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Panhandle

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**RANKED #23 BY U.S.
NEWS AND WORLD
REPORT**



/ CAMPUS /

UPDATE ON OPSU'S MOVE TO VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

Due to increased risk exposure to COVID-19, OPSU will have a diminished capacity to effectively clean and sanitize all campus buildings during the remainder of the semester. Current university resources and backup personnel will allow us to maintain appropriate sanitization through Friday. This situation, while difficult, is a short-term personnel issue caused by COVID-19.

In an effort to keep our students, employees, and community safe, the decision has been made to move the date for the start of virtual instruction and appropriate virtual campus operations to Friday, November 13, at 4:30 pm.

This decision will allow the university to focus resources on cleaning and sanitizing the most critical areas of campus to keep our residential campus students and our community safe while we finish the semester.

Campus housing will be available to students who need or choose to stay on campus during this time. Students remaining in campus residential housing should report their decision to stay on campus to Ms. Amber Glass, Dean of Students, studentservices@opsu.edu. OPSU's regular food services will remain available.

Prorated refunds will be made available. For information and to apply, click opsu.edu/coronavirus.

The academic calendar will not change. Classes will continue as scheduled in a virtual format for the remainder of the fall 2020 semester. Contact your instructor for specific instructions for your class.

Final exams will be held December 8-11 in a virtual or modified format. Spring classes will resume as scheduled, in person, on January 6, 2021.

Students who may need assistance with computer access and technology can contact Ms. Sarah Green, Dean of the Academic Resource Center, arc@opsu.edu, or 580-349-1533.

All campus offices can be accessed virtually, and telecommunication and video conferencing can be arranged. A directory for all campus offices and personnel is available online <https://opsu.edu/About/Personnel/List/>

All remaining Homecoming events will be rescheduled for the spring semester.

All remaining OPSU fall athletic events are canceled. Where possible, the canceled contests will be rescheduled in spring.

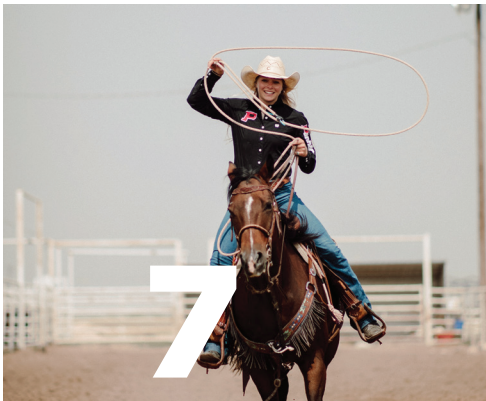
OPSU Commencement Exercises for the class of 2020 planned for December 12 will be rescheduled. For more information, please visit commencement.opsu.edu.

We thank you for your continued support of the OPSU community. Please understand that our primary concern is our students, faculty, staff, and community's health and safety. **P**

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On the cover: Dr. Faltyn and Panhandle State Students



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/ CAMPUS /

EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY







“I am constantly impressed by our people and how hard they work for those we serve. The work we do everyday changes lives for the better. We have now broken the Top 25 record for our region in the U.S. News and World Report. This is something everyone in our region should be proud of. These rankings place us firmly among the top regional universities in America.”

— *Dr. Tim Faltyn,*
University President

/ CAMPUS /

PANHANDLE STATE RANKED 23RD REGIONAL COLLEGES WEST AND 7TH IN SOCIAL MOBILITY FOR 2021

Oklahoma Panhandle State University was named 23rd Best University in the Regional Colleges West in the annual U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) rankings. This is an increase in rankings from the previous year being named 26th. This improved ranking is due to the increase in enrollment for the fifth year, higher graduation rates, and a higher score on the peer assessment rating.

Panhandle State also celebrates being named 7th in Social Mobility in the Regional Colleges West. This ranking indicates that after graduation, students are quickly placed in the workforce.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, “I am constantly impressed by our people and how hard they work for those we serve. The work we do everyday changes lives for the better. We have now broken the Top 25 record for our region in the U.S. News and World Report. This is something everyone in our region should be proud of. These rankings place us firmly among the top regional universities in America.”

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, “This is a great achievement made possible by our team at Panhandle State. Despite the uncertainty of the global pandemic we saw a 6% increase in our enrollment compared to last fall. It is no accident that we are a success, this is from the hard work and dedication from every one of our Staff and Faculty at Panhandle State.”

The Western Region is made up of 14 states ranging from Texas to Washington and Montana to California. Panhandle State was ranked with some of the best colleges in the west. **P**



“Aggie Nation is so proud of Beau Peterson for winning 2nd place for Breakaway Roping at the 2020 Inugural Women’s Rodeo World Championship! Beau’s skill and dedication to the sport shined through. Beau should be very proud of herslef, we all are.”

— *Dr. Tim Faltyn,*
University President

/ STUDENT /

BEAU PETERSON PLACES 2ND AT WOMEN’S RODEO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Oklahoma Panhandle State University Rodeo standout Beau Peterson (Council Grove, Kan.) continued to impress the rodeo world, turning in a second place performance in Breakaway Roping at the inaugural Women’s Rodeo World Championship held in the Metroplex. In Sunday’s finale – held concurrently with the Professional Bull Riders event last weekend at AT&T Stadium – Peterson had a time of 2.14 seconds.

Peterson’s time was just 9/100ths of a second off of the winning effort of 2.05 by Madison Outhier. Sawyer Gilbert was third at 2.54 seconds, followed by Loni Lester in fourth (2.56). Kelsie Chace and Paisley Pierce rounded out the championship field in fifth and sixth, respectively.

Peterson and Outhier both posted their best times on their second runs of the finals.

Peterson reached Sunday’s finals at AT&T Stadium thanks to winning runs of 1.89 and 1.85 in the two rounds of the main event – as well as the top aggregate of 3.74 – and with a 1.84 in the progressive qualifying round at Fort Worth’s Will Rogers Memorial Center earlier in the week.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, “Aggie Nation is so proud of Beau Peterson for winning 2nd place for Breakaway Roping at the 2020 Inaugural Women’s Rodeo World Championship! Beau’s skill and dedication to the sport shined through. Beau should be very proud of herself, we all are.”

“It been a pleasure to have Beau on our team,” OPSU Women’s Rodeo Coach Shelbie Rose said. “It has been so much fun to watch her grow and succeed in the arena, as well as out of it. She’s becoming one of the best women in rodeo and I can’t wait to see where her career continues to take her.”

As a freshman in 2019, Peterson won a national championship for OPSU at the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) in Goat Tying. In her sophomore season during the spring of 2020, the CNFR was canceled due to COVID-19. However, Peterson was declared the 2020 Central Plains Region All-Around and Goat Tying champion, holding substantial point total leads in both categories when the season came to a halt.

Peterson is a biology major at Panhandle State. **P**



/ STAFF /

DAVE BEYER

Originally from Whittier, California, Dave Beyer has been the Sports Information Director at Panhandle State since February of 2019. Beyer is in his 35th year of service as a collegiate athletics communications professional.

Beyer earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications at Biola University and was also a four-year member of the Eagles' wrestling team. He prepped at Whittier Christian High School (Calif.), where he played football and was a member of the track & field team (shot put).

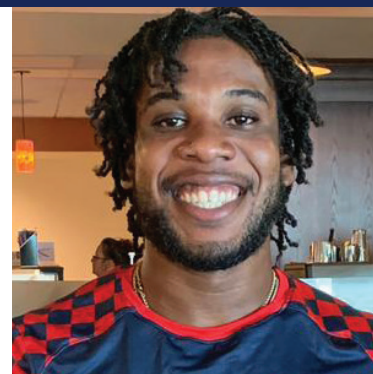
Prior to OPSU, he has also worked in similar positions at multiple colleges in Texas, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, and California.

Beyer is a member of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) and has served 21 years sitting on the prestigious CoSIDA Academic All-America® Committee. He has also served 14 years as a member of CoSIDA's Publication Contest committee. Personally, Beyer has earned a total of 39 awards for publications and writing during his career.

During a portion of his career, Beyer battled colon cancer. In 2005, he was officially cancer-free and has been in remission since. After visiting the campus for a football game, Beyer fell in love with the campus. "When a job opened up, and I was looking for a change, I jumped at the chance. I truly believe God's timing opened the door for me at OPSU!"

Beyer stated, "I love the people at OPSU; the sense of community. Even when we may disagree or have issues, we are all one and working toward making OPSU a destination for a great educational experience. I also love how Goodwell people wave to each other with the hand on their steering wheel while driving!"

Beyer enjoys writing song parodies, photography, collecting sports memorabilia, and watching documentaries on historical events in his personal time. While crossing paths with many noteworthy people during his career, Beyer counts having the chance to meet John Wooden, Hank Aaron, Dick Vitale, Vin Scully, Walter Payton, Erik Dickerson, Bill Bradley, and former vice president Dick Cheney at the top of the list. **P**



/ STUDENT /

TAYZE ELLINGTON

Tayze Ellington is a senior at Panhandle State that has called Goodwell his home for over a year. From Kingston, Jamaica, Tayze came to OPSU for the institution's affordability, class sizes, the diversity of culture, and Men's soccer, where he is captain of the team.

Tayze plans to graduate in May of 2021 with a Bachelor of Business Administration with an emphasis in Management. His favorite thing about OPSU is how it is family-oriented driven.

"I love the support from faculty and staff and the community. Also, when a university president knows a student by name, that goes to show that people do care and reinforces the family cohesiveness environment."

During his studies as a student-athlete, Tayze also became a Student Ambassador and currently works in the academic records office.

Registrar, Jade Houtz stated, "Having Tayze as a student worker and a OPSU Student Ambassador is a privilege. He is such an amazing young man, and is definitely going to be successful in whatever he pursues."

Head Men's Soccer Coach, Brandon Misuraca commented, "Tayze is a player that will be tough to replace once he graduates this Spring. We brought him into the program in year one to serve in a leadership role given his maturity and presence both on and off the pitch. We are very proud of the job that he has done as a leader and mentor to the younger players on the side. I cannot express how excited we are to have him as one of our first ever alumnus of the program and look forward to watching him continue to succeed in the years to come."

Tayze is proud to be an only child and is a vegan. He loves working out and helping to mentor others.

After graduation, Tayze plans to work in a business organization for up to five years. "After this, I will start my own business where I will be providing guidance and services for student-athletes from my country Jamaica and The Caribbean region on how to obtain a higher education in the States through their talent." **P**



/ FACULTY /

JUSTIN COLLINS

Best known as “Doc” on campus, Justin Collins was born in Ada, Oklahoma, but was raised in Guymon, Oklahoma. Collins came to Panhandle State on a livestock judging scholarship for Dr. Woodward. It was Dr. Gardner’s General Chemistry class that changed his passion from animal science to biology/chemistry. Doc graduated with a degree in Biology in 1990.

Doc continued his education in Stillwater at Oklahoma State University, obtaining a Masters in Entomology with an emphasis in Insect Fungal & Viral Diseases in 1993, and a Doctorate in Entomology with an emphasis in Insect Pheromone Chemistry in 1996. Once he graduated from OSU in 1996, Dr. Goodwin offered him a position as the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Collins has been a part of the OPSU family for 23 years and is currently the Department Chair for Science and EMS and Professor of Biology and Chemistry. He said, “I have been at OPSU for a long time, but the best thing, in my opinion, is the interactions with the students. I love being in the classroom because that is where I think I can make the greatest impact.”

Doc has continued developing his education during his time working at Panhandle State by receiving an Associates in Technology – Emergency Medical Services Paramedicine in 2013 and an Associates in Technology in Fire Protection & Safety Training in 2015. This education allows him to be a firefighter with the Goodwell Fire Department, a Paramedic with the Goodwell and Guymon EMS departments, and the Oklahoma Region I HazMat team as a HazMat Technician.

When he isn’t on campus or working for the fire department, Collins enjoys using his hands with woodworking, remodeling, welding, working on trucks, and playing guitar. He has been married to his wife, Rilla, for 31 years, who he met at Panhandle State. They have two sons, Jordan and Jeremy, who also graduated from OPSU. Jeremy and his wife Ashley have a little girl, Magnolia, and Justin and Rilla love spending time with them as much as possible. **P**



/ ALUMNI /

LOU SIMS

Louis Sims is a Hobart, Oklahoma native with a life full of success in several different industries. He attended Panhandle State on an athletic scholarship and graduated with a degree in Business in 1956.

After graduating from Panhandle State, Sims was enlisted for three years in Army Intelligence, which started a decorated career of service. Louis finished with the Army and became a Special Agent for the U.S. Secret Service. He served and protected 6 U.S. Presidents starting with John Fitzgerald Kennedy and finished under Ronald Reagan.

He retired from the Secret Service, continuing into a career in the oil industry with Pennzoil. He eventually earned his second retirement as Vice President of Pennzoil. Louis wasn’t quite ready to leave the workforce after the second retirement and became a Vice President for Career Enserch Exploration in the energy industry.

Sims returned to Hobart after his third retirement and has since been a chair or member of several boards to serve and improve the community, schools, and economy. He stays involved with the community by attending Hobart athletics, often speaking at the schools, especially during Veterans Day.

Sims also serves as the Director of Association of Former Agents of U.S. Secret Service for Oklahoma. His career was written at the request of the U.S. Secret Service for the USSS National Training Center Library. The Secret Service has used his career to teach current and new agents how the USSS has developed since the JFK assassination.

He has always credited Panhandle State for an excellent education. When asked about his favorite thing, he said, “Professors were helpful always, everyone was part of Panhandle State family, friendships were great, played varsity baseball and basketball, and Coaches IBA and Williams were great.” Sims keeps busy with the community and enjoys 2 of 5 children living in Hobart and playing golf. **P**

/STUDENT/

DORM OF DOOM HAS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR



Panhandle State had yet another successful year with Dorm of Doom. The turnout for the event was excellent, and it was all made possible by the participation of clubs, organizations, and athletic teams.

The groups who worked tirelessly to make this event possible were: the Student Activities student workers, the baseball team, members of the Black Scholars of the World, residential assistants, the cheer team, women in ag, choir, the judging team, and the Student Government Association.

Dean of Student Services, Amber Glass, stated, "The Office of Student Services is very appreciative of everyone who made the Dorm of Doom a success this year. Our Student Activities Coordinator, Hannah Hammack, and our student workers, Affton Schlochtermeyer, JC Deason, and Harlee Voss, created a fantastic event for our students. We are pleased that we were able to provide a fun activity for our campus and community members. We couldn't have held such a great event without help from teams, clubs, and organizations across OPSU's campus."

All proceeds were dispersed to the clubs, teams, and organizations who generously donated their time to help make Dorm of Doom a success. **P**



/STUDENT/

OPSU BAND HOLIDAY CONCERT

The OPSU Band held an amazing Holiday Concert on November 13 in the Centennial Park. There was an array of Christmas music played including: Dashing Through the Snow, Winter Wonderland, Tis the Season, and many more.

President, Dr. Tim Faltyn commented, "Sounds of Christmas Music filled everyone's hearts who attended the Holiday Concert hosted by the OPSU Band this afternoon. These students have practiced tirelessly for weeks on this concert, and when we had to make the heartbreaking decision yesterday to go virtual, it meant their concert would have been canceled. Today they rallied and had a special performance! Thank you, Charla Lewis, and our AMAZINGLY talented students, for the opportunity to be filled with the holiday spirit!"

Director of Instrumental Music, Charla Lewis stated, "The reason I wanted to give the students an opportunity to perform even though it was a week early is because I know what it means for musicians to be able to perform for other people. They didn't get that opportunity last Spring when we went virtual so I wanted to give them that chance this semester if we could make it work. A few of the students were quarantined and couldn't make it, but most of them adjusted their work schedules so they could be there. Luckily, they work for understanding people. The original plan was to have the concert in the auditorium, but we decided to move it outside so we didn't have to worry about a cleaning crew and so audience members could socially distance." **P**



/ STUDENT /

OPSU HOSTS FFA INTERSCHOLASTICS COMPETITION

Oklahoma Panhandle State University hosted the FFA Interscholastics on November 10, 2020. The OPSU Interscholastics is a one-day event where we host Career Development Events (CDE's) and Leadership Development Events (LDE's) for the surrounding FFA Chapters. This has been an ongoing tradition for our school for many years and we draw students from Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas.

Around 500 students from 39 different high schools came to participate. With 20 different contest areas, students were able to enter into multiple contests. There were 760 contest entries in total.

These contests all vary and are specifically designed for students to explore areas of interest where they might look at having a career in the future. The contests held in the morning were the Career Development Education (CDE's) and included contests like Livestock Judging, Meat Evaluation, Floriculture, Rangeland Evaluation, etc. Most of these are individual events in that they work independently, but they use all the scores of the team members to determine the winners. In the afternoon, we held our Leadership Development Education (LDE's) which are basically speaking events and an individual contest. These are designed to improve student's leadership abilities by develop their skills in public speaking.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated "The OPSU FFA Interscholastics was a huge success because of the hard work put forth by dozens of people all across campus! First for having it and second for running things so well. Special thanks to Sydney Wilkinson, Jared Bates, and all the Ag Faculty and students for their leadership."

Sydney Wilkinson, Instructor of Animal Science and Livestock Judging Coach stated, "I am so thankful and grateful that I was given the opportunity to organize and run this event this year. With COVID-19, many contests have been moved virtually and when we made the decision to move forward with the contest, I was so excited because I knew that we would have a lot of interest because we were one of the few in person contests happening this fall."

"We had a record number of entries and I am so grateful for the University to believe in the value of the event and keep it going this year. These contests are an invaluable part of an FFA members experience and giving them another opportunity to compete and show their skills is truly an honor. I think the contests went great and am so appreciative for all the support of the chapters that attended and everyone who helped make the day possible!"

Jared Bates, Assistant Professor of Animal Science commented, "Students were definitely excited to participate in the event. In the current times it was great for students to have an opportunity to showcase their talents and abilities in these events. The OPSU student workers were terrific in coordinating the events and turnout for the event was terrific."

Dean, Shawna Tucker stated, "Robby Johnson and his crew in the Physical Plant did an amazing job with being so consistent and thorough with their sanitation efforts throughout the day to ensure a safe environment for participants." **P**

/ CAMPUS /

PANHANDLE STATE AND TRANSFERMATE OFFER INTERNATIONAL TUITION PAYMENTS VIA TOUCHNET

TransferMate
GLOBAL PAYMENTS

OPSU has partnered with TransferMate, a leading cross-border payments provider and TouchNet to offer you an easy, economical, and secure international tuition payment options. Students and authorized users can pay by clicking the TransferMate link in TouchNet. Easy, automated secure payment without any surprises.

At Oklahoma Panhandle State University, we know that our international students often have to pay significant international transfer fees when paying for their tuition fees and expenses. We listened to your challenges, so we've teamed up with TransferMate to provide you a transparent payment method to reduce additional bank fees and improve your payment experience. TransferMate helps international students pay tuition and fees in their local currency from any country. **P**

/ FACULTY /

CHARLA LEWIS ELECTED TO FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE STATE REGENTS



Charla Lewis has been elected to serve on the Faculty Advisory Council for the State Regents. The Faculty Advisory Council communicates the views and interests of all Oklahoma college and university faculty to the Chancellor and the State Regents. In this position, Lewis will represent OPSU and our region while developing proposals and recommendations to the State Regents.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "I speak for everyone when I say we are always so proud of our people at Panhandle State when they step up to be leaders in our state. Charla Lewis is an excellent advocate for faculty and her students in her work here on campus, and I know she will be the same dedicated, thoughtful, tireless leader as a member of the Faculty Advisory Council to the State Regents."

The FAC consists of 14 members elected by tier by the State Faculty Assembly at its annual fall meeting, and they are appointed by the Chancellor. She was elected to serve as a delegate to represent the regional universities in the State system. Lewis was qualified for the nomination as she is the President of the Faculty Senate at Panhandle State.

Lewis stated, "We each got a chance to introduce ourselves and state our cases as to why we'd like to be on the council. My argument was that I'd like to represent OPSU as a rural voice from the most western part of the state because I think we often get ignored by those from downstate."

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger, commented, "It is fantastic that Ms. Lewis is bringing an OPSU perspective to this state-level group. I believe Charla will be a great addition to the council, she will help drive policy to support all faculty in Oklahoma but especially faculty from the western region of the state." **P**



/ STAFF /

DEREK BARTON SELECTED AS THE MUSIC DIRECTOR FOR THE NFSR

Derek Barton, The Voice of the Aggies, has been selected as the Music Director for the National Finals Steer Roping in Mulvane Kansas November 6th and 7th at the Kansas Star Casino Arena and Event Center. The National Finals Steer Roping features the Top 15 Steer Ropers for the year, in the PRCA, competing in 10 go rounds for the PRCA World Champion Steer Roping Title. Barton will provide all sound and music for the main event and also for awards presentations.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "Congratulations to our very own Voice of the Aggie Athletics, Derek Barton. We are so proud of you and for you for this great accomplishment."

To be selected as Contract Personnel for the National Finals Steer Roping and the National Finals Rodeo, each person chosen, must have worked a required amount of rodeos and performances to be considered. The National Finals Steer Roping selects 2 Announcers, 2 Timers, 1 Secretary, 1 Chute Boss, 1 Music Director and 1 Usher. The PRCA Board of Directors and a selection committee go through the list of eligible PRCA Contract Personnel and make their selection.

Barton said "This is such an amazing honor to be selected for the National Finals Steer Roping. I am so humbled and excited to be a part of this. The Steer Roping is one of my favorite events and I have become good friends with so many of the contestants over the years, so this will be a lot of fun to be able to be a part of it. Just have to say Thank you to all of the people and rodeo committees, there are way too many to mention, but I could not have been able to do this job that I love, without all of their help and support." **P**

/ATHLETICS/

MEET THE SHOOTING SPORTS HEAD COACH: JORDAN FREEMAN

Oklahoma Panhandle State University announces Jordan Freeman as the first-ever Shooting Sports Head Coach. Originally from Hooker, OK, Jordan graduated with a Bachelor's in Elementary Education in 2018 from OSU. While at OSU, she competitively shot for over three years.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "We are excited to have Jordan Freeman a part of the Aggie Family. We believe she will be a great asset to the Shooting Sports Department. We look forward to this addition to OPSU Athletics."

Jordan stated, "It has always been a dream of mine to work within the shooting community, and when this opportunity arose, I jumped on it. I have always been proud of OPSU, so it makes me happy that I play a small part in helping it grow and succeed with the shooting program." She continued, "I had always loved shooting, especially trap shooting, but my love for the sport grew significantly during my time at OSU. I met some of my best friends through the shooting program, so I know how life-changing it can be. I want my athletes to get that same experience and build friendships and connections that will last a lifetime."

One of Jordan's favorite things about Panhandle State so far is the people. "From the very beginning, I have been treated like family. Everyone here is so nice and quick to jump in and help with anything. You can tell that everyone wants to best for each other here, and it's a close-knit work community."

Jordan and her husband, Grant, celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary. She and her husband have four dogs and enjoy spending time with their families, being outdoors, and "working on the Freeman family farm." **P**



/ATHLETICS/

SHOOTING SPORTS HOSTS INUGURAL AGGIE SHOOTOUT 2020

The Oklahoma Panhandle State University Shooting Sports Team hosted the first-ever home competition – the Aggie Shootout 2020- at its new OPSU Shooting Sports Complex this past weekend. The Aggies tied for fifth in the eight-team field.

"I would say that our first shoot was a huge success," Head Coach Jordan Freeman said. The wind was not ideal for a weekend of shooting, but all the teams persevered and made the most of it. I can't think my team and volunteers enough for all their hard work to make this event run smoothly."

Panhandle State freshman Tristen Roll led the Aggies. Roll won the Sporting Clays with a score of 84-of-100. Roll went on to finish third in the Men's Overall Average, tallying a 270-of-300.

The other Panhandle shooters were (and place): Wyatt Hammack (34); Wyatt Woolman (58); JW Syzmore (59); Tyrun Rose (61); Kendal Hanson (62); Jebidiah Stubbs (71); Daniel Byers (72), and; Logan Perky (74).

Freeman was grateful to her team, as well as community support for making the historic event a success in its inaugural year.

"My athletes shot all their events on Friday so they could help manage the shoot," Freeman explained. "It is truly their hard work that made this event so successful. They stepped in wherever they were needed to make sure that we stayed on schedule. This included pulling and keepings score for the other teams, loading houses and repairing and adjusting the machines. Guymon FFA also helped tremendously by loading houses and dumping trash for us." **P**

/ ATHLETICS /

ANCHOR D ARENA FACILITY UPDATES



When the OPSU volleyball and basketball seasons resume in the spring of 2021, Aggie athletes and fans will be enjoying games in a newly renovated Anchor D Arena. The biggest improvement is the new floor of Anchor D Arena at Oscar Williams Field House. While there have been surface re-paintings over the years, the new court saw the decades-old boards replaced, as well as a beautiful new paint scheme.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "We hope that these renovations will make a lasting impression for years to come. We cannot wait to host academic, athletic, and community events this coming spring."

The floor paint is a new design, with the OPSU athletics logo is screened from end-to-end. The Panhandle "P" is emblazoned in blue at midcourt. The baselines and court boundaries are also blue in color. New wall pads and upgraded lighting help highlight the "Home of the Aggies."

Other improvements include painting of the ceiling in the gym, new LED lighting, and a remodel of the athletic training room. The locker rooms were also renovated and repainted.

Vice President of Operations, Dr. Ryan Blanton stated, "These improvements were a necessity to the overall student and fan experience at the Oscar Williams Field House."

Interim Athletic Director, Victor Esparza commented, "I'm excited about the look of the new floor, it has been a long time coming. This upgrade has been a great addition to our facility." **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

MEET THE SOFTBALL HEADCOACH: MARC BENJAMIN

Oklahoma Panhandle State University hired veteran coach Marc Benjamin to head up its softball program in late September. Benjamin brings more than 10 years of college coaching experience to the Aggies' helm.

"We welcome Marc to the Aggie family," Esparza said. "His breadth of softball knowledge - from his time coaching both at the four-year and JUCO levels - will be a plus for our program. Likewise, he has a track record of being a solid recruiter, who brings in athletes who are talented on the field and in the classroom."

Benjamin came to OPSU after most recently serving as an assistant at Pitt Community College (2020). He has also been an assistant at Northwest Kansas Tech (2018), as well as at NCAA Division I schools Campbell University (2017-18) and Southern Utah University (2010-13).

"I want to thank President Faltyn and Athletic Director Esparza for having the confidence in me to take over this growing program," Benjamin said. "I believe OPSU is definitely a program on an upward trajectory and I am looking forward to helping the Aggies become an even stronger force, building on the foundation of the coaches before me." **P**



/ATHLETICS/

AGGIES' VOLLEYBALL KEEPS ROLLING TO FIFTH-STRAIGHT WIN

Upon completion of the fall, non-conference, portion of the 2020-21 season, the Oklahoma Panhandle State University volleyball team finds itself sitting atop the Sooner Athletic Conference schools with a league-best .833 winning percentage. The Aggies (5-1) – winners of five-consecutive matches - solidified that position, thanks to their 3-0 sweep (25-15, 25-19, 25-20) over Mid-America Christian University (9-2).

It was the first time that OPSU had defeated MACU in over three years, last topping the Evangels on September 9, 2017. The five-consecutive wins is the most in the modern era of Aggie volleyball (since reinstating the sport in 2003, after dropping the program in 1984). The 1981 team also won five-straight matches. **P**

/ATHLETICS/

MEN'S BASKETBALL OPENS WITH A WIN AT HOME



Oklahoma Panhandle State University men's basketball used a red-hot shooting night, combined with lockdown defense, in a 95-77 non-conference, season-opening, home win over Barclay College. No less than five players scored in double-digits as the Aggies (1-0) led wire-to-wire over the Bears (1-2).

"I was very happy with how the guys kept their focus through the crazy week that we had," OPSU Head Coach Mark Laird said. "I felt our energy and tempo were where we wanted them, for the most part. You could definitely tell it was our first game due to all of the unforced turnovers. But more importantly, we maintained our character and put our 'Uncommon Culture' on display for our friends and family in attendance and watching online. It was a good team win with lots of guys contributing. I love these guys and I love where we're headed." **P**

AGGIE WONDERLAND

DECEMBER 4 - JANUARY 1 | 6PM-10PM

