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## Basketball Preview 2016

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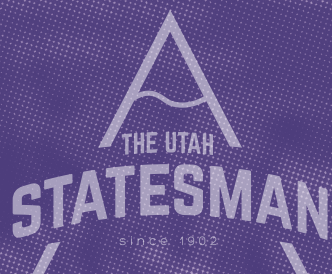
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# BASKETBALL PREVIEW 2016



**INSIDE:**

Can true freshman Koby McEwen live up to the hype? (Yes, he can)

Rachel Brewster does it all for Aggie women

How does the Spectrum crowd stack up?

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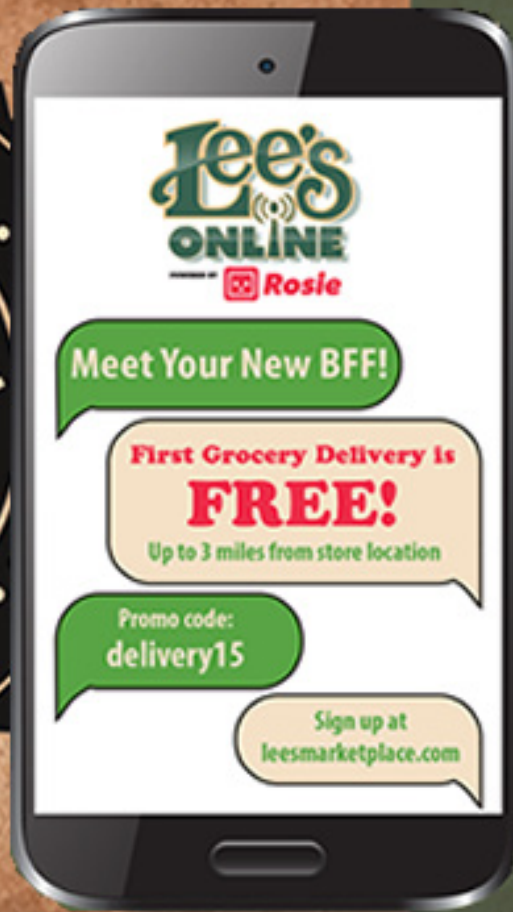


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'Hail the Utah Aggies', otherwise known more simply as the Fight Song, is written in tandem by Darwin Jepsen and Mark Hart and composed by Mickey Hart.

The first senior gift in school history is given, and can still be seen today atop Old Main. The initial gift was only the block 'A' on the West face of the tower, and was later replicated on all four sides.

1909

1933

The USU Assembly Center opens as the new home of Aggie basketball with a 95-89 victory over Ohio State on December 1. One year later, the building is renamed the Dee Glen Smith Spectrum after the founder of Smith's Food and Drug.

1970

In a game against UNLV, several Utah State students manufacture a device to spray the visiting Rebels with water dyed Aggie blue. On top of the water turning green, the prank backfired as UNLV was awarded two technical free throws which turned out to be the difference in the Aggies' 84-82 loss.

1992

On January 19 in a game at home against Idaho, Jaycee Carroll passes Greg Grant to become USU's all-time leading scorer. He would finish his career with a total of 2,507 points scored.

2015

Following an absence of nearly twenty years, women's basketball is re-established at Utah State. Discontinued after the 1986-87 season due to statewide budget cuts, the women's team returns to the court in the 2003-04 season.

2002

2008

1901

Blue becomes the official school color. The first to use the color is the women's basketball team, who pre-date the men's team by three years.

1918

Utah State's cherished 'second' fight song, 'The Scotsman', is composed by a Utah State student.

1965

The greatest tragedy in the history of USU hits in the form of Wayne Estes passing away after being electrocuted by a low-hanging power-line at the scene of a car accident. Estes had just scored 48 points in what was his final game, eclipsing the 2,000 career point mark in the game, as well.

1976

A live, white bull is purchased to act as a mascot at sporting events. Damage to both Smith Spectrum and Romney Stadium cause the bull's retirement shortly thereafter. Our beloved Big Blue is adopted as mascot in 1987.

2001

Utah State reaches the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament after winning the Big West Conference Tournament. Seeded #12, the Aggies upset #5 Ohio State.

2005

USU men's basketball plays their 500th game at the Dee Glen Smith Spectrum. Utah State posted an amazing record, going 398-102 in that span.

2009

On March 9, Stew Morrill becomes the first coach in Utah State history to lead the Aggies to back-to-back undefeated seasons at home with a victory over San Jose State. Morrill would finish his career with 402 wins at the helm of Utah State, including 249 wins at the Spectrum.

# 2016 SCHEDULE

## MENS

11/11/16 @ UC Irvine  
 11/14/16 vs NJIT  
 11/16/16 vs Bristol  
 11/19/16 vs Idaho State  
 11/22/16 vs Purdue (Cancun, Mexico)  
 11/30/16 vs BYU (Salt Lake City, UT)  
 12/03/16 vs Indiana State  
 12/06/16 vs Great Falls  
 12/10/16 @ Utah Valley  
 12/19/16 vs New Orleans  
 12/21/16 vs Weber State  
 12/28/16 vs Boise State  
 12/31/16 @ Air Force  
 01/04/17 vs New Mexico  
 01/07/17 vs UNLV  
 01/11/17 @ Wyoming  
 01/14/17 @ San Diego State  
 01/21/17 vs Colorado State  
 01/24/17 @ New Mexico  
 01/28/17 vs Fresno State  
 02/01/17 vs Nevada  
 02/04/17 @ Boise State  
 02/07/17 @ Colorado State  
 02/11/17 vs Wyoming  
 02/15/17 vs San Diego State  
 02/18/17 @ Nevada  
 02/22/17 @ San Jose State  
 02/25/17 vs Air Force  
 03/01/17 @ UNLV

## WOMENS

11/11/16 vs Westminster  
 11/14/16 vs Montana State  
 11/17/16 vs UC Irvine  
 11/22/16 vs Southern Utah  
 11/25/16 vs Incarnate Word  
 11/27/16 @ Montana  
 12/01/16 vs Idaho State  
 12/03/16 @ Utah  
 12/15/16 vs Utah Valley  
 12/17/16 vs BYU  
 12/21/16 @ Arizona  
 12/29/16 @ Boise State  
 12/31/16 vs Air Force  
 01/04/17 @ New Mexico  
 01/07/17 @ UNLV  
 01/11/17 vs Wyoming  
 01/14/17 vs San Diego State  
 01/21/17 @ Colorado State  
 01/25/17 vs New Mexico  
 01/28/17 @ Fresno State  
 02/01/17 @ Nevada  
 02/04/17 vs Boise State  
 02/08/17 vs Colorado State  
 02/11/17 @ Wyoming  
 02/15/17 @ San Diego State  
 02/18/17 vs Nevada  
 02/22/17 vs San Jose State  
 02/25/17 @ Air Force  
 02/28/17 vs UNLV

# Mountain West home courts: Who shows up?



# History of the Spectrum

BY DANIEL HANSEN

What can be said about the Spectrum that hasn't already been said?

You've undoubtedly already heard many players, both past and present, talk about how special it is to play in front of a sold-out Spectrum crowd. You probably heard a post-game quote from Stew Morrill about how important the crowd was during one of his 193 victories in the Spectrum. You also hear countless numbers of opponents try to describe how difficult it is to play in the Spectrum. Heck, you may have even told your own friends and peers about a moment or a game in the Spectrum that you will never forget. Everyone has something to say about the Dee Glen Smith Spectrum. You come here once, and you never forget it.

That's what the Spectrum has

been for the past 46 years. An Aggie fortress that's left players, coaches and fans alike in awe. It started with a 95-89 win over Ohio State on Dec. 1, 1970 and the fame and reputation of the building has grown ever since. Hundreds of opposing teams have come through its doors since, and more than an astounding 80 percent have left defeated. Utah State has climbed into the national spotlight on several occasions, with the magic of the Spectrum propelling the team.

'Spectrum Magic' is often talked about around Aggie basketball, and there's obviously some truth to the legend. Wichita State head coach Gregg Marshall summed up the Spectrum after losing 68-58 in February of 2010.

"Utah State has 4000 student tickets and they make some type

of impression on the visiting team and it's just a party," he said. "It is one heck of a party. It's the best I've ever seen. In many, many years I've been at Duke and Kentucky and UConn and Syracuse and it's clearly the best I've ever seen in terms of atmosphere."

That atmosphere, that magic, has galvanized the Aggies many times over the years. It's helped the Aggies claim nine regular season conference championships over the past 20 years. It pushed the Aggies over No. 10 Nevada back in 2007, the highest-ranked team the Aggies have ever beaten in the Spectrum. It helped Jaycee Carroll break the all-time scoring record in 2008. The Spectrum was a permanent fixture for Stew Morrill's career, helping Morrill climb the all-time wins for a coach in college

basketball where he currently sits at 29th with 620 victories. And it's helped the Aggies mass a home record of 453-105 since its opening. In short, the Spectrum has helped the Aggies be the Aggies.

In the 47th installment of Utah State basketball at the Spectrum, the Aggies will be hoping for the crowd to spur them on to yet another successful season. So stand up, cheer and scream your lungs out. It's time for some Spectrum Magic.

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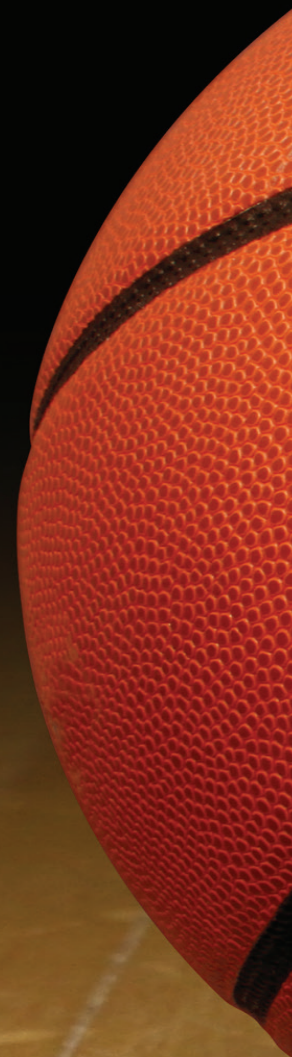
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# How to build a coaching family

"In coaching, you can always do more. You never get done. The day is never over." —Spencer Nelson

BY SYDNEY CREER

The day is never over for the coaches of the men's basketball team and it has just begun for Tim Duryea as he enters his second year at the helm of men's basketball.

After a rioting 16 game wins last season and with fourteen seasons of assistant coaching under his belt, it is clear that Duryea is prepared to assist his team in victory this time around. With a focus on his players, fresh new recruits and returning leaders, he has high hopes for what each of them will bring to the table.

"They come to you in different stages of development, but they all come as prospects for the future," Duryea said.

It's sure to be a successful season with the addition of talented recruits like freshmen Koby McEwen and Diogo Brito. When speaking of the chemistry of this year's team, Duryea is nothing but optimistic.

"It's the closest group we've had in four or five years here," Duryea said. "They really enjoy each other's company."

But the players are not the only close group on the court. Duryea who is focusing on developing his team, has managed to develop

strong ties with his fellow coaches and has become someone his colleagues look up to.

"When something goes wrong, he wonders what he didn't do right. That's the mark of a great leader," said Tarvish Felton, associate head coach.

This will be Felton's first year as associate head, but if his previous coaching career renders, it should not be his last. Felton was first hired onto the Utah State basketball staff back in 2008 with an emphasis on offense and rebounding.

"When I first got here nine years ago, I was just trying to figure out how to fit in and not screw it up," Felton said.

He has managed to do the opposite. Under Felton's watch, the rebound margin has not only been acceptable, it has been awarded. From leading in the Western Athletic Conference in the 2012-2013 season, ranking 18th in the NCAA, and an average of 35 rebounds per game last season, it is clear that Felton's mark has been printed on his team. Now as associate head coach, Felton is prepared to step up his game even more with Duryea as inspiration.

While Felton has worked side-

by-side with Duryea for a span of nine years, nobody is more qualified to validate for Duryea than his own player and now fellow assistant coach Spencer Nelson.

"Being in the backroom, seeing him from the player's perspective, he's everything that he was as an assistant coach now as a head coach," Nelson said. "Great basketball mind, incredible person, really high character, and just wants to help these guys succeed."

From an Aggie great, to a professional player in Europe, and now back again to the spectrum floor, Spencer Nelson has proved he is worthy of a position on the USU basketball staff.

In his college days at Utah State, Nelson was not only a valuable and talented player, but also a scholar and inspiration to his team members. As far as changes go in Logan, Nelson remains nostalgic and excited for the new experience.

"The facilities have obviously improved drastically, but it's still the same old Spectrum," Nelson said. "The people are the same, the community is great, and it's what I remember as far as Aggie basketball goes. I met my wife here so we both are aggies. It absolutely feels

like we're coming home."

Only a year out of retiring from professional basketball, Nelson is more apt than anyone to relating on a personal level with the players. He is able to know what they are thinking and understand their perspective.

A close friend throughout his career, and an assistant coach to him in his glory days of play, Duryea shared nothing but support for Nelson.

"Before you even start thinking about the basketball side of it, he's just a great person to have in your program," Duryea said. "Spencer always bring his energy, his optimism, and he's a great people person. I had no reservations when I hired him, and I'm even more happy about it now."

More than any skill-set or rebound, the greatest benefit this year's team has is its family environment — something that shows on and off the court.

"We have a tight knit staff. We all look out for one another. It literally is the deal here. My son can hang out with any one of the players. It truly feels like home," Felton said.

# Offseason ink

BY SEAN COGHLAN

There's a low hum in the studio as the radio playing in the corner covers the miniscule amount of empty sound. Images of pirate ships, panthers, and multi-colored faces hang from frames on the wall. Two artists exercise their craft onto a pair of subjects, willing to have their art drawn onto them for the rest of their lives. James Zehna, owner of Sailor Jim's Electric Tattoo, sits in the corner working on a young man's arm. His partner is at his own station facing a more sizeable arm, gearing up for nearly six hours of listening to the buzz of the machine and ink being planted in the canvas before him.

The artist is Louisiana native Johannes Franciscus, and the arm belongs to Utah State starting forward Jalen Moore.

"The hands (on the clock) are when I was born," says Moore, as Franciscus readies his next canvas. Two banners are strewn alongside the face of the clock, depicting the birthdays of his mother and father. Along with the birthdays, Moore has tattoos for the two states his parents are from — Utah for his mother, and Mississippi for his father.

Franciscus has been tattooing at Sailor Jim's for two-and-a-half years, learning the style of American traditional tattoos under his mentor Zehna. He's lived everywhere from Nashville to Dallas, even finding himself spending an extended amount of time in Hawaii. He's worked with food in restaurants and on ranges as a farmhand. With vast experience in

numerous aspects and adventures in life, Franciscus feels tattooing is his calling.

"It's romantic," says Franciscus. "I do take pride in the fact that I am learning, that that new tattoo or session I did does not look just like the last one, so it's always evolving. It's always changing, it's always moving." Franciscus spoke of the longevity of tattooing, and how the art has changed, is changing and will change — "and therein lies the romance."

Franciscus and Zehna make all of their own ink, build and tune their own machines, and are involved with as much of the process as they can be. It's the American traditional way, and they don't see themselves diverting from their customs.

Moore had heard about the work performed by both Franciscus and Zehna from friends around Logan, going in for his initial appointment around a year ago — it would be his first tattoo. Above a basketball on his wrist lies the acronym F.O.E. — Family Over Everything. In addition to F.O.E. and the clock, a portrait of an angel stretches from tricep to bicep.

Now nearly a year removed from his first tattoo, Moore has his entire right arm covered in ink, but not in a Nick Young "strictly for buckets" sort of way. Moore preferred to get them all on his shooting arm, as a way to showcase what means the most to him.

Though some might view excessive ink in an unfavorable light, an estimated 30 percent of Americans

have at least one tattoo. A butterfly on the ankle, the heart composed of a bass and treble clef, a heart with "MOM" running through it — whatever the design, tattoos are memories that everyone can see, and memories that people want everyone to see.

For sophomore Norbert Janicek, a Slovakian transfer from Snow College, his only tattoo is a set of three arrows, with triangles dotting the background.

"It's about life," Janicek says. "It means when life pulls you back and it gets bad, it's going to be better soon. Everything's going to be good."

Freshman forward Klay Stall, an Arizona native, has two: the phrase "Respect All, Fear None" on his left bicep, and a series of numerals on his right bicep — the birthday of his late grandmother.

Some have the sleeve, featuring everything from the sport they love, to an angel following them everywhere, to the one thing over everything — family.

"It means a lot, to have my family on me," says Moore, whose older brother and former Aggie Grayson was the first to get tattooed. "Just something I wanted to get for them."

Covered arms, legs, hands, necks, and faces — Franciscus has seen all of these and more. From the Avett Brothers song, "The Ballad of Love and Hate," to a pair of electrical switches on each temple, to a set of anchors on the forehead, "to keep the hairline from creeping up too much," Franciscus says.

Shane Rector, Utah State's senior point guard from Bronx, New York earns the top spot on the team for the most tattooed. His first was when he was still a teenager: a banner across his chest saying "Blood and sweat, but never tears." His favorite rests on his right forearm, a portrait of the Statue of Liberty whose face has been replaced by that of Marilyn Monroe.

"It just reminds me of home," says Rector. Further up his arm is his second favorite, a crowned basketball with the phrase "Love this game." Rector says he's taking his time before he gets his next tattoo, and that he has plenty for now.

Franciscus continues his work on people, welcoming familiar faces as well as new clients. The artist says he will stop by when his hometown University of New Orleans comes to Logan.

"I'd love to go when UNO comes," he says. "I don't have any gear, so I guess I'll just wear Saints stuff."

For those who love the ancient art of tattooing, ink acts as a bridge connecting people in Louisiana with people from Logan, UT. But Franciscus says there are two things to keep in mind.

"They are not for everyone, and that is perfectly fine," says Franciscus. "And two, there is a tattoo out there for you, and a tattooer for you. Do your homework, what does and does not work. Take a second, see why you like it and compare it with others. Make sure it is for you."

# Immediate impact

Hailey Bassett readies for her first season in an Aggie uniform

BY MIRANDA WEBB

Hailey Bassett, a star player from Layton High, is preparing herself for her first year on college courts with the Utah State women's basketball team.

Since her first initial visit last November, Bassett felt inclined to make Logan the home for her college career.

In comparison to other campuses she previously toured, Bassett said the atmosphere at Utah State felt most welcoming.

"The coaches were just amazing and the girls were just so sweet to me," Bassett said. "They just took me in and made me feel like family."

And Bassett's coaches adore her right back.

"She is everything you want in a recruit," said Jerry Finkbeiner, the head coach for the team. Bassett's basketball history further demonstrates that point.

"I started playing basketball when I was five," Bassett said. "I've always had a big love for basketball and it's always grown each year. I love the competition, I really like winning and I love the excitement it brings to me when I'm playing

as a team and working with my friends."

From Little League and Junior Jazz to a successful high school year, Bassett earned all-state honors and winning the region title for two consecutive years at Layton high.

Bassett's recruiting process goes back more than three years

prior to her college experience. "I started getting recruited when I was in 10th grade and I've always loved Utah State," Bassett said.

"We try to get the best Utah girl," Finkbeiner said. Aside from being a Utah-favorite, Bassett's passion for the sport has earned her the position on the team.

Finkbeiner said it was a "win-win" situation when recruiting Bassett.

"Hailey wanted to be an Aggie, and we cultivated that, and we signed it and we're happy she's here," Finkbeiner said.

Bassett is the only athlete listed as both a forward and a guard on a

team of 15.

"As she progresses her freshman year and on into her career, we would like for her to move out to that three-guard spot," Finkbeiner said.

This rotating position is nothing new to Bassett.

**"I'M NERVOUS TO START PLAYING ACTUAL GAMES BECAUSE IT'S SUCH A DIFFERENT GAME. BUT I THINK I'LL DO WELL."**

"In Junior High I played point guard because I wasn't tall until I reached high school and then they moved me to post and that was a big transition," Bassett said. "I went from a shooting guard to a five post and that was really tough but that helped me a lot being able to handle the ball and also post up."

While she was still a junior in high school, Finkbeiner told Bassett that her dynamic would be a helpful asset in college ball.

Finkbeiner is also impressed by her character off the court.

"She accepts her teammates and her teammates accept her really well. It's just a good group, and Hai-

ley is a big part of that good group," Finkbeiner said.

Since the start of this school year—and since hearing about Utah State from her brother, a USU alum—Bassett has been pleased with her decision to become an Aggie.

"The Aggie environment is amazing," said Bassett on her involvement so far as a student of Utah State.

Bassett is also looking forward to sharing her Aggie experience with her boyfriend, who will soon be returning from an LDS mission.

In the past offseason with her new team, Bassett feels that she has not only improved, but that she has become, as she said, "mentally stronger, physically stronger, and a better basketball player."

Looking ahead, Finkbeiner is convinced of a good year thanks to Hailey on the team.

"This freshman class is really a tight group..." Finkbeiner said. "They're in support of each other, and Hailey is right in that mix."



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# He's new in town

Meet the Aggies' host of incoming freshmen, lead by rising star Koby McEwen

BY MEGAN MCNULTY

Freshman guard Koby McEwen comes from a team who was simply too good to play in 2A — a small, private school in San Pete county called Wasatch Academy.

Wasatch Academy's entire student body would fit in section K in the Dee Glen Smith Spectrum where McEwen will soon play.

"I'm going to be really nervous. I've never played in front of a lot of people before," McEwen said, anxious for the first home game on Nov. 4. "Not like this."

McEwen has some experience on the big stage, though.

The Wasatch Academy Tigers went independent two seasons ago, traveling the country to play some of the best teams in states like Alabama and Florida. In the midst of a difficult schedule, McEwen bolstered the Tigers to a 24-7 record last season.

McEwen, the Toronto, Canada native, decided to come to Utah State because his first coach at Wasatch Academy, Geno Morgan, and current Aggie assistant coach Louis Wilson were college teammates/roommates and have similar attitudes and coaching styles.

Morgan, who McEwen had developed a deep relationship with, passed away last year.

"Koby had so much of a relationship with Morgan, it was very easy for him to transition to Wilson," said Curtis Condie, former Aggie assistant coach who coached Koby his senior year.

When Koby showed interest in Utah State, Condie, being a former

Aggie himself, brought Koby up for a few campus visits.

"He feels at home and I think that's a big thing for him," Condie said. "That's why he liked it at Wasatch and I think it's the same thing."

McEwen has separated himself from the beginning, averaging 18.7 points, 4.6 rebounds and 5.4 assists per game his senior season. Aggie head coach Tim Duryea said the Aggies had shown interest in McEwen since his freshman year at Wasatch Academy.

With earning Mountain West Co-Freshman of the Year, the first for the Aggies since they joined the Mountain West Conference in 2013, and leading both blue and white teams with 12 points at the annual Primetime Madness scrimmage, he will likely be the Aggies' starting guard this season.

"Koby is physically gifted for a freshman," Duryea said.

McEwen, the six-foot-four-inch 195 pound powerhouse, brings all the finesse to Logan as the Aggies' highest recruited guard in history.

Not only does he make an impact on the court, he deeply cares about his teammates and is extremely loyal.

"And not just basketball-wise but his mental attitude and his work ethic," Condie said.

"He brings toughness that I think has been missing up there. As you know, he also has a million dollar smile."

McEwen has already received attention from many Aggie fans

and lots of love via social media.

But everything isn't always serious for McEwen — he likes to sing and play chess in his free time.

"I like to sing by myself a lot. I went from terrible to OK," McEwen said. "I taught myself how to sing a little bit. I sing in my apartment all the time. Coming up the stairs, in my room."

McEwen is not the only freshman who will have a large impact on the court this year and several others will vie for leadership positions on the team. Six of the seven new freshman received scholarships — the only exception being Trevin Dorius (forward) from Wasatch High School who will redshirt because of his decision to serve an LDS mission.

"Anytime you have a large freshman class, and a freshman class that is highly regarded like ours is, you're looking for immediate impact," Duryea said of the largest freshman class in Aggie history.

"You know that they're gonna get better in the future, but you know that you need some of them to get better right away."

With the team's only returners being Julion Pearre, Shane Rector, Jalen Moore, Quinn Taylor and Alexis Dargenton, Duryea's main focus is transitioning the freshman to the college level and then place them into starting and backup positions from there.

"It's kind of a hodgepodge of backgrounds and separation, but hopefully they will all come together and it will be a positive

experience," Duryea said.

Klay Stall (forward) from Basha High School in Chandler, Arizona is recovering from an ACL injury that wiped out his senior year.

"The coaches were super loyal after I got hurt," Stall said. "It was tough missing your senior year, but recovery went well so excited to start playing again."

Another huge contributor will be guard Sam Merrill from Bountiful High School, who recently returned from an LDS mission in Nicaragua. Merrill has a variety of athletic talent, lettering in basketball, baseball, golf and football high school.

"The whole idea of playing under these new lights with new people is exciting," Merrill said.

The Aggies are also welcoming in guard Diogo Brito, who is originally from Portugal and came to the U.S. to play high school basketball at Mountain Mission High School in Virginia. He also had the opportunity to play overseas for the Portuguese national team since 2012 — bringing professional experience to the roster.

Daron Henson (wing) from Cathedral High School in Pasadena, California and Abel Porter (guard) from Davis High School wrap up the freshman class.

"We do a lot of things together we don't leave each other behind," McEwen said. "It makes it easier to play with each other on the court because we get along."

# Finding faith in basketball

**Julion Pearre credits family, faith for success on and off the court**

BY PAIGE CAVANESS

It was in the early years of Julion Pearre's life that he developed two deep loves: one for basketball and one for God.

Pearre grew up with his mom, dad and two younger brothers in McKinney, Texas. They attended the New Covenant Fellowship Church where his father, Hulon, served as a Deacon.

His parents made sure that prayer was a part of their children's lives as they were raising them, but other than that, Hulon and Perde-thia Pearre said they simply tried to live Christian lives in order to be everyday examples to their sons.

Pearre's father also introduced him to basketball.

"I've loved it since I was four," said Pearre of the sport. "I've played it ever since."

From as early as second or third grade, it was clear to his parents that Pearre would develop into a successful athlete, but he was playing both football and basketball at that time, so they were unsure which sport he would pursue long-term.

However, the expectation set for their sons had nothing to do with sports, but everything to do with

how they live.

"The expectation is that they do not live their life to please others, but be the best person they can be and fulfill the life that God has already ordained for them," Pearre's parents said.

"I grew up always believing in God, always making sure I give Him credit first," Julion Pearre said. "I do think I worked hard, but I feel like God put me in opportunities for me to capitalize. He gave me my blessings, and I've just got to always give Him the credit."

Through the good and the bad times, Pearre said his faith is what keeps him playing the sport he loves.

His first proudest basketball moment was making the A-team in seventh grade basketball. But from teenage years to Division I college ball, it hasn't always been an easy or pretty ride for Pearre.

"Sometimes I go through bad slumps when I can't make a shot or something," Pearre said. "Having my faith is what allows me to stay positive. I just know that He will get me through it. He puts you in tough situations and you will overcome them, just keep your faith."

This year, as one of the only four returners on the team, Pearre will be joined by many young and comparatively inexperienced players, but he sees them as nothing less than brothers. "These guys have become my family away from home," he said.

Pearre understands he has a responsibility to lead the team on and off the court. But this doesn't scare him or add any unnecessary pressure, both he and his parents feel that he thrives in leadership roles.

"I like being able to lead, I just try to teach them and give them the wisdom that I've gained from playing. I help them understand some of the mistakes I've made in the past so they can learn from them," Pearre said. "I embrace that kind of thing. If anything, it helps me."

He started embracing leadership roles as early as kindergarten. His parents said one of their proudest moments was watching him receive the honor of Servant Leader at his kindergarten graduation. The award recipient was described as someone who consistently displayed Christlike qualities of care and kindness to others while

being a Godly example, and gently guiding others to follow the right path, Hulon Pearre said.

"From an early age, we noticed that Julion was a very caring and giving individual. He would give of himself and his possessions if he saw a classmate or peer in need," Pearre's parents said. "We believe that you receive your greatest blessings through giving."

Pearre recognizes those blessings in the opportunity he has been given to play Division I basketball, in the team that has become like family away from home to him, and in the family he grew up in.

"I've got to give all the credit to God, I wouldn't be here without Him," Pearre said. "He put a lot of blessings in my life and I just have to take as much advantage of them as I can."

His parents are proud of all his accomplishments in life, academics and basketball. But, above all, they are proud that he continues to live his faith even though he is approximately 1300 miles away from the home where he learned it.

# Say hello to the Australian Swiss-Army Knife

You can stop gawking at her accent now

BY JASON WALKER

Yes, Rachel Brewster hails from the Melbourne, Australia area (pronounced Mel-bn, not Mel-born FYI). Melbourne is a quiet town of a little more than four million people. But there's more to her than your first impression of how she says words like "no".

Growing up, Brewster lived not much more than a casual stone's throw away from the beach. And right next to the big city. But that has all changed with her move to the Beehive State here in the United States. Beaches and dense suburbs have been replaced with mountains and the open spaces of Cache Valley. Not an easy thing.

"It was a huge change," Brewster said, "I've been to some mountains before but they were three hours away from my house."

When it comes to the cultural differences, Brewster said there aren't very many differences between the United States and Australia.

"There's really not that many cultural differences," she said. "It's easy because we speak the same language. I get asked a lot if English is my first language, which it is. So culturally it wasn't really much of a change."

The reason for Rachel Brewster to travel approximately 8,400 miles to play basketball was pretty simple.

"It's mainly the experience and the opportunity to be able to play a high level of sport and get a good

education at the same time," she said.

Another reason for Brewster to come to the United States was to get a good education and be able to pay for it. In Australia, student athletes do not receive scholarships. The only way you can get paid is if you play at a high enough level.

It's no secret the United States is the basketball capital of the world. With the NBA, the growing WNBA and even college basketball, if you want to play at the highest level in basketball, sooner or later you will end up in America.

Basketball fans in Utah are familiar with Australian basketball players. Former Golden State Warriors center Andrew Bogut played his college ball at the University of Utah. And fans of the Utah Jazz have been treated with small forward Joe Ingles and point guard Dante Exum. Bogut and Exum also come from Brewster's hometown of Melbourne.

The WNBA has also had its fair share of Aussie influence. A total of 27 native-born Australians have suited up for WNBA teams. Most notable among them is three-time MVP Lauren Jackson.

Playing basketball at a higher level does have its downsides, though. In Australia, when practicing with a WNBL (Australian equivalent of the WNBA) team, Rachel Brewster would practice three times a week for an hour and

a half. Here, her team practices almost daily for three hours.

Along with the new workload, there's also the difference in the style of basketball to get used to. Believe it or not, basketball isn't played the same way all around the world.

"I think American basketball is a lot more fast paced and there's a lot more athletic players, whereas in Australia it's more technical and people don't really rely as much on their athletic abilities," she said.

Despite the differences in style, Brewster didn't find it that difficult to adjust.

"The level I play at home actually helped me a lot when I came over here," she said. "It was pretty much the physical side that I had to step up and get a little bit faster and learn to make decision a little bit quicker."

Brewster's upbringing in basketball has not only helped her to adjust to the American style of basketball, it has given her valuable tools. Growing up, Brewster primarily played down low as a post player. As she has gotten older, however, she has gradually moved to guard, playing primarily on the outside.

Even though she no longer plays in the post, Brewster's experience playing there has made her an incredibly versatile player. She is an all-around player with the ability to do a little bit of everything on

the floor. As evidenced by the fact that she leads all returning players in points, rebounds, assists, steals, field goals made, and three-pointers made.

Because of her all-around dominance of the court, Rachel Brewster is considered the top returning player for the team — and is not ignorant of that designation. She is well aware and has very high expectations for herself.

"I put a lot of pressure on myself," she said. "A lot more than what anyone else does. I definitely feel like I need to step up this season. Definitely build on what I did last season because I still wasn't 100% happy with my season last season. I played a lot of minutes but I think I could have done a lot more with the minutes I got."

Other Paragraph, maybe throw in if it fits

Another reason for Brewster to come to the United States was to get a good education and be able to pay for it. In Australia, student athletes do not receive scholarships. The only way you can get paid is if you play at a high enough level.



# New kids on the block

Utah State looks to turn heads in the Mountain West behind a few veterans and a whole lot of new blood

BY TRISTAN PARADISE

Heading into the second season of his tenure, head coach Tim Duryea has created a fresh-faced roster featuring several new players.

"I'm excited about all of them in different phases," Duryea said. "Some will be red-shirted and some of them will be counted on to play right away."

Despite the youth of the team, assistant coach Tarvish Felton thinks that the whole roster can compete in the Mountain West conference.

"I feel like we have a group that from 1-13 are Mountain West level guys," Felton said. "I think we have good size at each position and I think we have enough depth now at each position."

The team will look to senior Jalen Moore to lead the team by example after posting team-high averages of 16.7 points and 7.3 rebounds last season. Moore declared for the NBA draft after his junior season, before withdrawing his name from consideration to return to Logan for his senior year. Moore is the only Aggie to return who appeared and started in every game for Utah State last year. Shane Rector, Quinn Taylor, Julion Pearre and Alexis Dargenton are the other returning Aggies this

year who have been influential mentors for the first-year players.

"Those five have really done a good job in practice of saying: 'This is how we do this.' It's a really good group," Duryea said. "Probably the closest group we've had in four or five years here."

Felton echoed Duryea's remarks. "We recruit really good kids," Felton said. "It truly is a family atmosphere here."

With Moore entering his final year of eligibility, the Aggie faithful will be keeping their eyes on freshman Koby McEwen. The Wasatch Academy product is the highest rated recruit ever for Utah State. McEwen was listed in ESPN's Top 100 recruits and was considered the 19th best point guard in the nation, 10th best in region and second best in state. McEwen averaged 18.7 points, 4.6 rebounds and 5.4 assists as a high school senior.

"He's obviously a kid with tons of talent," Duryea said of McEwen, "and maybe even as important; tons of confidence. When you put those two together, you have a competitive individual and those guys are really good players."

A couple new transfers to look out for will be Ngor Barnaba and Norbert Janicek. Both are lengthy forwards that will be expected to

contribute right away.

"We need big contributions from Ngor Barnaba on the front-line, from Norby Janicek on the front-line," Duryea said.

Barnaba averaged 14.7 points and 7.5 rebounds per game before transferring from Missouri State-West Plains. Janicek averaged 15.6 points and 6.2 rebounds in his last season at Snow College.

Some familiar faces that will not be seen are Chris Smith, Grayson Moore, Lew Evans and Elston Jones. Smith and G. Moore graduated at the conclusion of last season. Lew Evans transferred to the University of Tennessee and Elston Jones went to UC Irvine.

A new addition to the Aggie bench will be former Utah State standout Spencer Nelson. Nelson ranks 19th in scoring and eighth in rebounding all-time for the Aggies. Duryea welcomes the addition of Nelson with open arms.

"He's just a great person to have in your program," Duryea said. "For our big guys to have a guy that played 10 years at the professional level is a major coup for us."

Nelson compared his experience in European basketball similarly to the college level.

"The European game is a lot more like college basketball with

the rules and style of play," Nelson said. "Being able to play for some of the best coaches in Europe, in some of the highest leagues, that experience can carry over to the coaching aspect. Hopefully I can help bridge a gap between coaches and players and help us all understand each other a little better."

It feels like returning home for Nelson, who is excited to return to Logan.

"It does have a very much of a coming home feel," Nelson said. "We were away for 11 years, 10 of which were overseas. We hadn't really made a home in America yet, so it absolutely feels like coming back home."

Nelson sees similarities between his separate stints here and he hopes to help the Aggies return to glory days.

"The community is great and it's what I remember as far as Aggie basketball goes," Nelson said. "Hopefully we can have the success that I remember, that we had back in the day, and have the support we had and I'm sure we will."

# “Every year is a new year”

BY PAIGE CAVANESS

Last year, head coach Jerry Finkbeiner brought the Aggies to an 8-10 conference record — the most conference wins the team has seen since it joined the Mountain West Conference. Assistant coach Ben Finkbeiner said finishing seventh in the conference was a huge improvement for a young, not-so-experienced team.

The team experienced some turbulence shortly after the end of the season last year when sophomore guard and leading scorer — on the team and in the conference — Funda Nakkasoglu decided to leave the program, along with sophomore Baylee Peck. On top of that, assistant coach Micha Thompson took a job at another program.

Jerry Finkbeiner said both of these transitions were minor bumps in the road because the staff is always prepared to pull the trigger and recruit where necessary. In regards to the replacement coach and point guards, Finkbeiner said, “Micha left, we pulled the trigger and got a great one... Funda left, we pulled the trigger and got two great ones.”

Of having promising players leave his program, Finkbeiner said “That’s ten years ago now to us.”

Kelsie Kruger was that “great one” that joined the coaching staff

in replacement of Micha Thompson this year. She came from South Dakota State University and has more than five years of coaching experience, and a lifetime of college basketball experience thanks to the fact that her father has coached women’s collegiate basketball for as long as she can remember.

Eliza West and Jessie Geer are the “two great ones” that were recruited for the point guard position after Nakkasoglu left. “They both come from winning programs,” Finkbeiner said. “Jessie was the MVP in Wyoming and Eliza is an extremely talented point guard from Australia.”

Along with those two guards, there are four other new freshmen this year in Hailey Basset, Shannon Dufficy, Dee More and Olivia West.

Nine women from the squad this year will be returning. Rachel Brewster is the one Ben Finkbeiner picks as the most accomplished player on the roster. Brewster was picked for first team all-freshman last year, and was a highly decorated high school and secondary college player in Australia before she came to Utah State.

Deja Mason and Katie Toole are two other players who had breakthrough seasons last year to keep an eye on in this upcoming

season. Mason set a college record in blocks last season and Toole was a key in helping the team make it to the quarterfinals of the conference tournament.

The other returners include seniors Angelica de Paulo and Antoina Robison, and sophomores Victoria Price, Taylor Enders, Lizzy Klinker, and Lindsey Jensen.

“We have fifteen girls on the roster and we’re deep,” Finkbeiner said. “We’re going to play a lot of girls early. I think we can press more, hopefully run more, and our offense is more spread out so it will be more of a four or five-pronged attack versus one or two from last year.”

Also in contrast with last year is the deep home schedule early on in the season. Eight of the 12 preseason games will be played at the Dee Glen Spectrum. “This is the first year I’ve been here that our schedule is conducive to gaining some momentum early,” Jerry Finkbeiner said. “Best case scenario we stay healthy and get some wins at home to get momentum for that first league game against Boise at the end of December.”

Other games that the coaches are looking forward to include Arizona on Dec. 21, BYU on Dec. 17 and the University of Utah on Dec.

3. Not to mention other regional schools like SUU, UVU, and Westminster.

As for conference play, both of the Finkbeiners predict the changes in the league this year will work to their advantage.

“The conference right now is in a little bit of a shake up,” Ben Finkbeiner said. “The top has been good for a long time but the bottom continues to rise and there’s new coaches and new recruits. With the exception of the teams at the top, we think everything is going to shuffle around a bit. It should be exciting to watch.”

Jerry Finkbeiner said his expectations for this year are much higher than they were at the beginning of last season. The team last year finished two or three wins behind a fourth place spot in the final standings. This year they are looking for a spot in the top third of the conference — at least at No. 4.

“Last year we made great strides. The year before we were about eleventh in the conference then the next year we made a huge jump and took seventh,” Ben Finkbeiner said. “We are hoping to make that same jump this year.”

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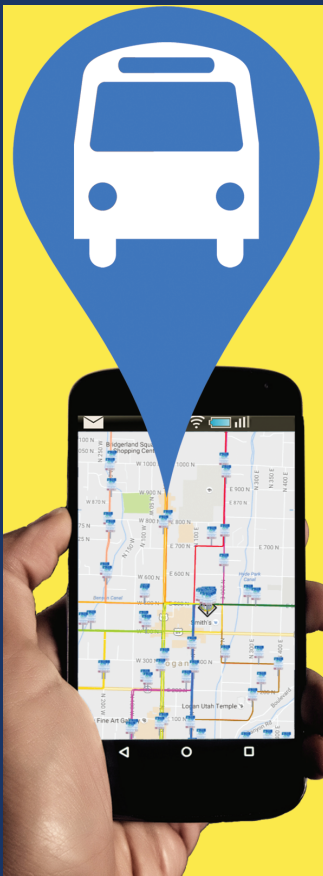
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