

Birmingham-Southern trustees vote to seek reclassification of intercollegiate athletics program

The Birmingham-Southern Board of Trustees voted May 26 to seek permission from the NCAA to reclassify its intercollegiate athletics program from Division I to non-scholarship Division III beginning with the 2007-08 academic year.

The board's vote came after the first internal review and assessment of the athletics program since the college applied for membership in NCAA Division I in 1999.

Chairman of the Board James T. Stephens said at the time that Birmingham-Southern would seek reclassification from the NCAA prior to June 1. The college would continue to compete at the Division I level in the 2006-07 academic year. He also said the college would revive a football program that last fielded a team in 1939, with preliminary plans to begin play in fall 2007.

Stephens cited financial and philosophical considerations for the reclassification.

"The board has a legal responsibility to examine all of the college's programs to determine mission fit and financial impact on the institution," said Stephens. "Obviously one of the things you consider in such a study after seven years is if Division I is indeed the right fit for an institution of our size, of our academic mission and quality, and of our financial resources.

"The financial performance of our intercollegiate athletics program is substantially below the expectations set when the board approved the move to NCAA Division I."

Stephens said the board also considered whether Division I participation was compatible with the college's mission and

profile. He said the board looked at institutions within the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference during the review. Ten of the 11 institutions in the SCAC house Phi Beta Kappa chapters, as does BSC, and most are ranked among the top 50 liberal arts institutions in the nation in such rankings as *U.S. News & World Report*. BSC's enrollment also is similar to most of the SCAC institutions.

Stephens said that Birmingham-Southern would seek membership in the SCAC, which includes such schools as Sewanee, Rhodes College, Centre College, DePauw University, Trinity University, and Millsaps College.

BSC President Dr. David Pollick said that all current Birmingham-Southern student-athletes on athletic scholarship will remain on athletic scholarship until they complete their eligibility and that incoming freshman student-athletes will remain on athletic scholarship through their junior year. In their last year, the college's Financial Aid Services Office will work with them to determine their qualifications for need-based and merit financial aid.

Prior to seeking NCAA Division I status in 1999, Birmingham-Southern had spent the previous 46 years as a member of the NAIA, including two national championships in basketball and one in baseball.

"Our board is committed to achieving the same level of excellence at the national level of Division III," said Pollick.



Women's golf captures its first Big South Championship title

The Birmingham-Southern women's golf team capped off a memorable 2005-06 season by claiming its first-ever Big South Conference Championship April 12 at Bent Brook Golf Course in nearby McCalla.

Under the direction of third-year Head Coach Michele Drinkard, the Panthers led from start to finish and fashioned a Big South Championship record score of 889 (301-298-290) in the 54-hole event.

Four of the five Panthers competing finished in the top-10, led by junior Jill Stupiansky of Lakewood, Ohio, who finished third after shooting a 2-under 70 in the final round. Freshman Alyson Mitchell of Troy tied for fifth, while sophomore Emily Klein of Brecksville,

Ohio, and freshman Jordan Hardy of Sylacauga tied for seventh.

Klein and Drinkard captured Big South Player and Coach of the Year honors, respectively, while Stupiansky was named the Big South Scholar Athlete of the Year. Joining Klein and Stupiansky on the All-Big South team were Hardy and Mitchell.

The win marked the second tourney victory of the season for the Panthers and their fifth finish of second or better.

The Panthers earned a berth in the NCAA Central Regional May 11-13 at Texas A&M University, becoming the third BSC team in three years to reach NCAA postseason play.

The 2006 Big South women's golf champions (from left to right) are Jordan Hardy, Lauren Dodge, Emily Klein, Head Coach Michele Drinkard, Jill Stupiansky, and Alyson Mitchell.



Birmingham-Southern becomes 12th member of the SCAC

Birmingham-Southern was unanimously confirmed as the 12th member of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) in a vote of the league's presidents June 7.

The membership was contingent upon a favorable decision by the NCAA this summer in regards to Birmingham-Southern's request for reclassification from NCAA Division I to NCAA Division III.

The SCAC, originally known as the College Athletic Conference upon its formation in 1962, is comprised of some of the most prestigious liberal arts colleges and universities in the nation.

"The addition of Birmingham-Southern College signals a message from our presidents that we are committed to providing an athletics environment for student-athletes that reflects two important aspects—a first-class liberal arts education and the opportunity to compete with similar colleges and universities at the Division III level," said SCAC commissioner Steve Argo. "We are excited about the conference gaining Birmingham-Southern as our 12th member and we look forward to a long and lasting membership."

"The Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference is comprised of some of the most prestigious liberal arts colleges and universities in the nation, so we believe this is a natural fit for Birmingham-

Southern College," said BSC President Dr. David Pollick. "This is a group of institutions among which we belong in terms of our academic mission and our intercollegiate athletics program. Our scholar-athletes can compete on the playing fields and courts while at the same time preparing for extraordinary careers."

"The SCAC is one of the premier Division III athletic conferences in the nation, and we are honored to have been invited to join this league and compete against some outstanding academic institutions," said BSC Director of Athletics Joe Dean Jr. "There is no question that the other 11 schools in the SCAC represent the best of what intercollegiate athletics is all about, and we are very pleased to be associated with them as we transition into NCAA Division III."

BSC joins Colorado College in Colorado Springs and Austin College in Sherman, Texas, as the newest members of the league. Austin College will begin full participation in 2006-07 while Colorado College will participate in specific sports for the 2006-07 academic year with full participation beginning in 2007-08.

Other members of the SCAC include Centre College in Danville, Ky., DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., Hendrix College in Conway, Ark., Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss., Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Ga., Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., Sewanee University in Sewanee, Tenn., Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, and Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

Birmingham-Southern currently sponsors 13 of the 19 sports that are part of the conference lineup—baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's golf, softball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's tennis and volleyball.

T.B. Pearson Hall of Fame/Weight Room opens

The newest addition to Birmingham-Southern's athletic facilities, the T.B. Pearson Hall of Fame/Weight Room facility officially opened in January.

Located on the south side of Bill Battle Coliseum, the two-story facility contains the weight room on the bottom floor and the Hall of Fame Room on the second floor, which can be accessed by the coliseum concourse.

The weight room facility houses top-of-the-line strength and cardiovascular training equipment for BSC's student-athletes and an office for the strength and conditioning coach.

Upstairs in the Hall of Fame, visitors can find photographs and biographical sketches of past Panther inductees, as well as league and

national championship trophies. The room, which also will be used to host banquets, recruiting visits, and special occasions, features seating for 80 people, a projection screen, a state-of-the-art sound system, and murals of current BSC student-athletes.

The facility is named for the late Theodore B. "T.B." Pearson, longtime superintendent of education in Washington County and a 1926 graduate and former student-athlete of the college. Pearson, a former baseball player and coach at BSC, was inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame in 1993.

The \$1 million facility was made possible by a generous donation from the T.B. Pearson family and BSC Athletic Foundation funds.



Visitors to the dedication of the T.B. Pearson Sports Hall of Fame Room at Birmingham-Southern look over some of the 135 student-athlete plaques located in the facility.

Joey Jones tabbed to revive Birmingham-Southern football program

Birmingham-Southern has hired former University of Alabama star and Mountain Brook High School coach Joey Jones as head football coach, reviving a program that has remained dormant since 1939.

Widely considered one of the top coaches in the Alabama high school ranks, Jones fashioned a 13-year career record of 125-38. He compiled a 101-27 ledger over the past 10 years at Birmingham's Mountain Brook High School, a program that had nine consecutive losing seasons prior to his arrival. Jones directed the Spartans to a playoff berth in each of his 10 seasons, including a Class 6A State Championship runner-up finish in 1996, a pair of semifinal appearances (2002, 2004), three quarterfinal appearances (1998, 1999, 2003), and four region titles (1996, 1999, 2002, 2003).

Prior to his stint at MBHS, Jones registered a 24-11 mark in three seasons at Dora High School.

A Mobile, Ala., native, Jones was an All-SEC wide receiver for legendary head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant at the University of Alabama from 1980-83. He was selected to Alabama's All-Decade team for the 1980s and ranks third on the Crimson Tide's all-time touchdown reception chart. Jones played professionally for the Birmingham Stallions of the USFL and the NFL's Atlanta Falcons.

BSC, the newest member of NCAA Division III's Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference, is expected to begin play on the gridiron in the fall of 2007.

"We felt that the best coach and the best person to start our new football program and lead us into Division III competition was right here in Birmingham," said BSC President Dr. David Pollick. "Joey Jones has excelled as a college player and he has excelled as a coach,

and Birmingham-Southern is excited that he has accepted the challenge of bringing exciting and successful football back to our campus."

"In identifying the best coach to lead our football program, our first and only choice was Joey Jones," BSC Athletics Director Joe Dean Jr., said. "Joey was an overachiever as a player and brought that competitive spirit to his coaching. We are all very excited that he has chosen to build our program to one that I know will be of championship quality in the years ahead."

Jones and his wife, Elise, have three children: Joe, 20, Jake, 18, and Caroline, 11.

Prior to World War II, BSC competed in football for 22 seasons from 1918-39, recording an all-time mark of 87-80-16. The Panthers were Dixie Conference Champions in 1932, 1934, and 1937.

The 1934 Panthers turned in the school's most successful season, winning the Dixie Conference title with a perfect 9-0 mark, which included a season-opening 7-0 win over Auburn. BSC won its final two games in '39, including a 9-6 win over archrival Howard College (now Samford) in the season finale.

Jones becomes the fifth coach in Panther football history, joining Baby Haynes (1918), Charlie Brown (1919-1923), Harold "Red" Drew (1924-27), and the all-time winningest coach in BSC history, Jenks Gillem (1928-39). Gillem was 51-43-8 in 12 seasons.



New BSC Football Coach Joey Jones addresses the media and fans during a June 19 press conference.

Seven inducted into Birmingham-Southern Sports Hall of Fame

The Birmingham-Southern Sports Hall of Fame grew by seven names in the spring as four former athletes, two contributors, and a national championship team were inducted into the 2006 class on May 20.

Inducted were David Daniels (men's basketball, 1978), Marguerite "Wita" Harbert (contributor, 1944), Lee Ann Massey (women's tennis, 2000), David May (baseball, 1995), Dr. Rob Moxley (contributor), Harold Pickel (men's basketball coach, 1959), and the 2001 NAIA National Championship Baseball Team.

An NAIA All-District performer in 1978, Daniels is one of the most prolific rebounders in the history of BSC men's basketball. In just two seasons with the Panthers, Daniels ranks second in career rebounds and third in rebounds per game. He was awarded the Bill Burch Most Inspirational Player award following his senior season.

From her time as a student to present day, Harbert has been a longtime supporter and is recognized as the pacesetter of women's athletics on the Hilltop. One of BSC's most generous benefactors, Harbert serves on the executive and athletic affairs committees of the Board of Trustees. The current business and education building on the Academic Quad, the Marguerite Jones Harbert Building, was opened in 1988.

A four-year letter winner, Massey was a two-time tennis All-American from 1997-2000. For her efforts on the courts, Massey was named the 2000 BSC Female Athlete of the Year.

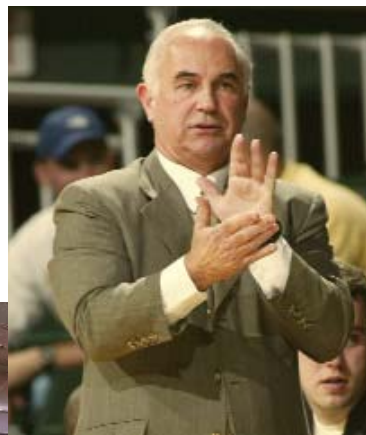
One of the most successful pitchers in Panther baseball annals, May recorded the second-most wins in history (28) from 1992-95. During his senior season, not only did May record the third most single-season wins, but he held the unique distinction of defeating three No. 1 teams in the same season—Auburn (NCAA I), Delta State (NCAA II), and Dallas Baptist (NAIA).

Moxley served as the Panthers' athletic director from 1982-93, and, during that span, was responsible for hiring the most successful four-some in BSC history—Preston Goldfarb (men's soccer), Joe Dean Jr. (men's basketball), Duane Reboul (men's basketball), and Brian Shoop (baseball). Moxley also has served BSC athletics as a radio announcer and through his current spot as men's basketball public address announcer.

A standout on the hardwood, Pickel was captain of the 1959 men's basketball team and once scored 25 points in a 60-59 loss to Southeastern Conference power LSU. Pickel returned to serve his alma mater as head men's basketball coach from 1963-70, and, during that time, was responsible for reinstating baseball as a varsity sport in 1967.

The 2001 baseball team completed perhaps one of the most successful seasons in Panther athletic history by going 55-11 and winning the program's first NAIA National Championship in its final season of NAIA competition.

Winter and spring sports recaps



Panthers turn in remarkable 2005-06 men's basketball campaign

Despite the loss of 10 lettermen and being picked sixth in the preseason Big South Conference poll, the 2005-06 Birmingham-Southern men's basketball team still managed to finish second in the Big South Conference regular season standings with a 12-4 conference record and a 19-9 mark overall. A Bill Battle Coliseum record crowd of 2,453 witnessed the Panthers lose a hard-fought contest to eventual league champion Winthrop in late February. Head Coach Duane Reboul was named Big South Coach of the Year for the second time in three seasons and he picked up career win No. 400 on Feb. 11 in a home victory over High Point.

(Top photo) Duane Reboul was named Big South Men's Basketball Coach of the Year for 2005-06. (Bottom photo) A Bill Battle Coliseum record crowd witnessed the Feb. 25 men's basketball game against Winthrop.



Hodge makes strides in initial women's basketball season

In Head Coach Brad Hodge's first season at the helm of the Birmingham-Southern women's basketball team, he faced a tough road and a tough schedule, guiding the Panthers to a 12-16 overall record and a 6-8 mark in the Big South Conference. In addition to league road contests, the Panthers traveled to Lawrence, Kan., to face Kansas and New Orleans; to Texas to play Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Alcorn State; to Starkville, Miss., to battle Mississippi State; and to Savannah, Ga., to face Savannah State. The Panthers earned the No. 6 seed in the 2006 Big South Tournament and traveled to face No. 3 Coastal Carolina, where they fell to the Lady Chanticleers to end the season.



Hodge

Rifle squad claims second straight SEARC title

Head Coach Sam Gladden and the Birmingham-Southern Air-Rifle team wrapped up another successful year, claiming the school's second straight and third overall SEARC Conference crown in Charleston, S.C., in February. Senior Dawn Stanfield from Clanton finished second overall in the final conference standings with a 666.5 average. Freshman Nakita Dees from Maplesville finished third with a 663.25 average score. The Panthers posted a 44-18 overall record, winning three of four SEARC matches and dual matches against Tennessee-Martin and UAB.

Senior Dawn Stanfield led the Panthers to another conference title.



Future looks bright for men's golf

The 2005-06 men's golf team saw a pair of record-breaking performances as well as a pair of budding stars on the horizon. The Panthers opened the season by shattering school records for an 18-hole round (276) and 54-hole score (854) in the BSC-hosted 'Southern Showdown. BSC went on to shoot three of the lowest rounds in school history, including a 281 at the Troy Invitational and a 284 at the Hal Sutton Intercollegiate. It was at the Hal Sutton where the Panthers turned in their best performance of the season, finishing second out of 13 teams. Individually, the Panthers were led by a pair of freshmen. Jake Nolen, a Birmingham native, led BSC with a 75.0 stroke average and a team-best four top-20 finishes. Austin Frye, a Madison, Miss., product, earned All-Big South honors by finishing in a sixth-place tie at the Big South Championships.

Baseball claims Big South regular season crown

For the second time in three seasons, the Birmingham-Southern baseball team can call itself Big South Conference champions as the 2006 squad clinched the regular season title on the final day of the season by completing a sweep over Radford May 19-21 at Striplin Field. The Panthers then entered the Big South Conference Tournament as the No. 1 seed, but dropped their first two games in the double elimination tourney to finish the season 33-22. The team was awarded the Big South Conference's Team Sportsmanship Award for baseball.

Senior hurler David Horne of Alpharetta, Ga., led the Panther pitching corps with an 8-2 record.



Softball turns in record-breaking season

Powered by senior standouts first baseman Nikki Rombough of Hayward, Calif., and pitcher Kristina Villavicencio of Longmont, Colo., the BSC softball team turned in a record-setting season in 2006. The Panthers strung together school-record winning streaks of six and seven games on the way to securing the program's first winning season at 28-21. Rombough paced the offense with a .459 batting average and set school records with 11 home runs and 41 RBIs. She earned her third-straight First Team All-Big South Conference honor. Villavicencio was 17-10 with a 1.79 ERA and earned second-team All-Conference accolades. The squad finished fourth in the 2006 Big South Conference Tournament.

Senior first baseman Nikki Rombough set school records in batting and slugging average, home runs, and RBI's this season.