

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



DAVID SHEPPARD-BRICK/the Justice

Will Friedman '09

■ The foil became the first Brandeis fencer in eight years to be named an all-American at the NCAA Championships.

After narrowly advancing through each round of the NCAA Northeast Regional Fencing Championship, foil Will Friedman '09 fenced to his full potential at last weekend's NCAA Fencing Championships.

In his third appearance after qualifying in 2006 and 2007, Friedman finished in seventh place out of 24 in the foil division, becoming the first Brandeis fencer to earn all-American status since Tim Morehouse '00.

"I came into this tournament more confident, knowing what I needed to do better than last year and the year before that," Friedman said. "I was not intimidated by any of the big name fencers or their schools. I didn't let my defeats or my victories get to me, and that's one of the keys to doing well in this kind of tournament."

Friedman's performance demonstrated his growth as a fencer since his rookie year, as he improved from his 22nd-place finish in 2006 and 23rd-place finish last season.

"In the past, [Friedman] had a

tendency to underperform in national competitions, even though he has always been a good fencer," captain and foil Eugene Vortsman '08 said. "Over the past three years, he's set a larger goal for himself and has committed himself to competing for the team and his teammates."

Coach Bill Shipman said one key to Friedman's improvement is his disposition during bouts.

"[Friedman] doesn't find people to blame for his losses anymore," Shipman said. "He takes responsibility for his performances. He used to blame the referees and get distracted, saying 'This referee hates me,' but of course the referee never knew who he was."

In addition to being the Judges' top foil, Friedman is a member of two Brandeis' sketch comedy groups: Bad Grammer and The Floor is Lava.

"I just try to remind everyone that what it all comes down to is that [fencing] is just a bout," he said. "It doesn't actually affect your life."

—Andrew Ng

AP BRIEFS

North Carolina, Memphis, Kansas, UCLA head NCAA Tournament field

North Carolina University, the University of Memphis, Kansas University and the University of California in Los Angeles earned the top seeds in the NCAA Tournament last Sunday, and the top-ranked Tar Heels got the best deal of all: Their road to the Final Four won't veer more than two hours outside their Chapel Hill campus.

The Tar Heels (32-2) are the top seed in the East region, with their first- and second-round games scheduled for Raleigh and the next two rounds in Charlotte.

"It's an advantage if you play well," said North Carolina coach Roy Williams, trying to lead the Tar Heels to their second title in four years. "Just because the crowd's cheering for you, I've never had a crowd win a game. I know it sounds wacky."

Like North Carolina, Kansas, UCLA and Memphis won their conference tournaments to seal their top spots—Memphis in the South, Kansas in the Midwest and UCLA in the West.

The Final Four is set for April 5 to 7 in San Antonio.

Absent from the tournament are last year's two finalists, Ohio State University and two-time defending champion University of Florida. The Buckeyes were a bubble team that didn't make it, and the rebuilt Gators saw their chances die with a first-round loss in the Southeastern Conference tournament. They're the first defending champs to miss the tournament since Kansas in 1989, when the Jayhawks were on probation.

March Madness officially begins Tuesday with an opening-round game between Coppin State University and Mount St. Mary's University, then with first-round games Thursday and Friday. The real festivities, however, have already started, with the brackets out, the pencils sharpened and office pools getting in full swing.

In the East region, North Carolina will open against the winner of the Coppin State-Mount St. Mary's game, while No. 2 seed University of Tennessee will open against No. 15 American University.

Other games in the region are: No. 7 Butler University vs. No. 10 South Alabama University; No. 3 University of Louisville vs. No. 14 Boise State University; No. 6 University of Oklahoma vs. No. 11 St. Joseph's University; No. 8 Indiana University vs. No. 9 University of Arkansas; No. 4 Washington State University vs. No. 13 Winthrop University; and No. 5 University of Notre Dame vs. No. 12 George Mason University, which will try to repeat its surprising trip to the Final Four two years ago.

By defeating the University of Texas in the Big 12 title game, Kansas earned its top seed in the Midwest, a short trip to Omaha, Neb., and a first-round game against Big Sky champion Portland State University.

The marquee matchup in that region, however, will be between No. 6 University of Southern California and No. 11 Kansas State University—a meeting of top first-years O.J. Mayo and Michael Beasley.

Other Midwest games pit No. 8 University of Nevada in Las Vegas against No. 9 Kent State University; No. 5 Clemson University vs. No. 12 Villanova University, a bubble team; No. 4 Vanderbilt University against No. 13 Siena College; No. 2 Georgetown University vs. 15 University of Maryland in Baltimore County; No. 7 Gonzaga University vs. No. 10 Davidson University; and No. 3 University of Wisconsin vs. No. 14 California State University at Fullerton.

In the South region, Memphis opens against No. 16 University of Texas at Arlington, No. 8 Mississippi State University plays No. 9 University of Oregon, No. 5 Michigan State University plays No. 12 Temple University and No. 4 University of Pittsburgh plays No. 13 Oral Roberts University. The other side of the bracket includes No. 2 Texas vs. No. 15 Austin Peay State University, No. 7 University of Miami (FL) vs. No. 10 St. Mary's College in California, No. 3 Stanford University vs. No. 14 Cornell University and No. 6 Marquette University against No. 11 University Kentucky, with coach Billy Gillespie leading the Wildcats into the tournament in his first year at the school.

In the West, UCLA plays No. 16 Mississippi Valley State University, No. 8 Brigham Young University plays No. 9 Texas A&M University, No. 5 Drake University plays No. 12 Western Kentucky University and No. 4 University of Connecticut plays No. 13 University of San Diego. Other games are No. 2 Duke University vs. No. 15 Belmont University, No. 7 West Virginia University vs. No. 10 University of Arizona—off the bubble and making its 24th straight NCAA appearance—No. 6 Purdue University vs. No. 11 Baylor University and No. 3 Xavier University vs. No. 14 University of Georgia, which won the SEC tournament Sunday afternoon to make a surprise trip to the NCAAs with a 17-16 record.

Rockets defeat Lakers 104-92 to extend winning streak to 22 games

HOUSTON—The Houston Rockets did more than extend their winning streak on Sunday. They validated it.

Rafer Alston scored 31 points and hit eight three-pointers, both career highs, and the Rockets beat the Los Angeles Lakers 104-92 to extend their winning streak to 22 and claim sole possession of first place in the Western Conference.

Kobe Bryant scored 24 points for the Lakers and smothered Tracy McGrady on defense, helping hold the Houston star to 11 points on 4-for-16 shooting.

The rest of the Rockets made up for it. Shane Battier scored 14 points and shadowed Bryant most of the game. Backup point guard Bobby Jackson added 19 points and Luis Scola had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

The Rockets have won 26 of their last 27 games and 31 of their last 34. They've won 15 straight at the Toyota Center, 10 straight since Yao Ming went out with a broken foot and 11 of their last 13 games by double digits.

The Lakers have lost three of their last four. They played without Pau Gasol, who's out indefinitely with a sprained ankle.

The Lakers held Houston to 12 points in the third quarter to cut a 15-point halftime deficit to two. But every time the Lakers got close, someone other than McGrady would keep Houston ahead.

Battier and Jackson sank threes as Houston surged to a 96-86 lead with 3:20 to play. With McGrady occupying the defense at the other side of the floor, Alston drove for a layup and Jackson swished a jumper from the wing made it 100-86.

Judging numbers

25 points scored by men's foils Will Friedman '09 and Eugene Vortsman '08 at the NCAA Championships last weekend. Friedman finished in seventh place out of 24 fencers and Vortsman placed 14th.

71 wins compiled by the men's basketball team's senior class. Joe Coppens '08, Kwame Graves-Fulgham '08, Florian Rexhepi '08, John Saucier '08 and Stephen Hill '08 ended their Brandeis careers with a 65-55 loss to Amherst College last Saturday.

5 runs scored by the men's baseball team in the first inning of Saturday's 10-7 victory over Emory University. The Judges amassed five of their 14 hits in the opening frame on their way to a University Athletic Association championship. Third baseman Drake Livada '10 hit a three-run homer to give Brandeis a 4-0 lead.

2 walk-off home runs hit by the softball team in the University Athletic Association tournament. The Judges turned the trick in 3-1 victories over Washington University in St. Louis last Saturday and Case Western Reserve last Tuesday.

1 set surrendered by the women's tennis team in its 9-0 sweep of Bates College last Saturday. After winning the first set 6-3, Gabrielle Helfgott '09 dropped the second set 6-3 at No. 3 singles before winning the third-set tiebreaker 10-5. The men's team, which defeated the Bobcats 6-3 last season, didn't have as fortunate a fate, losing 9-0 without winning a single set.

UPCOMING GAME OF THE WEEK

Softball vs. Wellesley College at HOME

Brandeis begins New England play with two games Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.

The softball team will kick off its New England schedule with a double header Wednesday against Wellesley College.

After posting a 5-5 record to start the season in Florida, the Judges will try to improve their record against Wellesley, who won its first New England Women's and Men's Athletic

Conference championship and earned its first NCAA Tournament berth last year.

In last season's game between the teams, the Blue held Brandeis hitters to two hits—singles by Chelsea Korp '10 and Natalie Volpe '08—and Wellesley pitchers threw a combined 14 strikeouts in just 23 at-bats.

TEAM LEADERS

Baseball (batting average, min. 20 AB)

John O'Brion '10 leads the Judges with a .464 batting average so far this season.

Player	AVG
John O'Brion	.464
Nick Gallagher	.409
Tony Deshler	.400
Artie Posch	.385
David Almeida	.355

Baseball (strikeouts)

Tyler Robinson '08 has struck out a team-high 13 batters from the mound.

Player	SO
Tyler Robinson	13
Drew Brzozowski	7
Justin Duncombe	7
James Collins	3
Craig Letendre	3

Softball (batting average, min. 20 AB)

Second baseman Melissa Cagar '11 paces the Judges' lineup with a .640 batting average.

Player	AVG
Melissa Cagar	.640
Kaitlin Streilein	.464
Erin Ross	.391
Danielle Lavallee	.360
Chelsea Korp	.300

Softball (strikeouts)

Kaitlin Streilein '08 has tallied a team-best 30 strikeouts for the Judges.

Player	SO
Kaitlin Streilein	30
Natalie Volpe	24
Emily Vaillette	1
Allie Mussen	0

UAA STANDINGS

Baseball

Not including Monday's games

	UAA Conference		Overall		Pct.
	W	L	W	L	
Emory	4	2	13	5	.722
JUDGES	4	2	5	2	.714
Rochester	3	3	7	3	.700
Washington	3	3	4	4	.500
Case	1	5	2	7	.222
Chicago	0	0	0	0	.000

Softball

Not including Monday's games

	UAA Conference		Overall		Pct.
	W	L	W	L	
Washington	7	1	15	3	.722
Rochester	6	2	9	5	.714
Emory	3	5	11	6	.700
JUDGES	3	5	5	5	.500
Case	1	7	7	9	.222
Chicago	0	0	0	0	.000