

# THE GREEN & GOLD

The Green & Gold newsletter provides a monthly glimpse into three of the four pillars of Baylor Athletics: Academic Achievement, Character Formation and Spiritual Growth.

## GOLDEN BRUISERS

The Golden Bruiser Awards show stands as one of the premier events within our athletics department, showcasing excellence and achievement while fostering a sense of community. This year, the event took on the theme of a movie premiere, setting the stage for an unforgettable evening. The festivities commenced with a glamorous red carpet experience, setting the tone for the night ahead. Guests were treated to a variety of heavy hors d'oeuvres, adding to the allure of the evening. The venue was transformed into a captivating space, with a tunnel adorned with team posters styled as movie posters, creating a unique and memorable atmosphere. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of awards, which were all well deserved. The award show, hosted by esteemed CBS sportswriter Shehan Jeyarajah, took place at the Mark and Paula Hurd Welcome Center on April 22, 2024. If you want to see more from this night, search #GoldenBruisers24 on X and Instagram!

### AWARD WINNERS

**Rookie of the Year:** Alencia Lentz (WTR) & Ja'Kobe Walter (MBB)  
**Student-Athlete of the Year:** Riley Chimwala (A&T) & Johnny Keefer (MGO)  
**Scholar-Athlete of the Year:** Sydney Collazos (SB) & Ryan Hodge (MXC)  
**John Westbrook Award for Courage and Perseverance:** Jackie Marshall (FB) & Payton Washington (A&T)  
**Team of the Year:** Acrobatics and Tumbling & Men's Basketball  
**Play of the Year:** Baseball vs. UT  
**Comeback of the Year:** Football vs. UCF  
**Team Performance of the Year:** Softball "sweep" vs. UT  
**Spark Award:** Mariah Polk (A&T)  
**Missions Award:** Emry McDonough (SB)  
**Acts 20:24:** Garrison Grimes (FB)  
**Academic Champion:** Sydney Collazos (SB) & Bryce Boland (FB)  
**Academic Team Champion:** Women's Tennis, Acrobatics and Tumbling, Volleyball & Men's Tennis  
**Community Champion:** Equestrian  
**Outstanding Spirit Member:** Maddie Reid (All-Girl Cheer)



# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

## ACADEMIC CHAMPIONS

On April 16, before the softball game against UT Arlington, we celebrated our academic champions from the fall semester. For a student-athlete to be considered an academic champion, they must have achieved one of the following for the term: a GPA of 3.5 or above, a personal-best GPA or have graduated. We are so proud of these 258 student-athletes and hope that as they progress in their time at Baylor, they continue to be academic champions!



26 Acrobatics and Tumbling	13 Softball
17 Baseball	9 Women's Tennis
3 Women's Basketball	7 Men's Tennis
6 Men's Basketball	5 Men's Cross Country
28 Equestrian	11 Men's Track & Field
53 Football	9 Women's Cross Country
5 Men's Golf	28 Women's Track & Field
5 Women's Golf	12 Volleyball
21 Soccer	

## BIG 12 STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



Congratulations to Avery Mortman for receiving the honor of Big 12 Student-Athlete of the Month. Her hard work and dedication both in and out of the classroom does not go unnoticed!

"I have loved working with Avery this year! Her love and dedication to her teammates, education and Baylor as a whole is evident. She has grown immensely throughout her freshman year, and I can't wait to see all she will accomplish!"

**-Julia Milligan, Assistant Academic Coach**

"Being selected as Big 12 Student-Athlete of the month is such an unexpected honor. Baylor is truly a special place, and I am honored to get to be apart of something so much bigger than me. I am forever grateful that I was led to Baylor and all that it has already done for me!"

**-Avery Mortman, Equestrian**

# STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS

## EQUIPPED AND COMMISSIONED

This semester, Sports Ministry commissioned 32 student-athletes representing seven sport programs into a life of ministry on their teams and beyond at the completion of iDisciple. This is the largest iDisciple cohort Sports Ministry has ever had. Through iDisciple, student-athletes are equipped with basic ministry skills like preparing and sharing their testimony of faith, sharing the gospel, and discipling others. It is so rewarding to have a front-row seat to what the Lord is doing in and through these student-athletes. Two of the student-athletes from this cohort shared their testimonies of faith in front of their entire team. Praise God for their courage and boldness!



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPING

Baylor Athletics proudly stood among the select group of 12 institutions nationwide that engaged their student-athletes in the National Association of Athletic Development Directors (NAADD) Earl Edwards Minority Student-Athlete Development Program. This initiative aims to identify and nurture talented minority collegiate student-athletes, exposing them to the field of development to promote greater inclusivity in fundraising professions. Six of our student-athletes participated in two immersive 90-minute in-person sessions, led by members of the Bear Foundation. These sessions explored essential topics such as recognizing fundraising opportunities, effective storytelling, mastering the art of making "asks," and the significance of stewardship. Moreover, they gained hands-on experience by making "asks" to support sample initiatives and crafting compelling cases for support. Complementing these sessions were five virtual sessions conducted by members of the NAADD diversity working group. Through this comprehensive program, our student-athletes gained valuable insights into the importance of fundraising roles, acquired new skills, and, for some, discovered a newfound interest in the field.



**MARIAH POLK**  
ACROBATICS &  
TUMBLING



**ALIYAH KALOOSTIAN**  
ACROBATICS &  
TUMBLING



**JOSH WHITE**  
FOOTBALL



**SHAYLON GOVAN**  
SOFTBALL



**DARIANA ORME**  
SOFTBALL



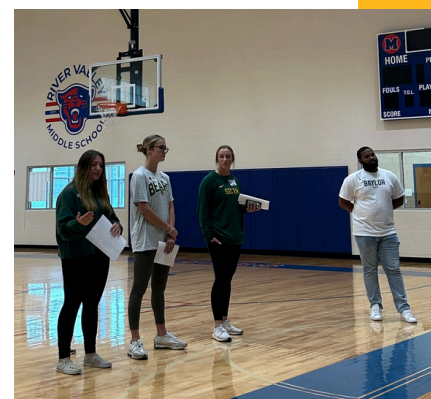
**VICKI ADU**  
TRACK & FIELD



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

In April, our student-athletes engaged in discussions with groups of students at River Valley Middle School, covering a range of important topics. These included embracing change, fostering relationships, effective time management, and maintaining clear and open communication with teachers, coaches and administrators. Our remarkable student-athletes shared their perspectives on these matters and offered valuable insights and advice to the 8th graders who are preparing to transition to high school next year.



## FITNESS FUN WITH J.H. HINES



Each week, J.H. Hines Elementary School extends its facilities for an after-school program tailored to their students. Our student-athletes are given the opportunity to participate in these sessions twice a week, enriching the experience for both themselves and the elementary school attendees. Recently, on April 24th, 25 members of our soccer team eagerly volunteered during a general fitness session, infusing the atmosphere with boundless energy and joy. Engaging in lively games of tag, forming spontaneous dance circles, and joining in pick-up soccer games all contributed to fostering relationships that are bound to endure.

"I had a great time spending time with the kids at J.H. Hines with my team! I think it was very fulfilling for both groups, our team and the kids. Interacting and playing with the kids really showed me how big of an impact one interaction or one person can have! It's the little things that can really make a difference. It's important to give back to the community however we can, and I think it's a privilege and a blessing to play soccer at Baylor, where we are supported and encouraged to do so!"

-Skye Leach





# STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

## GOLDEN BRUISERS RECAP WITH MARIAH POLK

**What is your position in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)?**

I am the Vice President and the Chair of the Golden Bruisers Committee.

**Can you explain the thought process around the theme of "movie premiere"?**

The committee loved the sneaker ball that took place last year. We enjoyed seeing everyone dressed up with their best kicks on, so we wanted to play off of that theme a little. As student-athletes, we know what each other look like going to class, at practice and in a Baylor uniform. Therefore, we wanted to see everyone dressed their best while giving them an occasion to look forward to. We wanted to celebrate the stars that each individual is and highlight those moments that were special throughout the year as if it were a big movie premiere.

**What was it like working with administration to execute the show?**

Administration was great to work with! I think in previous years, it's been hard for us as students to get our plans and points across because we are not the ones spending the money, but administration did great by listening to our ideas, giving feedback and executing everything to the best of their ability.

**Why is the Golden Bruisers award show important?** This award show is important because it gives student-athletes something to look forward to after a rigorous year. We put countless amounts of hours into our community, in the classroom, and in our sports, so I believe celebrating those accomplishments and highlighting all sports gives everyone something to look forward to and gives us a reason to continue to want to be not only great athletes but also great people.

**What was your highlight of that night?** For me, the highlight of that night was walking into the pre-show and seeing every idea come to life. I was super grateful to see everyone enjoying themselves, laughing, eating and taking pictures. I loved watching everyone that night enjoy each other's company. It was truly magical, and I can't wait for what's in store for next year!

