership is one of a kind, and we are truly going to miss the competitiveness she brings to the court daily."

DBU graduates three players in addition to Gipson and Papadeas: Krystal Wunderlich, Markayla Benoit, and Sarah Black. "These seniors have given so much over the years," added Kokel. Especially fifth-year senior Krystal Wunderlich. She has overcome many injuries and gone through several surgeries but decided to stay on and play another year. There were so many fun, different, and wonderful personalities in this group, and I am excited to see what their lives outside of volleyball will look like, and I have no doubt each one of them is going to be doing some great things in the near future."

Women's Soccer

The Dallas Baptist Women's Soccer Team capped off a remarkable 2014 season with their third trip in the last four years to the NCAA Division II Tournament. An overall record of 14-5-1 marked the fourth best record in school history.

Playing a challenging non-conference schedule, that saw DBU play nationally ranked Colorado School of Mines and Metro State University to begin the season, the Patriots started the year with a tie and a loss. As DBU marched toward their Heartland Conference schedule, the Patriots posted a 4-3-1 record, including a key 1-0 win over St. Edward's University in a match that did not count towards either team's





conference record.

Following a 1-0 loss to St. Edward's the following week in the Heartland Conference opener, the Patriots went on a nine game winning streak that included six shutouts, as DBU cruised into the league's tournament.

In the semifinal round of the Heartland Conference Tournament, the Patriots shutout Texas A&M-International, 4-0. The Patriots would fall though in a 1-0 overtime loss in the Championship match of the Heartland Conference Tournament to St. Edward's.

Despite the loss, the Patriots were selected as one of 48 teams to the NCAA Division II Regional Tournament. In their first round matchup, DBU would face a familiar foe in St. Edward's, as the Patriots prepared to take on the Hilltoppers for the fourth time in 2014. DBU dropped a 2-0 affair to St. Edward's, bringing the Patriots' season to a close.

At the conclusion of the 2014 season, DBU received a number of regional and national accolades. Senior Lea Sedwick completed a stellar career when she was recognized by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America as a Third Team All-American. Sedwick was also named a Capital One CoSIDA First Team Academic All-American.

The National Christian College Athletics Association tabbed four Patriots to the NSCAA/Continental Tire NCCAA All-America Team, as seniors, Jake Cox, Kerry Edwards, Lea Sedwick; and junior, Ashley Cox, were all named as NCCAA Third Team All-Americans.

Outside of the All-American recognition, DBU also earned honors on the regional level. Three Patriots were named to the National Soccer Coaches Association of America All-South Central Region Team, as Lea Sedwick was named to the First Team, followed by Second Team selections Jake Cox, and Ashley Cox.

The NCCAA also named four Patriots to the First Team All-South Central Region Team, including seniors Jake Cox, Kerry Edwards, Lea Sedwick, and junior Ashley Cox. Sophomore, Emilie MacDonald was an Honorable Mention selection.

Following the 2014 season, the Patriots bid farewell to a storied senior class. Six seniors all played a pivotal role in building the DBU Women's Soccer program. The 2014 senior class helped the Patriots advance to the NCAA Regional Tournament for three of their four years at DBU.

Men's Soccer

Competing in just their third season as an NCAA Division II program, the Dallas Baptist Men's Soccer Team capped off their 2014 season with a 3-14-1 record. In a season marred with six losses by one goal, the Patriots finished the year on a difficult eight game losing streak.

In the season opener, DBU won a dramatic 2-1 affair over Harding University. A goal from redshirt-sophomore, Landon Lacy, put the Patriots on top in the 85th minute and held on to win, making it the third straight year DBU won their season opener.

Following a tough-luck loss to Colorado Christian, 2-1, DBU claimed their first road win of the season with 4-3 overtime victory against Southern Nazarene University. After Riley Alvey tied the game at three apiece at the 72:08 mark in regulation, a goal from Brandon O'Donovan in the 100th minute sealed the win for the Patriots.

DBU would claim one other overtime victory in 2014, coming on September 27 over McMurry University at Patriot Soccer Field. Once again, Alvey netted the game-tying goal in the second half, before a Brian Robertson goal in overtime won it for the Patriots.

One of the most thrilling moments of the season came on October 6 in a home contest versus the No. 18 team in the nation, Midwestern State University. A goal from Alvey in the second half tied the match, and Schober grabbed a season-high 11 saves to preserve a 1-1 tie. For his efforts, Schober was named the Heartland Conference's Co-Defensive Player of the Week.

In their final match of the season versus Lubbock Christian University, DBU recognized their two seniors, David Balyeat and Cameron Garner, along with Chuck Schober, who is scheduled to graduate early. After falling behind 2-0 in the first half, the Patriots rallied to tie the match midway through the second half but would eventually drop a 3-2 decision. The loss marked the team's fifth straight loss by one goal and brought a difficult season to a close.

"It was a tough match and a tough season, but we were right there in every game and just have to finish the last push," said DBU Head Men's Soccer Coach, Chris Crawford. "I am more excited for the future than ever, because this next step will make us or break us. The fight and passion is there for each guy, but this is a hard way to send our seniors out."





Basketball

The Dallas Baptist Men's Basketball Team finished the 2014-2015 year with a sensational late season run and a trip to the National Christian College Athletic Association National Championship game. Facing Colorado Christian for the NCCAA national title, DBU fell 77-71 to cap off their season with a 17-16 record.

The Patriots were led in 2014-2015 by the sensational shooting of Myles Johnson, who was named Second Team All-Heartland Conference after setting a new single-season school record with 572 points. Johnson, a redshirt-sophomore from Arlington, Texas, eclipsed Nick Fox's previous record of 567 points, as he drained 91 three-pointers on the season and shot 43 percent from downtown.

Johnson also was named the Heartland Conference's Player of the Week on three separate occasions, making him the first player in school history to earn league honors three times in one season. He finished the season among the team's leaders in assists (59), rebounds (113), steals (25), and made free throws (107 at 82%).

Along with Johnson's superlatives, the Patriots also saw several signature highlights during the year, including a thrilling 104-101 win in overtime over Texas A&M-Commerce at Homecoming. Redshirt freshman shooting guard, Amari Bryant, also added some fireworks of his own in a 97-72 win over Oklahoma Panhandle State at the Burg Center on February 2. The Florida native went an incredible 9-for-9 from three-point range that evening, scoring a season-high 33 points.

Despite a difficult finish to the regular season, in which the Patriots dropped their final five games, DBU earned an invitation to the NCCAA Regional Tournament in Paragould, Arkansas. The Patriots went 1-1 in the Regional and earned an invite to the NCCAA National Tournament in Winona Lake, Indiana.

In their first two games, DBU knocked off Grace College, 63-55, and then Emmanuel College in the semi-finals, 57-51, to advance to the title game. Facing Colorado Christian for the third time

during the season, DBU could not hold on to a one-point lead at the half, as the Patriots fell 77-71 to the Cougars.

Following the tournament, two Patriots received national recognition by the NCCAA as Shannon Lilly was named to the NCCAA National Championship All-Tournament Team, and Myles Johnson was tabbed an NCCAA Second Team All-American.

Lilly, a junior guard who transferred to DBU from Navarro College this year, averaged 11.6 points-per-game in the NCCAA National Tournament and dished out seven assists. On the year, Lilly totaled 306 points, which placed him second among Patriots for the season. He also had 118 assists, with an average of 3.9 per game, and 39 steals.

For Dallas Baptist Head Men's Basketball Coach Blake Flickner, who is in his ninth season with the Patriots, the 2014-2015 season was a year that had its share of memorable moments, including an incredible overtime win against Texas A&M-Commerce at Homecoming.

"This year was an exciting season, with some really fun moments, and some glimpses of better things to come," said Flickner.

"The homecoming weekend victory over a really good Texas A&M-Commerce team was one of the most exciting games in Patriot history. We also enjoyed victories over some of the top teams in our conference like Rogers State, Lubbock Christian, UT-Permian Basin, and St. Edward's."

DBU graduates five seniors this year, including Wayne Cunningham, Wesley Gipson, Chris Strong, Carter Trent, and Jordan Walker. Despite the loss of those five seniors, the Patriots anticipate the return of a veteran squad for the 2015-2016 season with the return of 10 lettermen.

"I was also happy for our guys that they were able to put together a nice run to make it to the championship game of the NCCAA National Tournament," explained Flickner. "I'm proud of this group, and we look forward to building on their success as we enter into next season."

