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## February 07, 2012

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Tuesday, February 7, 2012

## thedmonline.com

# ASB president seeks changes to budget in the future

BY JACOB BATTE thedmnews@gmail.com

Through the 2011-12 academic year the Associated Student body has introduced new Scantrons, hosted the Black and White Affair and created the Two+2 program.

What is not publicized is how much it costs to buy all the Scantrons, how much it costs to put on the affair and to create the new meet and greet.

That money comes from the ASB's yearly budget and is allotted by its treasurer, John James.

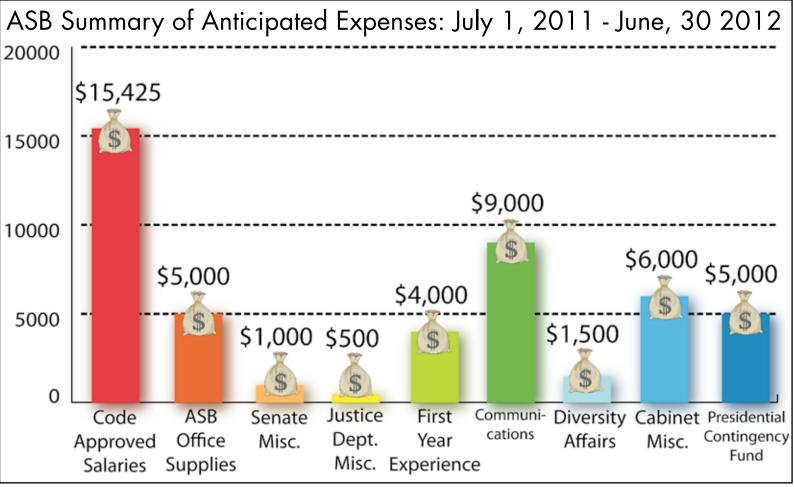
Though James remains the acting treasurer, he is currently working in Houston in an accounting internship.

ASB comptroller Garner Reesby said the transition of James moving from Oxford to Houston has been a smooth one.

"John is more of the face while (comptroller) Chris (Brantley) and I really ask the tough questions," Reesby said of allocations to student organizations in an earlier interview.

James said the only thing that has changed is that he isn't there in person.

"I still perform all of my duties from Houston," he said. "I just work from an email/phone call perspective. I hold my office



INFOGRAPHIC BY KELSEY DOCKERY | The Daily Mississippiar

ASB General Fund totals \$47,425. First Year Experience includes freshmen focus (\$1,500), transfer leadership (\$500), rebel series (\$1,000), residential life (\$500) and engagement (\$500).

hours through email rather than in person now."

James said the day-to-day work is still done through email, before being approved by the Dean of

Students office.

He is still being paid as full time ASB treasurer, while Reesby and Brantley do not hold office hours.

"They serve as my cabinet, just as (ASB president) Taylor McGraw has his cabinet," James said.

McGraw said James being See BUDGET, PAGE 4

gone has been a little bit inconvenient, but it hasn't been a huge problem.

# Rebel Sports Radio aims to revitalize Ole Miss fan base

🔛 😤 🛋 🚺 10:21 PM oading Rebel Sports Radio Live Stream. dio to cover Ole Miss sports exclusively, 24 hours a day. there is looking for a place where they can hear Ole Miss talk 24 hours a day, get their

new station is the first in a said. growing trend of Internet ra-

Jasper sold his Buffalo Bills website in 2006 and started VSporto in 2011. Jasper said the Ole Miss loyal fan base is the reason it made sense to go the Internet radio route.

"We don't just want to be the first, we want to be really, really good at it," Jasper said. "We want to make great radio for Ole Miss fans."

Jasper said many other sports outlets utilize other Internet radio has been types of media besides radio, rapidly growing over the past such as blogs and message boards, but he said they were going to focus their efforts elsewhere. "We are radio," he said. "Let's focus on making really solid, great radio and not worry about that other stuff. I don't want to compete with print media or television. My main thing with Rebel Sports Radio is making really good radio."

ming at the time to search everything Rebel Sports Radio has on file to find programs they are interested in.

"If you tune in and everything is about recruiting, and you don't want to know about recruiting, you can go back and listen to the Hugh Freeze interview or the Deuce McAllister interview," Jasper said. Rebel Sports Radio also features a wide variety of content. Garrett said the station is an all-encompassing network covering every aspect of Ole Miss athletics. Some of the different programs the station features include a show all about recruiting, a show about Ole Miss' involvement nationally and a basketball-centered show, as well as fan-based shows with the guys from Red Cup Rebellion.



GRAPHIC COURTESY KELLEN FARMER

BY PEYTON THIGPEN peytonthigpen@gmail.com

There's a new radio station in town covering all things Ole Miss sports in an innovative way that aims to make every aspect of athletics more accessible.

Sports Rebel Radio launched on Nov. 10, 2011, about a week before the Rebels were scheduled to face off against the LSU Tigers. The

Ole Miss news and the most up-to-date Ole Miss information from the guys who cover this team, this is the place to come to," said Ben Garrett, general manager of Rebel Sports Radio.

"If any Ole Miss fan out

Rebel Sports Radio is the brainchild of 27-year-old Mississippi native Keith Jasper. Jasper started his first sports website when he was 14 years old and considered himself a displaced Buffalo Bills fan living in Mississippi. He said the idea of displaced fans is what inspired VSporto, the company that supports Rebel Sports Radio.

"I was a Bills fan, and here I was wanting information like this; I couldn't imagine a world where there weren't fans like me for every other sports team out there," Jasper

few years, especially since the invention of the smartphone and mobile apps. Pandora radio now has over 125 million active listeners. In comparison, Sirius satellite radio only has 20 million subscribers.

Jasper cites this growth in Internet radio as one of the reasons Rebel Sports Radio launched its mobile app, available for free on both Android and Apple devices. Internet radio also allows the station to more carefully monitor its listening base and allows for advertisers to more carefully focus their marketing strategy.

Jasper and Garrett said they want Rebel Sports Radio to be the most easily accessible outlet with the best content for listeners.

Garrett said he shares the same sentiment.

"Our goal is to become the one-stop shop for all Ole Miss fans to get their Ole Miss listening news," he said.

Rebel Sports Radio is the first Internet radio station to offer all its content in ondemand format. This allows listeners who might not be interested in the live program-

Students seem to support the idea of an Ole Miss athletics exclusive network.

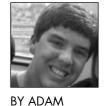
"The sports marketing program has done things to give fans more accessibility to all

See RADIO, PAGE 4

# OPINION

OPINION | 02.07.12 | THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN | PAGE 2

# It's budgeting season



BLACKWELL

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ablackwe

I've tried to discuss issues specifically pertaining to Mississippi lately. Of course, it's important that we consider global and national issues, but I think state issues are extraordinarily important, especially in a time when our newly elected officials are entering office.

I have been closely following Gov. Phil Bryant's transition to head of state. Recently, the office of the governor issued a press release with information regarding Bryant's budget proposals to the Mississippi Legislature. After reading over the press release, I have to ask myself, "Where does Bryant stand on education?"

Bryant has cut funding to higher education and K-12 education, and the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) continues to be underfunded. However, Bryant has not proposed cuts to student financial aid. Essentially, I feel that Bryant is saying, "Hey, I want Mississippi students to have the opportunity to go to college, but I plan to make it more expensive."

Not to mention, Bryant proposes to cut funding to community colleges institutions that are quickly increasing in importance in Mississippi. Furthermore, Bryant weakens the already feeble K-12 education in Mississippi by cutting funding and mandating that school districts use reserve funds to make up the difference. Reserve funds should be used in extreme circumstances or financial crises, neither of which we are experiencing at this time.

As college students, we should be

extremely concerned that Mississippi's leadership continues to propose and pass funding cuts to higher education. Not only do we, as students, have to expect to pay more tuition, but we can also plan on seeing larger classes if professors are removed; our technology will not progress at the same rate as the rest of the country if our funding continues to be cut. How can the University of Mississippi expect to compete with top universities around the country if the state does not financially support it, as they should?

Bryant has also called for a new budgeting process — the Smart Budget Act, by which state budgeting would be based on performance. While I think this idea has some merit, at this time it is not right for Mississippi. How can we expect programs such as the Department of Environmental Quality or even the Department of Education to perform well when our leadership does not support them? What if the Mississippi Development Authority or economic groups don't attract enough businesses to Mississippi one year? Does this mean their funding will be cut?

Essentially, I think Bryant is setting some programs up to fail miserably.

Look for more information in the coming weeks as the legislature tackles the state budget. Find out what our governor thinks; research how your legislators vote. In two and four years, we'll be able to vote them out.

Adam Blackwell is a sophomore public policy leadership major from Natchez. Follow him on Twitter @AdamBlackwell1.

# Small class sizes should not be taken for granted



BY LEXI THOMAN alexandria.thoman @gmail.com

Like everyone else in the Ole Miss family, I love my university. I love the people, the tradition, the Grove and, yes, even class. I love the town of Oxford and the countryside in which it resides. I love the football games in the fall, the basketball games in the winter, the baseball games in the spring and all of the other sports in between.

I love the real sense of community that emanates from our little haven in northern Mississippi, whether you are a resident, student or visitor. The thing that impressed me the most about Ole Miss during my college visit nearly four years ago was just how friendly everyone was; how people could pick up a conversation with a complete stranger as if they had known them their entire lives.

I love walking across campus and seeing people I know, waving to friends from the Croft porch and running into classmates in the Student Union. I think the size of our student body is perfect — large enough to get rowdy on game day, but small enough that we have not lost the intimate feeling that is so unique to our university.

Along those same lines, perhaps my

favorite characteristic of Ole Miss is something that I think many of us take for granted: our class sizes. With the programs I am in, my average class size has been around 20 or 30 students, and I have even been in a class where I was one of four.

While some of my introductory classes may have had as many as 50, I never really understood just how remarkable this was until I arrived in Rio de Janeiro and met other exchange students, who just so happen to hail from various high-profile universities such as Harvard, UCLA, UC-Berkeley and Georgetown.

While talking to two of my friends from Berkley and UCLA last week at lunch, our conversation shifted to our favorite classes back home in the states. When it was my turn to talk, I listed some of my favorites and explained that sometimes the professors made all the difference, and how I'd love a class even though it had nothing to do with my academic focus.

Such was the case with my East Asian Studies class that I took with Dr. Frost and Dr. Cozad this past spring semester. I explained to my friends that even though I wasn't very interested in the subject matter, I looked forward to lectures because of the relationship I had with my professors.

It was when I started talking about how I could easily stop and chat with Dr. Frost if I ran into him on campus that my friend from Berkeley stopped me.

"Wait," he said. "Your professor actually knows your name?"

That question struck me as odd. "Uhh, yeah?"

Neither he nor my other friend could believe it.

So when they heard that my largest class size was the same as their smallest, they were absolutely speechless. Their normal class size was well over 100 students, sometimes even 200.

I am, by no means, trying to undermine the intellectual prowess of these big-name universities. They continually prove themselves academically again and again. But I, for one, could never imagine sitting down in a sea of students every day and getting the same thing out of class that I do with the interactive experience I have here at Ole Miss. I have even had professors email me when I wasn't in class! Needless to say, it really would be a

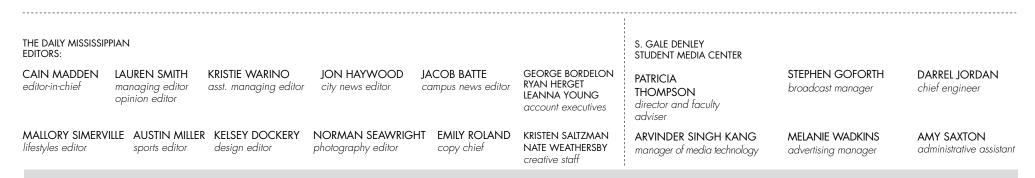
different world.

My message here is this: don't take the opportunity to have a relationship with your professor for granted. Though it is not something that is wholly unique to Ole Miss, it isn't exactly a common phenomenon in higher education today either, especially while an undergraduate. Unlike at other institutions, our professors aren't untouchable deities guarded by an army of teaching assistants, and I love that about my school.

In my experience, those professors I have reached out to have given me countless opportunities that I know would have been nearly impossible if I were just a face in hundreds like at other universities. I am extremely thankful to each and every one of the professors I have had over the past three years.

I can't help but wonder what my friends would have said if I had told them that a few students and I would regularly grab lunch with Dr. Frost after class.

Lexi Thoman is junior international studies and Spanish double-major from St. Louis, Mo.



# **Daily Mississippian**

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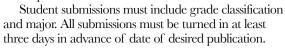
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Letters are welcome, but may be edited for clarity, space or libel.

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Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Third party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or "name withheld" will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.





MEMBER NEWSPAPE

# Bring the GOP primary to a close

# BY SEAN HIGGINS shiggins2011@gmail.com

As Mitt Romney claimed his third win of the primary season in Nevada Saturday night, the fight for the nomination continues — Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum and Ron Paul have all pledged to stay in the race. But while Romney is pulling ahead of the rest of the pack, Republican voters need to question the relevance of the remaining candidates.

Let's take a look at Saturday's Nevada caucus. Romney won by almost 30 percent, partly due to a significant amount of Mormon members in the Nevada GOP. However, Romney still would have won by at least 17 percent without the Mormon vote. In addition to Mormons, he also won among Protestants and Catholics. His victory was decisive; according to The Washington Post, Romney won among self-identified conservatives, Tea Party members, women, men, low-income and highincome voters. Mitt Romney won a majority of "very conservative" voters (51 percent). He also won 48 percent of the vote among evangelicals (48-27 percent) over Gingrich.

Romney's victory speech

IVE MON-FRI 5:30

REBROADCAST

was perhaps his best to date — pointedly directed at Barack Obama with the general election in mind. He started to present his case against President Obama, saying:

"Three years ago, a newly elected President Obama told America that if Congress approved his plan to borrow nearly a trillion dollars, he would hold unemployment below 8 percent. It hasn't been below 8 percent since. This week he's been trying to take a bow for 8.3 percent unemployment. Not so fast, Mr. President. This is the 36th straight month with unemployment above the red line your own administration drew. And if you take into account all the people who are struggling for work or who have just stopped looking, the real unemployment rate is over 15 percent."

Romney's rhetoric is much different than Gingrich's, who seems clearly intent on destroying Romney — even though he knows his smears could hurt the potential nominee in the general election. Just like classic Newt, he has no regard for his party and no respect for his fellow candidates. In Florida, he accused Romney of cutting kosher food for Holocaust survivors. In Nevada, Gingrich accused Romney of hating the poor. These types of false and baseless attacks do no good for the candidates or the Republican Party.

Thankfully, Romney has raised enough money through fundraising to respond to Gingrich's negative campaign. Politico reported that the Romney campaign raised \$24.3 million between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31 and has almost \$20 million cash on hand and no debt. Romney has almost 10 times the campaign funds Gingrich has, and Gingrich's campaign is \$600,000 in debt.

In addition to Romney's huge fundraising advantage, the political action committee supporting Romney finished 2011 with an astounding \$23.6 million in the bank. Political action committees can use unlimited funds to launch negative ads against any candidate they choose, which seems to be a trend in this election cycle. The PACs supporting Romney and Paul are credited with taking down former Speaker Gingrich's campaign in Iowa and Florida, showing how destructive and effective negative ads can be.

With Romney's stellar performances in New Hampshire, Florida and Nevada, the other three candidates should rethink their campaigns and their ability to win this primary and the general election. Without a broad base of support, and especially without the ability to out-fundraise Romney, it'll be nearly impossible for them to overtake his frontrunner status.

The bickering between Gingrich and Romney needs to stop. Republican voters seemingly aren't concerned with who has the most baggage or who has flip-flopped on the most issues. Gingrich, Paul and Santorum know they can't win; they've had their moment of fame, and now it's time for them to suspend their campaigns.

This negative, drawn-out battle doesn't put our party in good light; the most important item on our agenda needs to be defeating Obama in November. With unemployment over 8 percent and a lagging economy, this election will be a referendum on a failed presidency. It shouldn't be hard to beat Obama; we just need the right candidate.

Sean Higgins is a political science and journalism double-major from Brookings, S.D. Follow him on Twitter @seanmhiggins.





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# NEWS

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# RADIO,

continued from page 1

things athletics, which inevitably leads to sustained interest and passion even in the most losing season," senior English major Jordan Griesbeck said.

However, Rebel Sports Radio has no connection with Ole Miss sports marketing program, and Garrett said that gives them a lot of programming freedom.

"There are so many agendadriven shows out there that cover a variety of different things, and Ole Miss is just a part of their coverage," he said.

"For us, all we are covering is Ole Miss, and there is a base for that."

Garrett said Rebel Sports Radio is growing like a weed. It had over 550 listening hours this past Monday. When the station first launched three months ago, the average day saw about 75 listening hours. There is also a Mississippi State station called Bulldog Sports Radio. However, Jasper said that Rebel Sports Radio easily grew twice as fast.

"A lot of people feel like the administration at Ole Miss is not very social mediaembracing and technologyembracing, and I found that it doesn't matter what the administration does," he said.

"Ole Miss fans are all over social media. They are all over technology. They ate us up; they were downloading it like crazy. The ratings have been outstanding for Rebel Sports Radio."

Garrett said he thinks the potential for growth in the future is outstanding.

"The ceiling for this network is incredibly high," he said.

"We are excited about what we are doing, and we encourage everyone to jump on board and listen to what we have to say, and we have a feeling that if you tune in once, you'll be hooked."

Jasper said listener feedback is what is going to help Rebel Sports Radio thrive.

"I love to hear feedback from people, whether it is good or bad, because our focus is making really great radio," he said.

"We want to make sure that the quality of our radio is topnotch."

You can access Rebel Sports Radio by going to rebelsportsradio.com or searching for the mobile app in both the Android Market and Apple's App Store.

# BUDGET,

continued from page 1

"If it had happened in the fall we would really be in trouble," he said.

After looking at the 2010-11 budget of approximately \$60,000, James and McGraw felt it was time to ask Larry Ridgeway, vice chancellor of student affairs, for an increase.

"They gave us a gracious 40 percent increase," James said. "This has been tremendous, and we are thankful for that."

That jumped the total up to an even \$100,000 for the budget.

"We determined that all of the increase would go to funding student organizations, which is one of the most important parts of the treasury in my opinion," James said. "We are also looking into creating a new scholarship sponsored by the ASB."

McGraw said a new roll over policy was implemented this year. In the past, unspent allocations would go back to a big student affairs pot.

"This year we changed it to where we get those rollover funds this year," he said. "We've got about \$20,000 from last year."

McGraw believes the cabinet and senate will spend all of their money by the end of the year.

He said the biggest problem with their budget is that they can't give away as many prizes to students as they want to.

"We want to be able to give back to students but through procurement rules we can't purchase the prizes," he said. "Anytime we give away an iPad or an iPod Touch those have to be donated."

McGraw said that even with that rule, the cabinet has taken the challenge of trying to find creative things to do for the students.

This year the ASB set aside \$15,425 on salaries. McGraw will earn \$3,600 this year while the vice president earns \$2,475, the secretary receives \$2,250, the judicial chair \$3,300 and the attorney general \$800. James will make \$3,000. The salaries are a set pay in the university constitution.

McGraw said he will make a recommendation to change the constitution to where the treasurer, attorney general and secretary will be an appointed position without salary.

He said he wished there had been money to pay his cabinet this year.

"It's tough to keep them motivated for an entire year when they aren't receiving any type of reward for it," McGraw said. The ASB cabinet received

\$20,500, senate \$1,000 and the justice department received \$500. The ASB holds \$5,000 aside for office supplies and another \$5,000 for a contingency fund.

James said the budget for the ASB has gone well so far this year, with few changes to the internal budget.

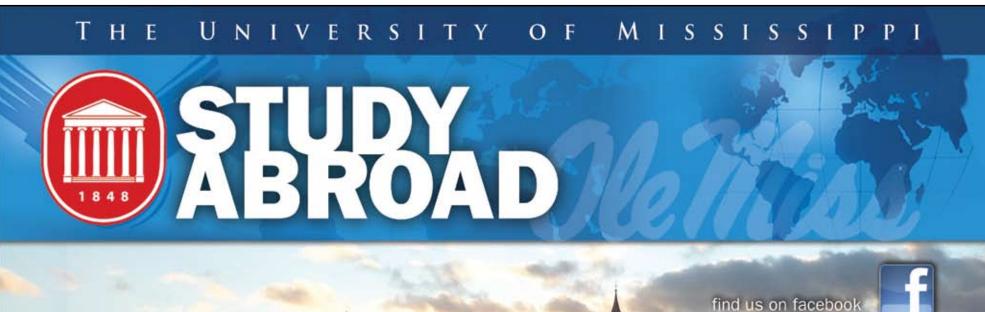
"We have funded the most student organizations ever this year," he said. "We have been able to give student organizations more per organization than ever before due to the increase in budget. We have been very excited about this, and we got a very positive response from organization's about the funding process in the fall."

James said the main goal is to allocate as many resources in the fairest way possible.

"We have been working to find a system that works the best this year, which presents our greatest challenge," he said. "It is the principle challenge every new treasurer faces, so it is an ever-evolving challenge."

James said he and the other comptrollers strive for the perfect system, but meeting each organization's individual needs is their first priority.

For more information on ASB and how it spends its money, visit http://dos.olemiss.edu/org/ umasb.



# Fall Sem



Learn more at the Study Abroad Fair Wed., Feb. 8, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Student Union Lobby Mark your calendars now! www.outreach.olemiss.edu/study\_abroad

# SPORTS

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## sports briefs

### OLE MISS TRACK & FIELD ANNOUNCES THREE SIGNEES

Three high school seniors have signed national letters of intent to join the Ole Miss track and field program, head coach Joe Walker announced Monday.

Asia Cooper (Jackson), Catie Daigre (Kingwood, Texas) and Hunter Harrison (Memphis, Tenn.) will join the Rebels for the 2012-13 academic year.

"We are excited to have signed all three of these athletes," Walker said. "We expect all of them to make an immediate impact on our program and are excited with the kind of character each of them exhibits. Each of them has a lot of potential to improve on what have already been stellar high school careers, and they still have this season to go."

## MORRIS EARNS 12TH PLACE FINISH AT JONES CUP INVITATIONAL

SEA ISLAND, Ga. — Freshman Blake Morris fired his best round of the tournament, a 1-under 71, on Sunday afternoon at the Ocean Forest Golf Club to tie for a 12th-place finish at the Jones Cup Invitational.

Morris caught fire on the back nine of the course, rolling in three birdies and shooting a par on the other six holes to finish with a three-day total of 77-75-71—223.

Justin Thomas, fellow SEC member Alabama's top-ranked player, took home first-place honors, finishing with a total score of 216.

The Jones Cup is a "who's who" of amateur golfers from around the world. Last year's champion, John Peterson, went on to win the 2011 NCAA Individual Championship. Other previous Jones Cup winners include current PGA Tour mem-

# David leads men's golf into start of 2012 season



PHOTO COURTESY OLE MISS SID

Senior Joe David led the Ole Miss men's golf team to the NCAA East Regional and finished the 2011 year with a top five finish in the inaugural Patriot All-America Invitational. BY MATT SIGLER we recruited him thinking he wa

mcsigler@olemiss.edu

At age 4, senior golfer Joe David was already learning how to play the game.

"I started golf and baseball at the same time when I was 4 years old," David said. "My grandfather got me into it. One day he was in the backyard hitting golf balls, and I asked him what he was doing, and he explained it and showed me. Eventually, some guys at the golf course got me some clubs, and I started going to the course with my grandfather."

David's experiences with his grandfather have helped him excel and become one of the leaders for the Ole Miss golf team this season. Head coach Ernest Ross has been impressed with David since he stepped on campus as a freshman.

"We've had very few players ever play every tournament since they were a freshman, and he has," Ross said. "So obviously, we recruited him thinking he was a star, and he has been that." As a freshman, the Madison,

As a freshinan, the Madison, Tenn., native led the team with a 72.38 stroke average, earned All-SEC honors and was named to the All-SEC Freshman team. Since then, his game has only gotten better.

"I've calmed down a lot since my freshman year," David said. "I used to be kind of a gung-ho, go-get-'em, 100-percent, hit it as far as I can and go chase it down kind of player. Now, I kind of play a more relaxed game and just try to play within myself and not try to push the game too hard."

Now, expectations are through the roof for David as he enters his senior campaign for the Rebels. He finished the 2011 year with a top five finish in the inaugural Patriot All-America Invitational at the Wigwam Golf Club in Litchfield Park, Ariz. He also helped lead the Rebels to the NCAA East Regional, in which he finished tied for 10th. Ross said he feels he has what it takes to replace All-American Jonathan Randolph and become one of the greats in program history.

"He's got the length and the power," Ross said of Randolph's drive off the tee. "(He hits the ball) as long as anybody on the PGA Tour right now. The part that is catching up is the short game. Just learning how to play a little bit more."

Despite these expectations, David puts as much pressure on himself to reach his goals for his senior season at Ole Miss.

"Some of my goals are being SEC Player of the Year, which I've played myself in position to get, and to make first team All-SEC, which I'm in sight of," he said. "I want to try and help the team get to Nationals. It's a goal I have always had since I have been here for four years and never got the chance to do. I've gotten to play in regionals, but you just want that extra step."

Both Ross and David know

professional golf is on the horizon, but David is focused on the spring season, which starts Feb. 26-28 at the John Hayt Collegiate in Ponte Vedra, Fla.

"I have an idea in my head, but I don't want to get ahead of myself," he said. "So I just keep telling myself just to play good this spring, and we'll see what happens when I get done with my time here."

David believes that before his time is over in the red and blue, this year's team will be in the national spotlight.

"We have the talent," he said. "We've got some guys with great attitudes. And as an older leader and captain, I feel like it's my duty to push these guys and tell them that they have the talent we need to get this team to where we want to go. Honestly, we have good-enough talent with some of the young guys and some older guys we have. We just have to push these guys and get them believing they can win."

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bers D.J. Trahan (2001), Nicholas Thompson (2005) and Kyle Stanley (2009).

"It was a great tournament for Blake," Ole Miss head coach Ernest Ross said. "We are really proud of him. This was an elite field, and he played exceptionally well."

The freshman was the third Ole Miss golfer to compete in the prestigious amateur tournament since 2007, preceded by Jonathan Randolph (2011) and Callum Macaulay (2007). Each of the three earned top 20 finishes, including the All-American Randolph, who finished in a tie for eighth place last year.

Morris and the Ole Miss golf team will return to action Feb. 26-28 at the John Hayt Collegiate in Ponte Vedra, Fla.

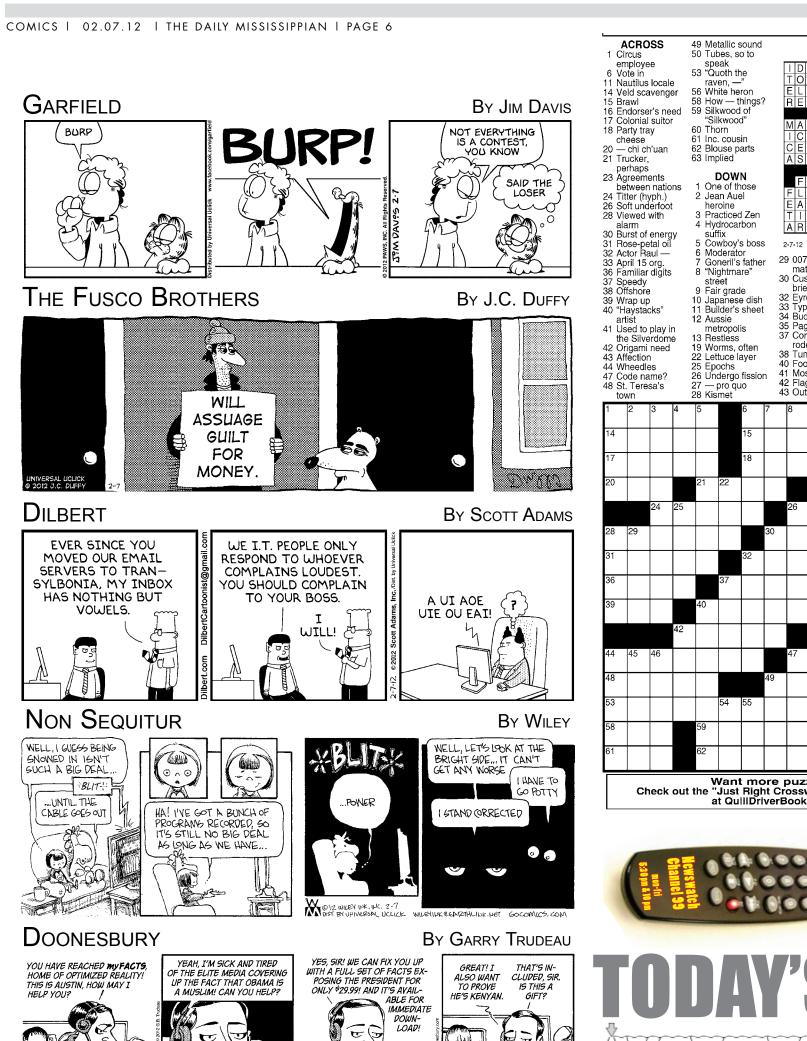
## Ron K Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company February 7 at 7 p.m.

**The Color Purple** February 12 at 3 p.m.

**Monty Python's Spamalot** February 25 at 7 p.m.

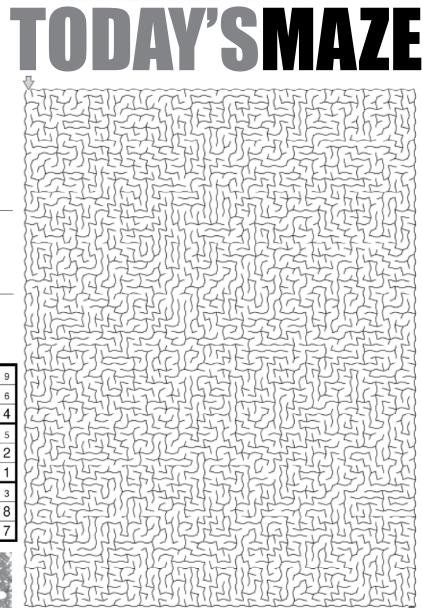


# Tickets: UM Box Office 662.915.7411 or www.fordcenter.org











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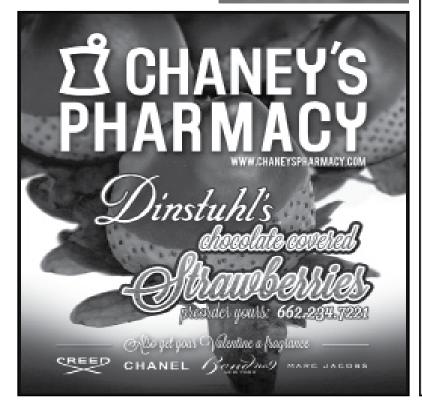


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# SPORTS

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# Baseball Notebook: pitching staff taking shape, Overbey makes adjustments

BY DAVID COLLIER dlcollie@olemiss.edu

# Competition on the mound

Despite the rain in Oxford almost the whole weekend, the Rebels managed to find a way to get their intersquad scrimmages in on Thursday, Sunday and Monday. What is interesting is the competition that is taking place on the mound as guys are fighting for a starting weekend spot.

"It went alright," head coach Mike Bianco said of Sunday's scrimmage. "We've got to get better at bunting. Offensively, we're getting a lot of good swings. Pitching-wise, I thought it went OK. It's baby steps, but we're getting better on the mound."

After having a rough outing a week ago, sophomore Bobby Wahl was back to himself on Thursday as he solidified his lead for the Friday night starter, giving up just one hit and one walk while striking out four batters in three and two-thirds innings.

Heading into spring practice, senior R.J. Hively looked to be a lock for the Saturday spot, but he has given up two runs in each outing this spring, which may leave the door open for someone else. The Sunday starter is really the only question mark as far as the pitching rotation, and there are several guys battling it out to get the edge.

Sophomore Mike Mayers, who appeared to be the leading contender heading into the spring, has looked sharp thus far. On Sunday, Mayers got the start and pitched 4.0 innings, giving up no runs on five hits with one strikeout.

"His command has always been probably the best on the team," Bianco said. "He's able to locate his fastball in and out, throw a breaking ball and



Freshman infielder Jake Overbey takes a lead off first baseball in an intersquad scrimmage last month. Overbey, a 10th-round selection in the 2011 MLB Draft, is one of several freshmen competing for playing time this spring for the Diamond Rebels.



changeup into the strike zone. He hit 94 (Sunday) with his fastball. He's getting stronger. We saw spurts of that in the fall where he had a couple of intersquad games that he threw the ball in the 90s. It wasn't like a high 80s guy that touched 90. He's a guy that pitched in the 90s, and he did that again today.

"When you do that and you're able to locate on both sides of the plate with your fastball, and you're able to throw a breaking ball and a changeup into the zone, it makes it really difficult for the hitters."

Left-hander Dylan Chavez, a junior college transfer, had the best outing on the weekend to keep the pressure on Mayers for that final weekend spot. Chavez pitched four and two-thirds innings, giving up no runs on just three hits and striking out two batters.

Bianco likes what he has seen from Chavez after a not-sostellar fall.

"Since he has gotten back from the (semester) break, he just looks stronger, looks more confident and like the kid that we recruited," he said of Chavez. "And that happens. A lot of time in the fall it's tough for the new guys, especially the pitchers. His velocity is higher. His breaking ball is better and harder. He's throwing strikes which makes it easier. He's put on about 15 pounds since he left (for Christmas break). He looks terrific."

#### **Closing the door**

With Wahl solidly in the weekend rotation, it looks like junior Brett Huber's sole responsibility this season will be to close games for the Rebels. As a freshman, the 6'3," 210-pound closer saved 12 games and posted a 3.54 earned run average and a .216 opponents' batting average in 48.1 innings. This past season, he saved four games and posted a 3.60 earned run average and a .243 opponents' batting average in 30 innings.

Huber was unable to pitch in the first weekend of intersquads, but he saw his first action of the spring on Sunday. He went just two-thirds of an inning and gave up three runs on four hits and two walks.

AUSTIN MCAFEE | The Daily Mississippian

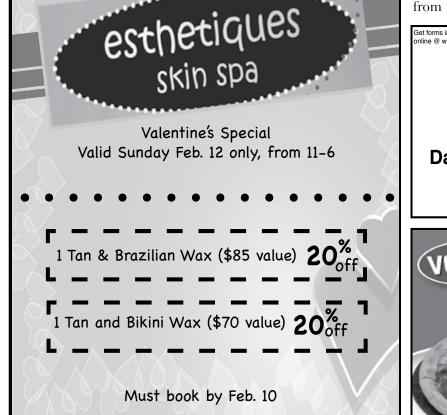
"First time out, it's just tough," Bianco said. "He hung a curveball that was ripped down the left-field line. Then, you're just in a tough spot. A guy bunts the ball where he has the guy at third but just throws it away. Then the inning gets away from him.

"The good news for Brett is that he was out there throwing. We need him out there, so it was great to finally get him out on the mound."

#### **Getting adjusted**

Freshman Jake Overbey is starting to come in to his own this spring after having a rather disappointing fall. Jake, the younger brother of sophomore Preston Overbey, who also plays for the Rebels, turned down signing with the Philadelphia Phillies after being selected in the 10th round of the Major League Baseball First Year Player's Draft last summer.

Bianco likes what he is seeing





from the younger Overbey this spring.

"He's just so much more consistent (this spring)," he said. "Offensively, he's better, but it's probably more evident in his defensive drills. In the fall, he had a tough time fielding and with wearing glasses. He just couldn't get comfortable. Now you look at him, and he's been terrific."

