

SJSU baseball team, ranked second in the conference, opens the season Friday

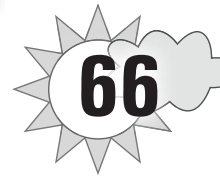
Spartan Daily staff members give their take on this weekend's Academy Awards

New York Post editorial cartoon causes a stir

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009

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FRI	SAT	SUN	MON
67	67	59	58

THE WIRE

CAMPUS

Suspects wanted in reported robbery on Saturday

Three assailants are still at large in a reported robbery on the south side of Bentel Hall Saturday, stated an alert released by University Police Department Wednesday. Three suspects, two of which are described as black male adults and the third unidentified, assaulted the victim without provocation and stole his wallet, police say. UPD Sgt. Jenny Pak said there was no new information in the investigation.

— Staff Report

STATE

Leaky sewage pipe in Marin pollutes Bay

SAUSALITO — A sewage leak at a Sausalito treatment plant that has released 500,000 gallons of sewage into San Francisco Bay is mostly contained. Officials with the Sausalito-Marín City Sanitary District said as of Wednesday afternoon only about 1 percent of the partially treated sewage running through a broken pipe was still leaking.

Assembly committee endorses effort to overturn Prop. 8

SACRAMENTO — A legislative committee on Tuesday endorsed legal efforts to overturn California's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, as gay rights activists worked the halls of the Capitol to try to get the full Legislature on record as opposing Proposition 8.

NATIONAL

Obama sends funds to avoid foreclosures

MESA, Ariz. — President Barack Obama throws a \$75 billion lifeline to millions of Americans on the brink of foreclosure, declaring an urgent need for drastic action — not only to save their homes but to keep the housing crisis "from wreaking even greater havoc" on the broader national economy.

INTERNATIONAL

Clinton visits Indonesia on good-will tour

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Thursday relentlessly hammered home the Obama administration's message that America is under new management and ready to listen and engage the world.

— Associated Press

GREGORY JOHNSON JR.

Cover-up alleged in student's death

UPD and coroner say 20-year-old committed suicide, but his parents say otherwise

DAVID ZUGNONI
Senior Staff Writer

An autopsy report states that SJSU student Gregory Johnson Jr. committed suicide, but his parents allege that the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner-Coroner and the University Police Department are covering up a homicide.

Johnson, who was a junior kinesiology major and a member of Sigma Chi fraternity, died on Nov. 22, the report states. He was 20.

"It's an unfortunate situation," said UPD Chief Andre Barnes. "We're doing an inves-

tigation, and we have not found anything to suggest it was anything but suicide."

Pat Lopes Harris, director of media relations at SJSU, said Wednesday that UPD intended to finish the investigation and release a report in about three weeks.

According to the autopsy report, UPD officers told Patra Albrecht, an investigator for the coroner's office, that a fraternity brother found Johnson hanging in the basement of the Sigma Chi fraternity house, 284 S. 10th St., about 2:45 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 22.

"A fraternity brother went

down into the basement and found the decedent hanging from a cord affixed to a ceiling water pipe," wrote Albrecht, who reportedly arrived at the scene at 5:10 p.m. "He took the decedent down and called for paramedics who pronounced death upon arrival."

Johnson's parents, Denise Johnson and Gregory Johnson Sr., said the manner in which their son reportedly hanged himself was almost impossible.

"I'm 5-foot-6, and I could touch the pipe," Denise Johnson said. "He was 6-foot-2, he weighed 220 pounds, and he was 220 pounds

of muscle; he was in good shape. There's no way that he hung, and they said they found him in a seated position with his legs out in front of him."

In the autopsy report, Albrecht wrote that police officers measured approximately 70 inches (5 feet, 10 inches) from the floor to the bottom of the water pipe.

"The fraternity brother said the decedent's knees were bent and he was almost resting on the floor," she wrote. "The fraternity brother unwound the ligature

See **JOHNSON**, page 3



Courtesy of Michelle Gilchrist
Gregory Johnson Jr.

GAZA CONFLICT



People petition before a discussion about Palestine and the conflict in Gaza at the Barrett Ballroom on Wednesday.

MIKE ANDERSON / Spartan Daily

Discussing transgressions of Middle East war

JULIANNE SHAPIRO
Staff Writer

A newborn baby with a bullet in its spinal column that a speaker said was a result of an Israeli soldier's gun was one of many topics discussed on Wednesday night in the Student Union.

The forum "The U.S.-Backed Israeli War on Gaza," which was sponsored by the SJSU Muslim Students Association, had more than 60 people in attendance.

The speakers for the forum were Karimah al-Helew, the publicity coordinator for SJSU Muslim Students Association,

Mazda Majidi, organizer of the ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) Coalition and Richard Becker, western regional coordinator of the ANSWER Coalition.

No one spoke out on the Israeli side at the event.

Al-Helew spoke first about the Israeli attack on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip in December.

"White phosphorous, which sticks to the human skin and burns to the bone, were dropped on infants, mothers and fathers alike at no discrimination among targets," she said.

She also said the most disturbing image of the attack she has

seen was an image of a newborn baby with an umbilical cord still intact.

"The fatal wound was a bullet hole embedded in her spinal column," she said.

Al-Helew said Israel maintains that it has a right to defend itself, yet militants shoot without mercy at innocent civilians.

The next speaker, Majidi, contended that the United States media is biased toward its treatment of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

"The business media in the U.S. basically provided little coverage of the crimes of Israel while it was happening," he said. "To the

extent of them covering anything, it was always in the context of Israel defending its survival."

He said the media covers the conflict as one that has happened for thousands of years, and that Israel is the more civilized country with more democracy.

The last speaker, Becker, said the ANSWER Coalition is opposed to all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism.

"What is being done in the name of many as anti-Semitism by supporters of Israel is an attempt to not have any type of honest discussion about what it is going on."

A question and answer session followed the discussion.

ENROLLMENT

CSU plans to increase number of transfers

ELIZABETH KANG
Staff Writer

In a recent California State University memo, officials announced their intention to make the transfer process easier.

Some students at SJSU said there is room for improvement, and that their transfer experience from community colleges could have gone better.

"I had a couple classes that didn't transfer over," said Daniel Tran, a junior business major, "but other than that it was OK."

Officials for the CSU system have recently announced their intention to increase enrollment of transfer students from community colleges.

Teddy Griffith, a junior accounting major who transferred from San Jose City College, said he also thought the transfer process could improve.

"The only problem I had was the to-do list," he said, adding that he wasn't aware of the list, located on MySJSU until friends told him. Also, he said, "my documents were not processed on time and were misplaced."

In the memo on Feb. 4, three officials for California public higher education said their organization would develop a task force to help increase the number

See **TRANSFER**, page 2



Sports Blog:
www.spartandailysports.wordpress.com
Photo Blog:
www.spartandailyphoto.wordpress.com
News Blog:
www.spartandailynews.wordpress.com

SPORTS BLOG

Read additional coverage of Bay Area college baseball media day.

Find out if SJSU football star Jarron Gilbert is stronger than you.

NEWS

Denise Johnson and Gregory Johnson Sr. speak with reporters on Feb. 5 at Praises of Zion Baptist Church in Clearlake, Calif. Watch video clips of their interview on theSpartanDaily.com.

SPORTS

"Sharks Remarks": Sports Editor Matthew Kimel commentates on the Sharks' recent road trip and Tuesday's drilling of the Oilers.

At 43, Sharks' Claude Lemieux doesn't feel 'like crap.'

NEWS BLOG

Facebook gets rid of its anti-privacy policy.

It must be somebody's fault when a 65,000-ton ship crashes into the Bay Bridge — right?

PHOTO BLOG

See a photo montage of the SJSU baseball team prepare for their season opener.



DEREK SIJDER / Spartan Daily

SPARTA GUIDE

CAMPUS IMAGES

19 Today

Bible Study

Acts 2 Christian Fellowship hosts a weekly study. 7 p.m. in the Pacifica Room at the Student Union. Contact Justin Foon at jfoon1@yahoo.com

Gatorade Pong

Delta Upsilon hosts a fundraiser for the Philanthropic Cancer Foundation. 5 p.m. at the Fraternity House on 201 S. 11th Street. Contact Chris Jones (707) 483-1585.

Graduate Vocal Recital

12:20 to 1:15 p.m. in the Music Building Concert Hall. Contact Joan at 924-4673.

Meditation Group

"Walking and Sitting like a Buddha." 5 p.m. in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library. Contact Harrison at hhaarrriissoon@gmail.com

Money Management For Students

12:15 to 1:15 p.m. in Clark Hall, Room 118. Contact Veronica Mendoza at veronica.mendoza@sjsu.edu

Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome

A screening of the movie "Banished" followed by Derehia DuVal. 5 to 9:30 p.m. in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Room 225/229. For more information, contact mlewis@union.sjsu.edu

Symposium

With Sean Randolph, President and CEO of Bay Area Council Economic Institute. 12 noon in the Engineering building, Room 189.

23 Monday

The Art of Cool Cuisine

Green Vision Cafe presents a discussion about how to eat well while minimizing the impact to our environment. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library. Contact Annie Stauffer at ib_annie@yahoo.com

LGBTQ+ Discussion Group

Co-sponsored by LGBT Resource Center and Counseling Services. 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. at the LGBT Resource Center. For more information, call 924-6158 or 924-5910.

24 Tuesday

Spartan Smart Cart

Fresh fruit and veggies. 10:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Clark Hall, rain or shine. Contact Luisa Garrett at luisa@postmodern.com

Sparta Guide is provided free of charge to students, faculty and staff members. The deadline for entries is noon, three working days before the desired publication date. Space restrictions may require editing of submission. Entries are printed in the order in which they are received. Submit entries online at thespartandaily.com or in writing at DBH 209.



Scott Gorman, a music major, warms up with a tuba before his class on Tuesday. This wind ensemble rehearsal is conducted by Edward Harris, and is one of the many classes held in the Music Building Concert Hall.

KIRSTEN AGUILAR / Spartan Daily

Speaker casts doubt on effectiveness of FDR's New Deal

SCOTT REYBURN
Staff Writer

Burton Folsom said he often wonders if Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was really a raw deal for the American people.

That was the topic the professor of history and management at Hillsdale College in Michigan discussed Tuesday at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library.

The New Deal was a set of programs created by Roosevelt in the 1930s to alleviate the

Great Depression.

Students like Alfredo Belman, an economics graduate student, said Folsom's perspective on the New Deal made connections to today's economic situation.

"I thought it was very controversial," he said. "It shows a lot of parallels with today, in terms that there's a lot of people suffering right now and would like to have more opportunities — and the people of today are not going to care how big the bill is going to be as long they have the job today."

The event intended to exam-

ine historical events to provide an answer to economists' public disagreement with President Obama's plan for the need of massive government spending to stimulate the economy, according to a flier from John Estill, a lecturer of economics. Folsom said he has examined government economic intervention and its consequences by studying the policies and results of Roosevelt's New Deal.

Folsom summed up his book as the failure of Roosevelt's New Deal, a perspective not many

have heard, he said.

"It's about the problems created when we tried to have massive spending resolve the Great Depression," he said. "Massive spending did not work. The New Deal failed, unemployment at the end of two terms of Roosevelt's administration was just about as high almost as it was when he began and the end result was that we had an economy that was in the tank, and when we tried massive spending, the problem was that we had to raise taxes."

Lydia Ortega, the economics department chair at SJSU, said she thought it would be a great opportunity for students to learn about a different perspective on the New Deal.

"We wanted to bring a provocative perspective on the New Deal," she said. "I think that students can learn about current events by looking, to some extent, on past events."

Not many students have heard Folsom's perspective, she said.

"It's not really provocative, except to the extent students generally don't see this side of FDR's perspective, so that's what makes it provocative," she said.

When Folsom first wrote the book, he said he didn't in-

tend to draw parallels to today's economic situation, which he said involves massive government spending like there was in the '30s.

"I didn't know this was going to happen, and so it was a kind of a wow situation," Folsom said. "I wanted to prevent something like this, hoping that it would, but it fits in that we see a pattern for how to handle disasters, and that pattern did not work in the 1930s and I hope we do not follow that pattern in 2009."

Ortega described the presenters in the lecture series as being noted for their outstanding public speaking abilities. She said the lecture series is intended to foster the tradition of higher education to challenge ideas and develop critical thinking skills.

Folsom summed up Roosevelt's presidency and the New Deal as a failure.

"Most historians rank Roosevelt as a great president," he said. "I think his presidency, at least the first two terms, were a failure, and thus we have a tremendous contrast. I would merely ask people to evaluate my evidence and evaluate the evidence of the pro-New Deal historians and make up their own mind."

TRANSFER | Memo: California ranked 39th in nation in undergrad degrees given

Continued from page 1

of transfer students. The three officials were Mark Yudof, the University of California president, Charles Reed, the CSU chancellor, and Jack Scott, the California Community Colleges chancellor.

The CSU system says it wants to do all it can to help transfer students transition smoothly from community colleges, but with recent budget cuts, many students might consider themselves lucky to just be admitted.

"From what we understand, SJSU is hugely impacted, which translates to less opportunities for college students to transfer, especially college students who are unaware of the policies and procedures," said Marian Duran, SJSU transfer program project assistant.

Teresa Ruiz, a CSU public affairs specialist, said that admission is not a sure thing even among transfer students, who have the best chance.

"Just because transfers receive priority, it does not mean they have a guarantee to be admitted into all of our campuses," she said. "Some are simply more impacted than others, which is why we encourage students to apply to more than one CSU."

Freshman art major Bond Nguyen said he thinks that transfer students should receive priority.

"Transfer students from community colleges might try harder to graduate earlier. They already

know what's going on."

In the memo, the three system heads agreed that an increase in community college transfer students to four-year universities is vital.

"Expanding the opportunity for a four-year education is a critical need for California," Yudof said at a UC Board of Regents meeting, according to a CSU memo. "We at the (UC) can't just sit back and wait for them to come."

Yudof said that the CSU system needs to be actively involved and help students realize that universities can be an affordable option.

In the memo, Scott said that a commitment to enlisting transfer students into four-year universities is essential, not only for students' futures, but also California's economic future.

According to the CSU memo, California is currently ranked 39th in the nation for percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded, relative to population.

College officials said their goals are to make the transfer process smoother and that they would like to see more aggressive efforts to make sure more students move up from community colleges.

"Our goal for students is to ensure that when they arrive at the CSU, they have the tools, information and support they need to be successful in achieving a baccalaureate degree," Reed stated in the memo. "A smooth transfer process is critical to that success, and a plan developed by the three segments holds great promise."

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HIDDEN TALENTS

A PROGRAM OF WORLD PREMIERES
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JOHNSON | Parents upset that fraternity members were not treated as suspects

Continued from page 1

cord and placed the decedent into a nearby chair.”

Albrecht further noted that when she arrived, Johnson's body was “slumped back in an office chair” and an electrical cord was nearby.

The Johnsons said their son's neck showed no marks of hanging.

Denise Johnson has photographs she took at their home in Clearlake, Calif., after first viewing the body on Dec. 1, before cosmetics were applied, she said.

“They say he was hanging for an hour and a half,” Denise Johnson said. “It would have been embedded deep in his neck.”

Albrecht wrote in the autopsy report that two ligature furrows surrounded Johnson's neck.

“The width is comparable with the orange electrical cord found next to the decedent,” she wrote. “At the front of the neck, the two ligature marks go horizontally. At the left and right sides of the decedent's neck, the ligature mark elevates toward the ears.”

The Johnsons said they were denied a viewing of the body until Dec. 1 because it had already been identified by fraternity members and a driver's license, and they were upset that the coroner's office did not allow them to view it at an earlier time.

“Right from the beginning, it's like they were covering things up,” Denise Johnson said. “I got the feeling they didn't want us down there.”

According to the autopsy report, Johnson's body was “tentatively identified” on Nov. 22 by his driver's license and “his fraternity brothers with whom he lived for two years,” and it was “positively identified visually” by his mother on Nov. 24.

Denise Johnson said she did not view the body in person and was shown a black-and-white photocopied picture of her son's body on Nov. 24.

“You can't see much in black and white,” she said, “but you



Denise Johnson and Gregory Johnson Sr. speak with reporters on Feb. 5 at Praises of Zion Baptist Church in Clearlake, Calif. **Spartan Daily (Screenshot)**

Watch video clips of their interview on theSpartanDaily.com.

can see that there are no marks on his neck.”

The coroner's office does not authorize the viewing of a body once it has been identified and that identification can be made by someone viewing a photograph, a spokesperson for the office said.

Denise Johnson said she was suspicious about the condition of her son's neck when the body was delivered to the family on Dec. 1.

She said her son's head was supported by a block, and when the block was removed, the head fell back.

“His neck was broken all the way through,” she said.

After UPD releases an investigation report, the case will be turned over to the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office, said Nick Muyo, D.A. public information officer.

“We look at the evidence they present to us,” Muyo said. “We look at the coroner's report. We do have the option to ask (UPD) to do some follow-up, to interview more people if that's what we think they need to do, or we can assign one of our investigators to do that.”

No suicide note was found, according to the autopsy report and Lopes Harris.

Nick Wright, chapter president of Sigma Chi, said the fraternity would have no comment.

Parents criticize police investigation

The Johnsons said they were told by UPD that the San Jose Police Department would not handle the case because the fraternity house was in UPD's jurisdiction. They said that UPD Chief Barnes told them that UPD was not prepared to handle a homicide and would turn such a case over to SJPD but that the case was determined a suicide.

In addition to their claims that there were no ligature marks on their son's neck and that he could not have hanged himself under the reported circumstances, the Johnsons said they had other reasons to suspect a cover-up.

Denise Johnson said the fraternity members were treated as witnesses to a suicide but should have been treated as suspects.

“I thought when the police came in and found a dead body, it was treated as a homicide until proven different,” she said. “Why was his case so different?”

After police had arrived at the scene on Nov. 22, fraternity mem-

bers were offered grief counseling in a Campus Village meeting room, Lopes Harris said.

When family members arrived at the fraternity house on Nov. 23, fraternity members had removed crime tape from the front of the house and had begun to disinfect the basement, Denise Johnson said.

“The police allowed the frat brothers to come in, take down (crime) tape, turn who they wanted to away, to just basically handle the scene,” she said. “And it should have been a police matter, and it wasn't.”

The Johnsons said some of their son's belongings were missing from his room, including DVDs, clothes, hats and jewelry.

UPD has not found any missing property, Lopes Harris said.

Denise Johnson said that she would seek justice in her son's death until her dying day and that she was spending seven to eight hours a day on the telephone contacting anyone who could help in her pursuit.

“He meant everything to me, everything, and I will miss him for the rest of my life,” she said. “And I will never rest until there's justice for my son. ... He deserves justice, fair treatment. That's all I'm asking for.”

Remembering Gregory Johnson Jr.: 'He was a leader, not a follower'

Gregory Johnson Jr. graduated in 2006 from Lower Lake High School in Lower Lake, Calif., where he was the student body vice president, an athletic trainer, an academic decathlon team member and a regional finalist for the Lion's Club Student Speaker Contest, according to a letter to the editor sent to the Spartan Daily on Feb. 12 written by Ann Nolasco, Jan Fiedler and Karen Ness, teachers at Lower Lake High School.

He was licensed as a minister at Trinity Baptist Church in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he lived for four years, and he was ordained as a preacher of the Gospel in 2004, according to a program for his Dec. 4 funeral at Praises of Zion Baptist Church in Clearlake.

“He was a leader, not a follower,” said Gregory Johnson Sr.

Denise Johnson said her son was excited about the near future. He was scheduled to participate in a judo tournament a week after his death, was planning a trip to Las Vegas for his 21st birthday in March, and was a year-and-a-half away from becoming the first in his family to graduate from college, she said.

“He just had so much stuff going for him,” she said. “I knew in my heart, deep in my heart, that something was wrong with what (UPD) said.”

The Johnsons said their son had never shown any signs of depression.

At a memorial service on Nov. 25 at Barrett Ballroom in the Student Union, more than 600 people attended and nearly 30 people spoke.

“He was a source of comfort during the hardships of life, and never fake about it,” one speaker said.

Another speaker said, “Whatever got him to do this — for someone so happy to do something so drastic — I wouldn't

wish that on anyone.”

Members of Sigma Chi declined to provide names of speakers in the days following the memorial service.

Kevin Victorean, a deacon at Praises of Zion Baptist Church, said members of the church, “every last one of them,” did not believe that Johnson had committed suicide.

“It was out of character for Gregory,” Victorean said, “the way that boy loved life.”

In the aforementioned letter to the editor, Nolasco, Fiedler and Ness wrote, “It is very difficult to believe Greg committed suicide. May his case remain open until more information is revealed that leads to the truth. We pray that anyone that knows any information will come forward.”

The autopsy report states, “University police officers interviewed many of the fraternity brothers who said the decedent was very social and had no problems at the fraternity. The fraternity brothers said the decedent showed no signs of depression and never had any suicidal ideations.”

It also states that Johnson had lunch with a “former girlfriend” on Nov. 22.

“We don't even know who they're talking about,” Denise Johnson said. “The autopsy said he had no food in his stomach. Where did he eat? We would like for her to come forward and tell us who she is.”

According to the autopsy report, Johnson told his former girlfriend that his father used the family's money and resources to support a drug addiction.

“His situation with his father was fine,” Denise Johnson said. “We had just visited him and he hugged and kissed his father goodbye and gave him a hat. They are making it up. ... They used anything they could.”

Parents turn to NAACP

The Johnsons, who are both black and whose son was black, contacted the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to help them find out how their son died.

Rev. Jeff Moore II, president of the San Jose/Silicon Valley branch of the NAACP, said he had looked into the case and spoke with Barnes, but that the organization cannot further pursue the case until the family files

an official complaint.

Neither parent explicitly said that race had anything to do with their son's death, the death investigation or alleged cover-up, but Denise Johnson said, “Tell me if it had been a black fraternity and it had been a white boy laying on the floor, tell me that everybody wouldn't have been arrested and held until they found out what happened.”

Statistics: suicide, hanging, homicide and black males

According to a 2005 National Center for Health Statistics study that sampled 100,000 cases, 10 percent of people between ages 15 and 24 committed suicide. In all age groups, men were four times more likely than women to commit suicide.

Suicide is the 11th-leading cause of death among all people, according to the National Center of Health Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The top ten leading causes of death are, in order: heart diseases;

malignant neoplasms; cerebrovascular diseases; chronic lower respiratory diseases; unintentional injuries; diabetes mellitus; Alzheimer's disease; influenza and pneumonia; nephritis, nephritic syndrome and nephrosis; and septicemia.

In the United States, homicide is the leading cause of death among black men and second leading cause of death for black women ages 15 through 24, according to the same sources.

The suicide rate among black males ages 15 through 24 has

doubled in the last 20 years, according to the American Association of Suicidology.

In 2004, 23.4 percent of all suicides were by hanging, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The National Center for Health Statistics study showed that among the 50 states, California had the eighth lowest suicide rate, 8.9 of every 100 people.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, “Although most depressed

people are not suicidal, two-thirds of those who die by suicide suffer from a depressive illness.”


Want to write a Letter to the editor?

— Place the letters to the editor box in the Spartan Daily office in Dwight Bentel Hall, Room 209,

— Send by fax to (408) 924-3282,

— E-mail to spartandaily@casa.sjsu.edu

— Mail to the Spartan Daily Opinion Editor, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, San Jose State University, One Washington Square, San Jose, CA 95112-0149.



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BASEBALL

‘Underrated’ Spartans ranked second in conference preseason

JULIANNE SHAPIRO
Staff Writer

The SJSU baseball team will start the 2009 season predicted to finish second by the Western Athletic Conference's seven head coaches — the highest it's been predicted to finish since 2003.

Yahoo! Sports and Rivals.com also predict a second-ranked finish for the team.

"If someone is going to pick you second, that means you have some really good players," said head coach Sam Piraro.

During a Bay Area college baseball news conference at Stanford yesterday, Piraro said the Spartans are the most underrated team in the conference.

"If this team can stay healthy and if I can get a couple of breakout years from a couple of guys, this team can be very competitive," he said. "It's a little underrated right now which is fine, but if they play like they're capable of, they can contend for the championship in our league."

Starting pitcher Max Peterson received preseason All-WAC recognition. In 2008, Peterson was the only Spartan to make the All-WAC team.

Peterson said he is excited to start the season and it was exciting to make the preseason all-conference team.

"It's a great honor to be able to do that with all the great players on the WAC," he said.

He also said the team's greatest asset is experience.

"We have 14 seniors and seven juniors," he said. "I believe our whole lineup and most of our pitching staff is going to be done by upperclassmen and by people who have played in the past."

Shortstop Kyle Bellows



Spartan baseball teammates eat sunflower seeds in the dugout during Friday's practice at Blethen Field.

DEREK SIJDER / Spartan Daily

praised his fellow teammate.

"Max is a great pitcher, and he throws great stuff," he said. "Hopefully he can do the same this year and if he does, he'll give us a great chance to win 10 games on his part."

Piraro, the 2008 WAC Co-Coach of the Year, said the key players to watch this season include Bellows and Peterson.

"Kyle Bellows and Max Pe-

terson are two players that are not only top-flight division one players, but will play professionally," he said. "They're very, very good."

Piraro said his goals and strategy for the team include finding the right combination in the bullpen.

"We've been a little inconsistent in that area," he said. "So that's something that's going

to have to play itself out. We all know how tough it is to get the last three outs of a game — it's not that easy."

He also said Fresno State, who was picked to win the WAC baseball title by conference coaches, would be a tough opponent to beat, but feels his team can do it and win the conference championship. Fresno State won the College World Series last year.

SJSU currently has 36 players on its 2009 roster.

"We have to stay healthy and we're not going to know how it's going to manifest itself," Piraro said. "I honestly believe this team has the capability over the long haul to be right where it needs to be. But we won't know that until we play somebody else."

The team will start its season against Saint Joseph's University

on Friday, Feb. 20 at San Jose Municipal Stadium with David Berner tentatively scheduled to pitch.

Piraro said Berner has been fighting a chest cold this week and has been sent home from practice every day. He also said that if Berner can't pitch, Peterson would start instead.

Matthew Kimel contributed to this report.



Top: Senior pitcher Ryan Shopshire pitches during a break from the rain during Friday's practice at Blethen Field.

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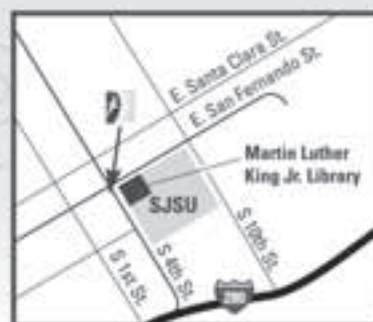
Bottom: Two Spartan baseball players walk around a puddle during Friday's practice.



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