

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Caitlin Kozel '09

■ After a slow start this season, the women's épée star qualified for her second-straight NCAA Championships berth.

For the second straight season, épée Caitlin Kozel '09 will represent Brandeis at the NCAA Championships March 13-16, but she admits that is where the similarities end between the two years.

After excelling early on last year, Kozel struggled at times this season and entered last Sunday's NCAA Regional Championships as just the 22nd seed out of 39 competitors in the épée division. She even admitted she was not so confident about her chances at qualifying as one of the region's épée representatives.

"I remember that, when I first got [to the tournament], I recognized all the girls in my pool, and thought 'I'm not even going to make it out of the first round.'"

Instead, Kozel comfortably advanced to the second round, where she swept all four of her opponents to assert her presence in the tournament. She then qualified for the final round-robin with a 3-1 record in her semifinal pool and took five of 10 bouts in the finals to qualify as the fourth-place épée finisher.

Kozel has tinkered with her fencing style all season in an attempt to incorporate more defensive strategies, but she said returning to a more aggressive mindset was a key to her qualifying for the NCAA Championships.

"A lot of my teammates were making fun of me yesterday, saying that I never retreated," Kozel said. "I didn't even realize that until people were telling me, [but] I have been working more on defense and working on incorporating coach [Bill Shipman's] parrying and reposting strategy."

Last year, Kozel won four bouts on the first day of the NCAA Championships, but struggled to just one victory on the second day. Kozel said improving her second-day mark is her primary focus this time around.

"[I'm telling myself], 'Don't fall apart on the second day,'" Kozel said. "That's what I have to work on, because the first day last year, I fenced well, but the second day was awful."

—Mike Prada



MIKE PRADA/the Justice

Judging numbers

3 NCAA Tournament berths in a row for the women's basketball team after making it for the first time in the program's history in the 2005 to 06 season. The team plays the University of Southern Maine in the first round Friday at 6 p.m.

1 more regular-season win for the men's basketball team than last year's NCAA Tournament second-round squad. Even without injured star forward Steve DeLuca '09, the Judges won 20 regular-season games in returning to the NCAA Tournament.

5 times in the last six years in which at least one men's foil has qualified for the NCAA Championships. Will Friedman '09 continued the trend with his third-straight NCAA selection, and Eugene Vortsman '08 may join him, as he is a candidate for one of the last at-large berths.

8 swimmers that finished behind Hollis Viray '10 in the 200-yard breaststroke at last Sunday's Eastern College Athletic Conference Championships. Viray's time of 2 minutes, 29.43 seconds was enough to finish in eighth place out of 16 swimmers.

50 percent shooting on three-pointers for the women's basketball team in its 63-60 NCAA Tournament-clinching win over New York University last Saturday. The Judges connected on six of their 12 attempts from beyond the arc in the victory.

33 percent shooting surrendered by the men's basketball team's defense in its 58-44 win over New York University last Saturday. The 44 points marked a season-low score for the Violets.

UPCOMING GAME OF THE WEEK

MBALL vs. Lasell College at HOME

The Judges begin the NCAA Tournament against their crosstown rivals.

As the host of a four-team first- and second-round pod in the NCAA Tournament for the first time since the 1977 to 1978 season, the men's basketball team should have a home-court advantage.

That advantage, however, could be mitigated in the team's first-round matchup against Lasell College Friday

at 8 p.m.

Lasell, located about three miles away in Newton, Mass., took the Great Northeast Athletic Conference's automatic bid after defeating Emerson College in the conference championship game last Saturday. They are 20-8 this season and have won 12 games in a row.

TEAM LEADERS

MBball (points per game)

Sharpshooting guard Joe Coppens '08 has become the team's leading scorer with 15.1 points per game.

Player	PPG
Joe Coppens	15.1
Terrell Hollins	13.6
Kevin Olson	11
Andre Roberson	9.7
Stephen Hill	7.7

MBball (rebounds per game)

Forward Terrell Hollins '10 leads the Judges in rebounding in just 24.3 minutes per game

Player	RPG
Terrell Hollins	6
Stephen Hill	5.2
Joe Coppens	5.1
Kwame Graves-Fulgham	3.6
Kevin Olson	2.5

WBball (points per game)

After a slow start, Jaime Capra '08 leads the team in scoring with an average of 14.7 points per game.

Player	PPG
Jaime Capra	14.7
Lauren Orlando	11.4
Jessica Chapin	10.6
Cassidy Dadaos	5.6
Three tied with	4.2

WBball (rebounds per game)

Guard Jaime Capra '08 has increased her rebounding average from last season.

Player	RPG
Jaime Capra	6.8
Jessica Chapin	4.5
Amber Strodthoff	4.1
Cassidy Dadaos	4
Lauren Orlando	4

REGULAR-SEASON UAA STANDINGS

Men's Basketball

	UAA Conference		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Chicago	11	3	18	7	.720
JUDGES	10	4	20	5	.800
Washington	10	4	19	6	.760
Rochester	9	5	20	5	.800
Carnegie Mellon	6	8	16	9	.640
New York	6	8	15	10	.600
Emory	3	11	10	15	.400
Case	1	13	8	17	.320

Women's Basketball

	UAA Conference		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Chicago	11	3	20	5	.800
Rochester	10	4	20	5	.800
Washington	10	4	18	7	.720
JUDGES	9	5	18	7	.720
Emory	7	7	14	11	.560
Case	6	8	13	12	.520
New York	3	11	14	11	.560
Carnegie Mellon	0	14	7	18	.280

AP BRIEFS

Cornerback Samuel spurns Patriots, signs deal with Eagles

PHILADELPHIA—Asante Samuel has such good hands and terrific instincts that the All-Pro cornerback rarely drops the ball, one reason why he has 16 interceptions the last two years.

The Eagles instincts were on the ball, too, that Samuel was the kind of playmaker they desperately needed to strengthen a defense that recorded an NFL-worst 19 takeaways in 2007.

Philadelphia got its first one of 2008, signing the free-agent cornerback to a six-year contract Friday and ending Samuel's five-year stint in New England.

"I just want a chance to be able to win and get back to the Super Bowl," Samuel said. "That's why I picked the Philadelphia Eagles."

Samuel, an All-Pro and Pro Bowl selection this past season, knows something about making timely picks. Samuel, who won two Super Bowl rings, has 22 career interceptions in 75 games.

"We regarded Asante as the No. 1 available free agent in the NFL," Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie said.

Samuel tied Denver's Champ Bailey for the NFL lead with 10 interceptions in 2006 and returned two more picks for touchdowns in the postseason against the Jets and Colts. His 12 total interceptions in the 2006 regular season and playoffs were the highest combined single-season total in Patriots history.

The Eagles wasted little time making an offer, reportedly worth around \$57 million with \$20 million guaranteed, on the first day of the free agent period.

Samuel, a fourth-round draft pick in 2003, also tied the NFL career playoff record with three interceptions returned for TDs.

He was protected by New England last year by the franchise player tag. When asked if he felt underappreciated in New England, Samuel declined to comment.

"You just have to try to block it out of your mind," said Samuel of the tag.

Steinbrenner softens stance on "Red Sox Nation" comments

TAMPA, Fla.—Yankees general partner Hank Steinbrenner knows what he'll do with a Red Sox Nation membership card if John Henry sends him one.

"I'll give it to the [Yankees] fans and let them handle it," Steinbrenner said Sunday. "The fans will probably take care of that. Let them decide."

Henry, a former member of the Yankees' ownership group, inducted Steinbrenner into the club Saturday after Steinbrenner challenged the popularity of the Red Sox's fan club.

"I'll think of a good response," Steinbrenner joked.

The Steinbrenner family holds Henry in high regard, and Henry and the Steinbrenners may collaborate on non-baseball ventures in the future.

"We love John Henry," Steinbrenner said. "Our whole family does. We've got no problem with John, I'll tell you that much. I'm sure we'll be working on things with him the future. There's nothing to talk about yet. A couple things have been talked about, that's all."

Steinbrenner would not get into specifics about any potential projects.

Red Sox spokesman John Blake said he knew of no projects that Henry and the Steinbrenners are collaborating on.

Steinbrenner said Henry has done "an incredible job" as the Red Sox owner.

"It's going to be a tougher rivalry than it ever was in the past," Steinbrenner said. "It's going to continue to be a tough, tough, tough rivalry. And they're always going to be good as long as John is the owner."

But don't think Steinbrenner is easing up on the Yankees' greatest rival, saying New York "will be better, that's the bottom line."

Steinbrenner added: "I haven't [softened] on the Red Sox any, I don't want to worry the fans. We'll always be arch rivals."

Bryant scores 52 to lead resurgent Lakers past new-look Mavericks

LOS ANGELES—New-look teams, same old Kobe.

Kobe Bryant took charge late in the game, scoring 22 points in the fourth quarter and eight in overtime to finish with 52 Sunday in Los Angeles' 108-104 victory over Dallas.

Mavericks coach Avery Johnson tried a variety of ways to stop him. Nothing worked.

"We gave him a single look, then we double-teamed him, then we gave him a triple-team and he split the triple-team and scored," Johnson said. "We tried to zone him, we tried to funnel him in the trap for a zone and he went the other way. He didn't cooperate on any of our defenses."

"Obviously he milked the free throw line on us and he just had it all going. He's a great player. He has these [games]. Lots of these."

Bryant hit the 50-point mark for the 22nd time in his career and first time this season. He went 15-of-27 from the floor and, constantly driving and drawing fouls, was 20-of-27 from the line. He was perfect shooting free throws in the fourth quarter, making 13, and converted the two he took in overtime.

That after he missed five of eight from the line in the first half.

"I was really upset with myself at halftime," he said, adding that he told himself to "just relax and go knock them down."

Bryant also had 11 rebounds and four assists, and Pau Gasol had 17 points and 14 rebounds in his 14th game for Los Angeles.

"All in all, we didn't give them any good looks, and I think eventually that wears a team down," Bryant said. "We really got it done on the defensive end."

"It was a physical game. It was back and forth. We didn't play extremely well, but it felt good to get this one done."

Dirk Nowitzki had 30 points for Dallas, including a three-pointer with two seconds remaining in regulation to tie it at 93. He had nine points in the extra period, but missed a three that would have tied it again with seven seconds left.

Jason Kidd, playing his seventh game for Dallas, had 15 points, 11 assists and six rebounds. He drove for a layup to pull the Mavericks within 105-104 and was fouled on the play with 11 seconds left in overtime, but then missed his only free throw of the game.