

# What a kick!

UL Lafayette adds women's soccer as official sport

**T**rahan. Delahoussaye. LeBlanc. • The roster for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's new soccer team reads like an Acadiana phone book. • That's not surprising, considering the public's intense interest in soccer. • "The popularity that women's soccer has in this area and throughout South Louisiana makes this a perfect fit," said Nelson Schexnayder, UL Lafayette's athletic

director, in April when he announced the addition of women's soccer as an official sport. It is the first sport that has been added since the women's track program began in 1986.

The team will compete in the Sun Belt Conference. It practices on a field near Dupré Library. Games are played at Moore Park in Carencro.

Dave Poggi is the team's first head coach. Most recently, he was head coach of the Utah Freeze, a professional team in the Western Indoor Soccer League.

Acadiana soccer fans will recognize his name from his days as head coach



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of the Lafayette Swampcats from 1997-98. Under his guidance, the now defunct Swampcats compiled a 44-14 record and earned the Eastern Indoor Soccer League's regular season and league championships in 1997 and 1998.

"The success Coach Poggi had with the Swampcats gave credibility to this program from the onset," said Schexnayder.

Only two of Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns are seniors: Amy Fulkerson and Ashley Langman.

Fulkerson said Poggi was a good choice to lead the inaugural team because his definition of success is to work together and have team members reach their potential as athletes.

Early losses in the season were seen by Poggi as opportunities to improve, she said. "He still sees good in those games."

Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns' season began with five consecutive road games. The team got its first win in the third game, in which it defeated UL Monroe, 3-2, in overtime.

The Cajuns won their first home game, 9-1, when they faced Alabama A&M.



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Dave Poggi

## Former Pitcher Takes Over Softball Program

**T**he Lady Cajun softball team's first All-American player is now its coach.

Stefni Whitton-Lotief replaces Yvette Girouard, who resigned in July to become head coach of LSU at Baton Rouge's softball program.

Whitton-Lotief was named the first-team All-American pitcher in 1990. That same year, she led the team to its first Top 10 ranking and to its first NCAA Regional appearance. Whitton-Lotief is ranked second in wins among UL Lafayette's pitchers, with 78 victories, and has the second-lowest career ERA in the school's history.

"Stefni is someone who knows our program from inside and out," said Nelson Schexnayder, UL Lafayette's athletic director.



Stefni Whitton-Lotief

Whitton-Lotief has been head coach and president of the Louisiana Image, one of the best select fastpitch teams in the nation, since 1996. In 1992, she was the pitching coach at North Carolina. The two-time All-American was a volunteer pitching and catching coach for the Lady Cajuns from 1995-97.

For the past two years, Whitton-Lotief has taught marketing at UL Lafayette. She holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and a master's degree in business administration.

# First Trip to Omaha

Louisiana-Lafayette adds spice to College World Series

**T**he 2000 College World Series got some unexpected seasoning from Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns, who fired up fans by playing with passion, flair and lots of heart. • Louisiana-Lafayette will be remembered most for taking down mighty Clemson in the ultimate nail-biter of the series. That was after the Cajuns had toppled South Carolina, the No. 1 team in the nation—on the Gamecock's home field, no less—for the right to go to Omaha, Neb. It was the first time in UL

Lafayette's 100-year-history that a Ragin' Cajun team made it to the CWS.

Two heart-stoppers in the Clemson game defined the Ragin' Cajuns. In the first, outfielder Steven Feehan snagged a single, stole second, moved to third on a throwing error and stole home plate. Yes, he stole home plate, from right under the noses of about 2 million television viewers. Cajuns ahead, 3-0.

Fast-forward to the bottom of the ninth. Cajuns were down, 4-3. Shortstop Rick Haydel was on first. Feehan laid down a bunt. Clemson's pitcher threw to first, but it was uncovered. That allowed Haydel to scoot to second and third. He practically flew home, sliding to touch the plate a nanosecond ahead of the Clemson catcher's tag. Louisiana-Lafayette won, 5-4. Pandemonium.

Adrenalin carried the Cajuns into their showdown with Stanford the next day. But the juice ran out in the third inning. Stanford ruled, 19-9.

In addition to making history with its appearance in the CWS, Louisiana-Lafayette was the first team in Louisiana, other than LSU, to host an NCAA Regional Tournament.

All in all, it was a heck of a season.



PHOTOS BY BRAD KEMP / THE ADVERTISER



TOP: Head Coach Tony Robichaux talks to players before they face Stanford for what would be their last game in Rosenblatt Stadium.

RIGHT: Louisiana's Ragin' Cajun fans spell it out.





TOP LEFT: From left, head coach Tony Robichaux and assistant coaches Wade Simoneaux, Anthony Babineaux, and Jason Gonzales. TOP RIGHT: Pitcher Justin Gabriel. ABOVE: Steve Feehan makes a textbook bunt. BOTTOM: Rick Haydel finds his way home. LEFT: Louisiana-Lafayette 5, Clemson Tigers, 4.



## Looking Ahead

Local baseball fans work to make Moore Field more fan friendly

**L**ong before Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns dazzled baseball fans across the nation as they muscled their way through the 2000 College World Series, many local supporters were at work behind the scenes.

- One group of low-key baseball backers will keep pushing toward its goal of improving T.L. "Tigue" Moore Field. With the momentum triggered by the Cajuns' dazzling performance in the CWS, the group is confident it can raise the money needed to upgrade the facility.

Jack McElligott of Lafayette is one of the faithful who helped obtain funds needed to install chairback seating at Moore Field for the Ragin' Cajuns' 2000 season. He and others, who call themselves the "UL Lafayette Baseball Development Committee," contacted friends to ask for donations.

"We are anxious to continue to move UL Lafayette's baseball program forward. Since we returned from Omaha, so many people have told me that they would like to help the team achieve continued success."

HEAD COACH TONY ROBICHAUX

McElligott said the red chairback seats behind home plate "immediately

made a difference" by bringing in extra revenue and offering fans some added comfort.

Now the group will start working

to generate money to:

- expand restroom and concession facilities;
- replace bleachers on both sides of the stadium; and
- expand the player's locker room and provide more suitable offices for coaches.

The group hopes to someday be able to provide enough funds to construct an indoor batting and pitching facility that could also be used by UL Lafayette's Lady Cajuns softball team.

A top-rate facility is needed to attract and retain blue chip coaches and players and to draw fans, McElligott said.

Head Coach Tony Robichaux is grateful for fans' support.



Members of the Executive Committee of the UL Lafayette Baseball Development Committee, a group of fans who are raising funds to improve Moore Field, are, from left: Scott Creel, Bob Fournet, Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns head coach Tony Robichaux, Jack McElligott, Ted Beaulieu Jr., and Jerry Reaux. Not shown is Executive Committee member John Bordelon.

ROBLEY DUPLIX

## Donation Puts a New Spin On Ragin' Cajun Tennis

"We are anxious to continue to move UL Lafayette's baseball program forward," he said. "Since we returned from Omaha, so many people have told me that they would like to help the team achieve continued success.

"Upgrading the stadium would mean a lot to the program."

Robichaux and his staff are making plans for "Home Run Weekend" Nov. 17-20. Activities include a golf tournament, banquet, auction and a game featuring former Ragin' Cajun players who now play professional baseball.

McElligott said the Louisiana-Lafayette baseball team "gave UL Lafayette great national exposure" by its performance in the CWS. "Shame on us if we don't do our part to keep it there," he said.

For more information or to make a contribution to Ragin' Cajuns athletics, please contact the UL Lafayette Office of Development at (337) 482-0922.

**T**HANKS TO A \$100,000 GIFT FROM A Lafayette ophthalmologist and his wife, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette will soon have one of the best college tennis facilities in the United States.

Brett Schwartz, UL Lafayette tennis coach, said a contribution from Dr. and Mrs. Jay Culotta Jr. will be combined with university funds to build a \$215,000 multi-purpose building.

"It will be one of the top 25 college tennis facilities in the nation because we'll have everything we need to host other teams," he stated. "We're ecstatic. Dr. Culotta and his wife, Cynda, have been our most generous boosters."

Construction of such a structure has been a goal since the 1980s, Schwartz said. It will include a conference room, locker rooms, coaches' offices and storage areas.

Construction began in October and is expected to be completed by mid-February next year.

Last year, Louisiana's Ragin' Cajun men's tennis team was ranked No. 25 in the nation. It went to its fifth straight NCAA regional contest and was only one match away from the NCAA championship competition. Louisiana-Lafayette player Eduardo Gordilho was honored as the state's Player of the Year by the Louisiana Sports Writers' Association, while Jakub Iowski was named Freshman of the Year. Schwartz was named Louisiana Coach of the Year by the same association.

For information about contributing to a University of Louisiana at Lafayette athletic program, please call the UL Lafayette Office of Development at 482-GIFT.

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Bell's Sporting Goods carries a complete line of quality UL Lafayette Ragin' Cajun Sportswear! Stop by our showroom or visit us online.