

Thunderbirds claim fifth straight title

Southern Utah University's women's gymnastics team claimed its fifth-straight academic national championship for the 2004-05 season, and its sixth in the last seven years. The Thunderbirds, posted a team grade-point-average of 3.714, the fifth straight season above 3.700. Remarkably, all 13 SUU gymnasts earned academic all-America honors. Southern Utah has won eight academic national championships in the past 12 years. The award is presented annually by the National Association of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches (NACGC). To earn individual academic all-America honors student-athletes must maintain a 3.50 or better GPA. SUU had four representatives above 3.90 this year.

Leading the way for the Thunderbirds was freshman **Kim Marquardt** who compiled a perfect 4.0 GPA while majoring in athletic training. Junior **Nicole Cummings** finished the year with a 3.97, also an athletic training major, while sophomore **Leah Sakhitab**, who advanced to the NCAA championships last year as an at-large competitor, finished with a 3.94 in biology. Sophomore **Jess Langley** checked in with a 3.93 GPA in business management. Two more Thunderbirds finished the year with GPAs over 3.80: sophomore **Sabrina Gourley** with a 3.84 in pre-physical therapy and senior **Molly Bauer** at 3.82 in communication. Freshman **Mandi Page** earned academic all-America honors with a 3.75 GPA in pre-nursing, while junior **Sheena Shaw** finished with a 3.71 in athletic training. Freshmen **Erin Morgan** and **Lindsay Sotack** posted 3.68 and 3.67, respectively, with undeclared majors. Rounding out SUU's academic all-Americans, sophomore **Ashley Sharpe** had a 3.64 GPA in nursing, freshman **Tehani Keeno** had a 3.63 in athletic training and senior **Carly Geronimo** had a 3.60, also in athletic training. "I couldn't be more impressed with our team. Not only were they very good on the floor of competition this year, but they were still outstanding in the classroom," Head Coach **Scott Bauman** said. "From an athletic standpoint, this team was the best we ever had in the program's history and our scores show that. They wanted to win



2006 SUU gymnastic team

athletically and academically and that says a lot about the character and type of athlete we have on our team."

"This is an outstanding honor for our gymnastics program," former SUU Athletic Director **Tom Douple** said.

"Congratulations to our student-athletes and coaches for their great efforts. To win this honor eight times in the last 12 years and to have all of our gymnasts be named academic all-Americans speaks highly of the type of student-athletes involved in our program." The other teams listed in the top 10 were North Carolina, the University of Denver, MIT, Texas Woman's University, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Utah, George Washington and Yale.

Sakhitab Finishes 23rd At NCAA Gymnastics



Southern Utah sophomore **Leah Sakhitab** finished 23rd at the NCAA Gymnastics Championship. Sakhitab started on beam, her strongest event earning a 9.775. She then earned a 9.70 on her floor exercise, a 9.60 on the vault finishing up with a 9.22 for a final score of 38.300 "Leah came in and competed hard, it was just some bad luck she fell on bars," Coach **Scott Bauman** noted. "It's so hard to compete as an independent, it's really hard to explain how difficult it is, coming in all alone and following one of the best teams in the country on every single event, with their best kid going right before you on every event. Leah is just a sophomore though and I thought she handled the pressure very well. She's learned a lot from this."

Ken Beazer named Athletic Director

Ken Beazer has been selected as the Athletic Director of Southern Utah University replacing **Tom Douple** who accepted the position as Commissioner of the Mid-Con Conference.

Previously the Director of Athletic Development at Utah State University, 41-year-old Beazer brings more than 16 years experience at all levels of intercollegiate athletics to SUU. Two of those years were spent at Washington State University as the Graduate Assistant Football Coach. He was the Assistant Football Coach at Snow College for three years; while Snow's Defensive Coordinator, the Defense finished in the Top 5 nationally for two consecutive years. Beazer then served as Snow's Director of Athletics for six years establishing the College's first-ever Athletic Foundation Board and creating the annual giving program. For the last 4.5 years, as USU's Director of Athletic Development, Beazer developed and initiated the largest capital campaign in the history of USU's Athletics Department, raising more than \$30 million. He was also instrumental in the USU Romney Stadium renovation—a project totaling more than \$25 million—leading the programming phase.

Beazer earned his associate's degree in communication from Snow College. His bachelor's and master's degrees, also in communication, were received from Weber State University and Washington State University, respectively.

"Ken certainly has very strong fundraising and alumni relations experience which is to our advantage," Dr. **Greg Stauffer**, SUU Vice President of Administrative and Financial Services, comments. "But

moreover, he has a supply of creative ideas for bolstering the interrelations of intercollegiate athletics with two groups who are very important to us—the student body and the local southern Utah community. These, coupled with the fact that he also has significant athletics management experience, made him a very attractive candidate for the SUU athletics program in particular."

Dean O'Driscoll ('83), Assistant to the President, adds, "In his career, Ken has had to take charge and make tough calls, manage budget challenges and make hard and strong decisions, while dealing with the needs and concerns of a campus community, the public, and efficiently managing a complete athletic program. The Screening Committee interpreted all this sort of experience as such that will only benefit SUU's athletics program."

Beazer's responsibilities will include: Recruiting, managing and motivating a team of highly-qualified coaches, administrators and staff;

Overseeing a fiscally-sound program that operates with integrity and full compliance with SUU, Conferences, and NCAA regulations;

Maximizing fundraising successes, and coordinating marketing and promotion activities in a manner that increases positive exposure, and;

Providing overall vision, leadership and strategic direction for the University's athletic program.

Beazer becomes the third Athletic Director since SUU became a Division I school in 1988. Joining him in their new home in Cedar City, are his wife, **Cidnee**, and their four children: **Rhett**, 13; **Adrienne**, 11; **Jadon**, 8; and **Harrison**, 5. **SUU**



Ken Beazer,
SUU Athletic Director