

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Melisa Cagar '11

■ The second baseman leads the softball team in five statistical categories after last week's University Athletic Association Championships.

Last season, second baseman Melisa Cagar '11 led the softball team with 10 stolen bases in 47 games played. Just last week, after eight games this season against University Athletic Association competition in Florida, she has already compiled six steals on only six attempts.

"I feel that I am more confident this year and have realized that I need to utilize my base running skills better," Cagar wrote in an e-mail to the Justice. "When I am on base I always try to put pressure on the defense."

Cagar wrote that she takes into account the "strength of the catcher's arm [and] the tracking of the ball when it is released from the pitcher's hand" among other factors when she is deciding whether to attempt to steal a base.

Of her six steals, arguably the most significant one came in the fifth inning of last Thursday's game against the University of Rochester. With the Judges trailing 2-1, rookie right fielder Samantha Gajewski '12 was on first base and Cagar was on second with rookie designated hitter Marianne Specker '12 up at bat.

Cagar wrote that head coach Jessica Johnson instructed Specker to bat right-handed, even though she typically bats left-handed, in order to obstruct the Rochester catcher's throwing path to third base. As a result, Gajewski and Cagar pulled off a double-steal.

Gajewski and Cagar came around to score later in the inning with Cagar scor-



JULIAN AGIN-LIEBES/the Justice

ing the tying run as the Judges earned a 3-2 comeback victory.

Batting first in the lineup, Cagar leads the team with 10 hits, seven runs scored, a .400 batting average and a .483 on-base percentage. She also added one home run and two runs batted in.

"I feel that my offense improved as the week progressed," Cagar wrote. "Getting off on a fast start will help me push forward and use that as a baseline [for] my role on the team."

—Jeffrey Pickette

Judging numbers

2 straight seasons that a Brandeis basketball team was knocked out of the NCAA Tournament in the Sectional Finals by Amherst College. The men's team lost last season 65-55 while the women's team lost this season 68-54 last Saturday.

1 run allowed by pitcher Pat Nicholson '11 in a complete-game win over Washington University in St. Louis March 10. Nicholson had seven strikeouts and hit two batters in the Judges' 3-1 victory.

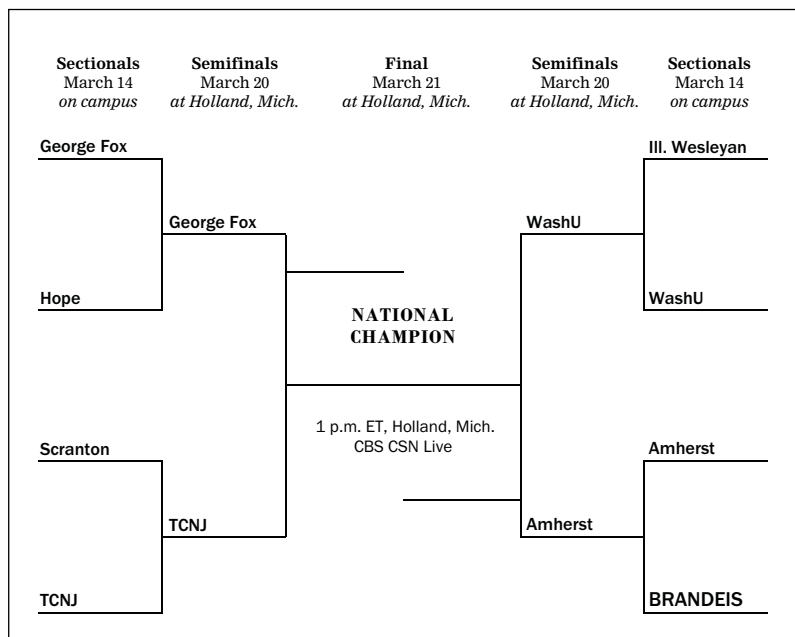
4 graduating seniors on the women's basketball team: guard Lauren Goyette and forwards Cassidy Dadaos, Lauren Orlando and Amanda Wells. The Judges advanced to the National Sectional Finals for the first time in school history this year after making the NCAA Tournament four consecutive seasons.

3 All-America honors for jumper Anat Ben Nun '09 in her collegiate career after finishing sixth in the triple jump and the NCAA Division III Indoor Track and Field Championships last Saturday.

5 players for the women's basketball team who scored in double figures in the Judges' 82-70 Sweet 16 win over Muhlenberg College to advance to the Sectional Finals for the first time in school history.

6 RBIs for catcher Erin Ross '10 in the first eight games for the softball team. The team is 3-5 after the annual University Athletic Association Championships in Florida last week.

NCAA TOURNAMENT WOMEN'S BRACKET



FINAL TEAM LEADERS

WBall (points per game)

Guard Jessica Chapin '10 led the team with an average of 14.1 points per game.

Player	PPG
Jessica Chapin	14.1
Lauren Orlando	10.0
Lauren Rashford	8.1
Cassidy Dadaos	7.0
Diana Cincotta	6.9

WBall (rebounds per game)

Guard Jessica Chapin '10 led the Judges with an average of 6.7 rebounds per game.

Player	RPG
Jessica Chapin	6.7
Cassidy Dadaos	5.5
Lauren Orlando	4.7
Lauren Rashford	4.2
Amanda Wells	3.6

UPCOMING GAME OF THE WEEK

Baseball vs. Rochester Institute of Technology

The Judges play RIT at home in a double header starting Saturday at noon.

The baseball team will play its home opener against the Rochester Institute of Technology in a doubleheader starting Saturday at noon.

The Judges are 4-7 this season after opening the season with a new spring training trip in Peoria, Ariz. and the University Athletic Association Championships in Sanford, Fla.

Brandeis won two of its first three UAA games with a 3-1 win over Washington University in St. Louis and a 6-5 victory over Case Western Reserve

University. However the Judges dropped their final three UAA games against WashU and the University of Rochester by close margins of 8-6 and 9-8, respectively, but were handled by Emory University 12-0 last Saturday.

RIT is 2-6 this season and has allowed over 20 runs in a game twice this season. The first time was against Wartburg College (Iowa) losing 25-5, and the second time was in its most recent game against St. Cloud State University (Minn.), a 22-4 defeat.

AP BRIEFS

Mississippi State University wins SEC Tournament in upset victory

TAMPA, Fla.—Mississippi State University showed all those bubble teams from the Southeastern Conference how to get into the NCAA Tournament.

Phil Turner scored seven of his 12 points in the final 11 minutes, 35 seconds last Sunday, and the Bulldogs knocked off Tennessee 64-61 to win the SEC tournament championship and the league's automatic NCAA berth.

Turner, who had 10 rebounds, hit a big three-pointer to put Mississippi State (23-12) in front for good, then made two free throws with 8 seconds left to help the Bulldogs hold off the Volunteers (21-12) in a wild finish.

Cameron Tatum's long three-pointer bounced off the rim and Mississippi State's Barry Stewart rebounded as time ran out on Tennessee's hopes of winning the tournament for the first time in 30 years.

Wayne Chism led the Volunteers with 15 points, but he missed seven of nine three-point attempts a day after going 4-of-6 to key a victory over Auburn in the semifinals. J.P. Prince had 14 points, and leading scorer Tyler Smith had 12 on 2-of-14 shooting.

The victory was the sixth straight for Mississippi State, which entered the tournament needing a strong run to improve its chances of making the NCAA field. The Bulldogs' first SEC title since 2002 ensures the league three spots, with Tennessee and regular-season champion LSU considered locks.

Mississippi State's run was reminiscent of the University of Georgia's stunning march through the SEC tournament last year. Georgia won four games in three days to earn an improbable NCAA berth after finishing last in the regular-season conference standings.

Stewart and Ravern Johnson both scored 11 points for Mississippi State, which also got 10 points, seven rebounds and six blocks from tournament MVP Jarvis Varnado. The Bulldogs held Tennessee to 29 percent shooting and forced two of the Volunteers' 14 turnovers with the game on the line.

Mississippi State accepted the championship trophy, landed Varnado and Stewart on the all-tournament team and cut down the nets in the half-empty St. Pete Times Forum, which drew a crowd of just 10,093 for the final.

Overall, the tournament drew 132,181 for six sessions over four days—the lowest attendance for the league's showcase event since 1991, when it was played in Nashville, Tenn., and without perennial SEC powerhouse University of Kentucky, which was on probation.

For Tennessee, it was more postseason disappointment under coach Bruce Pearl, who had hoped winning the crown would improve his team's seeding in the NCAA Tournament. The Vols hadn't been in the SEC final since 1991 and hadn't won it all since 1979.

The Bulldogs will play the University of Washington in Portland, Ore. in the first round of the NCAA Tournament Thursday at 9 p.m.

Tennessee will play Oklahoma State University Friday at 12:25 p.m. in Dayton, Ohio.

Binghamton earns its first NCAA Division I Tournament berth

VESTAL, N.Y.—Senior forward Reggie Fuller had 19 points and 10 rebounds, D.J. Rivera added 16 points, and Binghamton beat defending America East champion the University of Maryland, Baltimore County 61-51 on Saturday for the conference title and the school's first NCAA Tournament berth.

It was the 11th straight win for the top-seeded Bearcats (23-8) and their first America East title since moving to Division I in 2001.

UMBC (15-17), the sixth seed and the last team to beat Binghamton, made its first NCAA Tournament appearance a year ago but saw its chances of a second vanish when the Retrievers failed to score in the game's final 4 minutes, 49 seconds.

Rich Flemming led UMBC with 14 points and 11 rebounds, conference scoring champion Darryl Proctor had 12 points and 11 rebounds, and freshman Chauncey Gilliam had 10 points.

The raucous green-and-white-clad, standing-room-only home crowd of 5,342, the largest in the history of the school's Events Center, celebrated the first title of any kind in the program's 63-year history, storming the court at the final buzzer amid a sea of green confetti.

Binghamton shadowed UMBC guard Jay Greene with a taller player at every turn, and the strategy worked. Greene was just 3-for-10—1-for-6 from beyond the arc—and finished with seven points, four assists and five turnovers in playing every minute.

Binghamton took control by scoring 12 straight points spanning the halftime break, and then held on at the end when the Bearcats had difficulty finding openings in the UMBC defense. Emanuel Mayben's layup that gave Binghamton a 56-47 lead with 7:32 left was the last basket of the game for the Bearcats.

UMBC had plenty of chances to challenge after moving within 57-51 but they all failed. In the final four minutes, Greene missed a 3, Proctor was called for a charge as he made a layup, then missed another drive to the basket and a pair of free throws.

In the final frantic minute, Flemming missed a follow and a three-pointer, and Gilliam missed a three-pointer and a layup.

The Bearcats led for most of the first half and threatened to break open the game early as Fuller went 7-for-7 from the field for 14 points. After Flemming's jumper from left wing pulled UMBC within 17-15 at 11:14, Binghamton went on a 12-4 run to gain a 29-19 lead.

Then, just like that, the Bearcats went scoreless for more than four minutes, missing five straight shots, and the Retrievers rallied, moving within 29-27 on Proctor's layup with 1:41 left.

Binghamton halted the slide and scored seven straight points to close the half, the final basket a long three from the top of the key by Mayben with 3.8 seconds left. It was his only basket of the period.

The Bearcats will play Duke University as a No. 15 seed in the NCAA Tournament this Thursday at 9:40 p.m. in Greensboro, N.C.

Duke is the Atlantic Coast Conference champion.