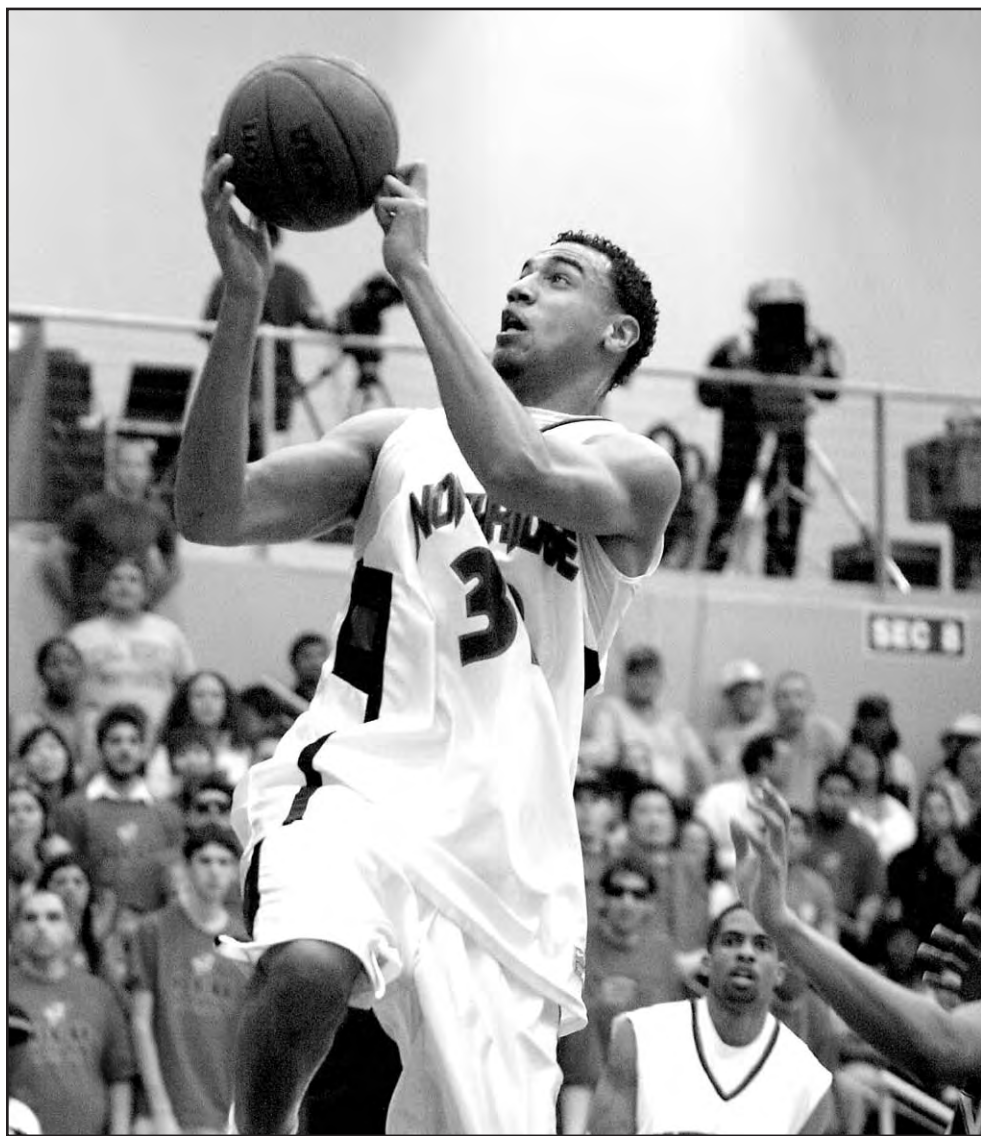


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Forward Tremaine Townsend scores on a layup in CSUN's win against Cal Poly on Saturday.

BRIAN MOUNT / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Matadors in must win situation this weekend

CSUN plays in semi-finals Friday night in Anaheim

ALONSO TACANGA
STAFF REPORTER

Northridge head coach Bobby Braswell is by no means any sort of choreographer, but a lot of his players are feeling great urges for dancing this time of the year.

Braswell, named Big West Coach of the Year earlier this week, and the Matadors (20-9, 12-4 Big West) begin their quest to obtain an NCAA tournament bid and will play in the conference tournament's semifinals Friday at 8 p.m. The game, to be played at the Anaheim Convention Center (as are all Big West tournament games), will be televised on ESPN.

"The intensity level goes up 100 percent," said Braswell, who's trying to lead Northridge to the "Big Dance" for the second time in its history. "It's a whole different season. There are eight teams in this tournament that believe they can win it. We're going to have to be very good (and) play

hard, unselfish basketball to be successful."

The Matadors will play the championship game the next day, Saturday, at 8 p.m. (ESPN2) if they advance. They enter the tournament on a winning note, following a 97-67

We're going to win. We're not going to go down there and lose.

— Jayme Miller,
senior forward

thrashing of Cal Poly last Saturday at the Matadome. Big West Sixth Man of the Year Deon Tresvant had 25 points to lead Northridge that night. Jonathan Heard, an All-Big West first-team selection, scored 19.

Tresvant scored all of his points in the second half against the Mustangs. This time, he said,

he'll double his playing productivity if that's what it takes for Northridge to win the tournament title. The Matadors, who were a preseason pick to go nowhere, are the No. 2 seed and have beaten every team in the conference at least once.

"(We want to) shock the world, show everybody that CSUN is for real," said Tresvant, who was also named to the All-Big West second team along with forward Tremaine Townsend. "Cal State Northridge is back on the map. We're going to go in (the tournament) and do what've been doing, which is winning."

Northridge led the conference race for most of the season, but conceded the No. 1 spot after losing to UC Santa Barbara (23-7, 12-4 Big West), the tournament's top seed, at home last week. Still, the Matadors got a pass directly into the semifinals and are in position to clinch their first NCAA

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Northridge hosts US Quadriplegic Rugby Tournament, Kings are 3rd

Three-day competition features two Northridge area teams

TAWNY ROSE GESTUVO
STAFF REPORTER

The Northridge Knights and Kings hosted the United States Quadriplegic Rugby Pacific Sectional Tournament, a three-day event at CSUN that ran Friday through Sunday.

Northridge's premier team, the Kings, came in third, securing their chance to compete in the upcoming division one national championship in Louisville, Ky. April 10-14. The Knights, Northridge's developmental team, finished seventh.

Eight teams gathered at Redwood Hall over the weekend to compete to qualify for the championship. Despite not having practiced for three weeks, the Kings were satisfied with their position. The Chatsworth park gym where, both teams practice, has been closed due to the discovery of lead on the premises.

"Third place is pretty good, considering we thought we would come in fourth," said Mike DeYoung, a senior urban planning and studies major at CSUN. "Overall, with no practice it worked out and our team's talent made up for the lost time."

DeYoung has been playing with the team for four and a half years and has been team captain for the past two. He said their biggest challenge this weekend was playing the Portland Pounders who took first place on Sunday.

"The Portland Pounders won

the tournament and have been a tough team to beat for years," DeYoung said. "They probably have the most talented group of players. All of their starters are on the national Paralympics team."

DeYoung made the U.S.A. developmental team this year and recently competed against Canada and Florida. He also placed first for individual performance on Sunday.

Upon the addition of play-

Our team gives people a new lease on life.

— Mike Doom,
coach

ers from Canada and San Jose, the Northridge Knights acquired a second team, the Kings. Both teams are coached by Mike Doom.

"We could be better with practice, but they are a good team," Doom said. "We were twelfth in the nation two years ago and sixth last year. I've been coaching them since 1991. I design medical equipment, and at the time I was designing wheelchairs. I started hanging around with the guys to see what they could do and what they needed to be able to do. Their former coach quit and I

started from there."

Doom recruits players through the Northridge Hospital's rehabilitation center. Current players go to support groups and encourage people who are getting out of rehab. Doom said after watching the team play it's hard not to get hooked.

"Our team gives people a new lease on life," Doom said. "At first a lot of people don't want to do it, but after a couple of months it's like a pick-me-up. For the first 10 years, I used my chair to coach. I wanted to understand what the guys deal with when they are on the court."

Doom said the best part of his job after all these years is winning.

Quad Rugby is an intense, full-contact wheelchair sport high on energy, with a competitive edge. The game is played on a modified basketball court and is likened to the aggressiveness of hockey. To be at the top of one's game takes dedication and a financial investment.

"You need a good chair and should be in good shape. Exercise is not enough. Some guys train for five hours a day pushing around. The starting price for a chair is \$3,000 and go upwards to \$6,000. Wheels are \$200-\$600 each, depending on the wheel. Gloves are about \$10-\$15 and players go through one pair a game," Doom said.

Introduced as the quadriplegic counterpart to wheelchair basket-



BRIAN MOUNT / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Michael Lykins of the Seattle Slam moves toward the goal on Friday at the Pacific Sectionals Wheelchair Rugby Tournament at the CSUN Activities Center.

ball, quad rugby, also known as Murderball or Wheelchair Rugby, made its way to the United States in 1981. Since its debut, there are currently 45 organized teams in the U.S. and approximately 20 international teams. Film directors, Henry Alex Rubin and Dana Adam Shapiro, released a documentary in 2005, Murderball, that captures the aggressiveness of the sport.

In order to participate, players must be 18 years of age and have upper and lower extremity

impairment. They are then given classification numbers from 0.5-3.5. Players classified 0.5 have the greatest impairment and the 3.5 player has the least. These ratings are crucial to the game as each team can only have four players on the court, totaling no more than eight points. Both males and females are encouraged to play and the classification system eliminates any possibility for gender advantages.

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BASKETBALL

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tournament berth since the 2000-01 season with only two more wins.

Some players feel confident the feat will be achieved.

"We're going to win. We're not going to go down there and lose," said 6-foot-8 forward Jayme Miller. "We're going there with a focus. We want to win this tournament. We did it in (the regular season) and it's time to really prove ourselves in the tournament. Then, we'll go to the big tournament, the big dance."

The NCAA offers automatic bids to its postseason to the winners of all conference tournaments, which is Northridge's best shot at acquiring one. The Matadors could still be given an at-large bid, a berth given to certain teams selected by an NCAA committee, but it's unlikely, especially if another loss is added to their overall record.

Northridge was last in position to qualify for the NCAA tournament three years ago, but a two-point loss against then-No.16 Pacific in the Big West tournament championship game prevented it. They haven't been close since. Braswell hopes skipping two rounds will somewhat ease the tough path to the dance.

"We've never been in this position before," said this year's conference's best coach. "We've always been ready to play on Wednesdays (when the lowest tournament seeds begin their play). To have two byes and get directly into the semifinals is a different position."

Getting the direct ticket to the semifinals should help, as should counting with a couple more Big West standout players. Northridge guard Josh Jenkins and forward Calvin Chitwood were both conference honorable mentions, making the total number of distinguished Matadors four, one of whom isn't even a starter.

Their coach is ok, as well.

"I'm very proud of him (for winning the (Big West Coach of the Year) award," said Tresvant of Braswell, "He deserves it."

Braswell indeed deserved it. He has the hardware to prove it. The Matadors think they merit being in the NCAA dance. Can they match Braswell?

Friday night will give a glimpse of the answer. Saturday night could be the definitive response.

*Note: Follow the Matadors' push to qualify for the NCAA tournament online! The Sundial is taking a vacation due to spring break, but you can still follow the men's basketball team online. Log on to www.sundial.csun.edu



BRIAN MOUNT / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jayme Miller gets fouled in CSUN's win against Cal Poly on Saturday.

RUGBY

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"I'm rated the lowest — 0.5 on a scale of 0.5 - 3.5," DeYoung said. "Players who have broken their neck break it in different parts. Mine was lower C5 and C6 (cervical level of spinal injury). Everybody has equal opportunity for play time. I play defense, so I don't really handle the ball. I set up the picker which is usually a higher level player."

The team travels nationwide and internationally, competing in tournaments. This, as described by DeYoung and Doom, is a great vehicle for camaraderie.

The three-day event was the result of USQRA's collaboration with CSUN's Department of Kinesiology, Center on Disabilities, Matador Athletics, A.S. Recreation, and Northridge Hospital.

"We heard about the tournament from Mike and went from there," said professor Elizabeth Slator of the kinesiology department. "We are pleased to have the opportunity to host this event. CSUN would like to build a relationship with Paralympics sports."

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