In central El Paso sits a scanty, shabby warehouse where organized action is practiced on a regular basis. Elbows are thrown, women are shoved almost constantly and hundreds of fans cheer for each team. It sounds like some sort of an underground exclusive fight club—one that is seldom talked about.

No, quite the contrary—the sullied building is home for the Sun City Roller Girls roller derby bouts, which attract hordes of fans, who have supported the sport for some time.

On Sunday, June 25, the organization embarked on their first double-header of the ninth season, called “Brawlesque,” featuring bouts between the Chuco Town Chulas and the Sexecutioners, and Las Viudas Negras and Las Diablas.

The Sun City Roller Girls opened the doors to the El Paso Coliseum’s judging arena, a dingy building in the backside of the arena and built the roller derby track inside the place for the bouts.

It’s a gritty, grimy, adrenaline-filled sporting event that is nothing but constant action. “So many people put so much work into this,” said Chuco Town Chulas’ jammer, Lady Latte Pain, who prefers her roller derby name to be used. “This is it—the bruises, the scratches, the falls, the pushing; it’s roller derby.”

Despite two lopsided games as the Sexecutioners defeated the Chuco Town Chulas 108-68 and Las Viudas Negras topped Las Diablas 108-27, the sold-out audience fed off every aspect of the bouts and were lively throughout the evening.

“The game is fast and furious,” said the director of SCRG, Teresita Lopez, aka coach Frida Krueger, of the Chuco Town Chulas. “When we have doubleheaders, we have four teams selling tickets, so that means we have a better turnout. All our fans come out when we have these doubleheaders and that’s why it sells out.”

Rules Breakdown

An outsider looking in might think roller derby is based off speed or a simple race. However, they are mistaken. Roller derby is an intricate sport with distinctive rules, points and winners and losers.

First off, both teams square off against each other and line up on one side of the bank of the rink. The key components of a roller derby bout are the jammers, who evidently score the points. The jammers start behind the pack, which is composed of four blockers from each team, and try to get through the pack to gain points for their team. The pack JOB is to try and allow their jammer to get through to get points while simultaneously blocking the opposing team’s jammer from scoring. This is where the pushing, shoving, hitting, scratching and other strategies are used to scrape up points.

Jammers score points each time they pass an opposing player, beginning with their second pass through the pack. The jammer, who is leading in the pack, is known as the lead jammer, who can initially call off the jam session if they choose to do so. If they do not call it off, jams will last one minute.

The referees play a big part in this game too. They award both major and minor penalties to anyone who intentionally trips, leaves the rink and comes back into play or anything else at their discretion. If a player is called for a penalty, she must spend time in a penalty box until her time-out is done.

“IT does take time to learn the rules,” baby Latte Pain, who has been in the league for five seasons. “If you can get that part, get good gear, maintain safety, respect the girls out there, you will have fun.”

The girl-power culture

If punk rock could have a local roller derby organization, SCRG would be it. The culture surrounding the experience is like none other. The girls are vicious and they’re willing to throw elbows or push at any given time.

The Prospector
Give artists due credit

BY LESLIE SARIÑAN
THE PROSPECTOR

Music consumption has evolved in the last 10 years and transitioned to mostly streaming. Cassette tapes and CDs are virtually obsolete. With this change in music comes a change in pay for musicians. The internet has made it possible to access more music at little to no cost at all. While this is great news for the consumers, it isn’t necessarily the best news for the musicians who aren’t compensated fairly.

In order to get people to join a streaming service, they’ll usually offer a free trial period. During those free trial periods, the artists don’t get paid any of the royalties for their music. This might not seem like a big loss for the big-name artists, but it’s a huge hit for the smaller, less mainstream artists. A lot of people don’t consider the production that goes into creating even just one song. There are multiple writers, producers, sound engineers, publishers and talent involved. So it’s not just the singers that don’t get paid, all of those involved do not get compensated for their work during those month-long trials.

Back in 2015, when Apple came out with their music streaming service, Apple Music, they offered all users a three-month free trial. This caused a lot of backlash from independent label owners and many big-name artists such as Taylor Swift.

When artists’ contracts for Apple Music were given, Taylor Swift pulled all of her music off every music streaming service. She even wrote a letter to Apple expressing her discontent with the service for not paying artists for their streams during such a long period. She didn’t just advocate for the singers and big talents, but for all of the other people involved in production, who would have to go such a long period of time without pay.

Her letter of course was read by many and even convinced Apple Music to compensate the artists during the free trial period and give artists 70 percent of the revenue for music streamed after the free trial period. After doing so, Taylor streamed her music exclusively on Apple Music.

A few weeks ago, Taylor finally returned to all other streaming services. This was due to her success in selling 10 million copies of “1989” and over 100 million songs. When she left Spotify, Swift said, “I’m not willing to contribute my life’s work to an experiment that I don’t feel fairly compensates the writers, producers, artists and creators of this music.” Her music is back on Spotify despite the low amount of revenue that artists receive.

As consumers, we never stop to think about why we pay for music. Instead of simply downloading free music, why don’t we at least set aside money to buy CDs or vinyls to preserve the art? Big-name artists probably don’t need the money, but one should consider the lesser known artists, who have barely made it onto Spotify and are struggling to make ends meet as they record in their tiny apartments. Just because music is no longer consumed through physical albums doesn’t mean that artists should miss out on the pay.

As an outsider from New York to El Paso, I’ve been through a complete shift in our music listening habits. Without downloading music, I don’t feel like I’m preserving the art. This was due to my success in making it onto Spotify and are struggling to make ends meet as they record in their tiny apartments. Just because music is no longer consumed through physical albums doesn’t mean that artists should miss out on the pay.

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It’s a great time to be in EP

By Augie Tours
THE PROSPECTOR

The border culture integrates two nations together in a world that seems separate from the international divisions seen on the news amid discussions of a wall. El Paso blocks all of that out, and in a world of delicious food and friendly people. UTEP is a historically revered sports school, and the programs are nudging the city to events will help El Paso in its push to take that next step nationally.

Although El Paso is one of the safest large cities in the country, and boasts a rich sports legacy, the city is often forgotten by much of the country. After all, Paso has its own niche; a quiet desert city that is isolated from seemingly everything brings a sort of solitude to its inhabitants.

By Augie Tours
THE PROSPECTOR

As an outsider from New York to El Paso, I’ve been through a complete shift in our music listening habits. Without downloading music, I don’t feel like I’m preserving the art. This was due to my success in making it onto Spotify and are struggling to make ends meet as they record in their tiny apartments. Just because music is no longer consumed through physical albums doesn’t mean that artists should miss out on the pay.

Show your mind

Letters will be edited for clarity and brevity. Letters over 250 words are subject to editing to fit available space. Please include full name, street address and telephone number and e-mail address, plus major, classification and/or title if applicable.

Letters may be obtained by calling The Prospector at 915-747-5161. Opinions expressed in The Prospector are not necessarily those of the university.

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JUNE 27, 2017

THE PROSPECTOR

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What would you like to see from the newly elected city representatives and mayor?

OSCAR GARCIA
Graduate student in curriculum & instruction
“I would want them to make changes to the education system for sure.”

BRITTANY RAMIREZ
Senior biomedical major
“To bring more jobs to El Paso city.”

KRISTIAN VILLANUEVA
Graduate student in software engineering
“It really is that the new mayor wants to focus on El Paso’s infrastructure.”

ANA JIMENEZ
Senior education major
“I want to see more help to public schools, even more to those that are in poor areas.”

LUIS GUTIERREZ
Freshman mechanical engineering major
“I would like to see the construction done.”

MICHELLE CARRASCO
Junior education major
“I hope our representative can help the department of transportation, improving the downtown area.”

EDUARDO PARRA
Sophomore kinesiology major
“To be more representative, since El Paso is more of a minority city and to show how El Paso is very diverse.”

SARAH PONCE DE LEON
Senior civil engineering major
“I hope our representative can help the department of transportation, improving the downtown area.”

MARIO PACHECO
Sophomore kinesiology major
“For them to make the best decisions for us and start sending researchers to help college students that need it.”

HELENA MUCINO
Doctoral student in education
“Improve education and health areas is something important.”

MARCUS WHITE
Senior nursing major
“Transparency and better infrastructure, because I feel that they do a lot of stuff behind closed doors and not public on their decisions.”

JOE MEXICANO
Junior forensic science major
“To hear the voice of El Paso’s people, not to do their own things behind our back and to present new ideas to El Paso.”

ANA JIMENEZ
Senior education major

FRI SAT SUN MON

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On May 6, it was announced that David Saucedo and Dee Margo would go head-to-head for a runoff election.

RUNOFF ANNOUNCED

On June 10, Dee Margo was announced the winner of the mayoral election, winning with 57 percent of the votes.

A LOOK BACK TO THIS LOCAL MAYORAL ELECTION

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Nearly a month after the 85th Texas Legislative Session ended, Governor Greg Abbott has called for a special session. The second session is set to begin on July 18, and last up to 30 days.

This comes to almost no surprise as lawmakers failed to approve a bill that would have prevented the shutdown of critical state agencies. This failure has caused Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick to push for a special session to revisit the bill. He says the House didn’t complete its sunset review process in time. “Sunset” is a review process where lawmakers periodically review state agencies and decide to either phase them out or keep them open.

If the sunset bill review does not go through, state agencies would have to close. One of the agencies facing closure is the Texas Medical Board, which licenses all doctors in Texas. The Texas Legislative Sessions take place every two years and run 140 days long. This year it wrapped up with a lot of loose ends. During the last day of the session, the House saw a lot of opposition and massive protests over Senate Bill 4, known as the “anti-sanctuary cities bill,” which allows law enforcement to ask an individual’s immigration status. This also caused argument between state representatives. The law was signed by Abbott with no advance notice Sunday night before the session concluded. Hundreds of protesters had to be escorted out of the House gallery after they disrupted the lower chamber’s proceedings.

High tensions and anger got in the way of completing the agenda on the last day of the session. Democrats and Republicans even went as far as to start shouting each other. These disputes left a lot of issues unresolved and only increased the need for a special session. After it came to an end, Abbott vetoed 50 bills passed during the legislative session. However, Texas legislators have the power to override the vetoes during the special sessions.

Key issues that are going to be brought up include abortion, the “bathroom bill” and property tax growth. The special session, which could run as long as 30 days, is estimated to cost taxpayers up to $800,000.

Here are two of the bills sure to be brought up during the special sessions:

HB 3859:
House Bill 3859 is the latest bill signed into law by Abbott and is sure to come up during the special session. This bill has made it legal for child welfare organization to deny welfare to qualified Texans based on their sexuality, gender identity or on the basis of the sexuality or gender identity of someone in their family if the provider cites religious beliefs as a reason to deny them. Organizations will be able to do the same for same-sex couples who wish to adopt or even a couple from which one partner has been previously divorced as it can be considered a violation of the organization’s religious beliefs. HB 3859 is set to go into effect in September.

SB 8:
Senate Bill 8 passed back in March during the legislative session. It is sure to be revisited during the special session as Abbott highlighted abortion as one of the key issues. This bill bans partial-birth abortions and restricts fetal tissue donations. Dilation and evacuation (D&E) is also made illegal through this bill. Doctors have concluded that D&E is the safest and most common type of abortions performed in the first trimester. Additionally, SB 8 bans the donation of fetal remains for medical research and requires that all remains during an abortion be buried or cremated. While it is unknown how the bill will be changed during the special session, all signs point to more restrictions on abortion.

Leslie Sariñana may be reached at theprospectordailynews@gmail.com.
Overview: What started out in Sweden as a small music streaming service has turned into a worldwide phenomenon that holds 140 million users. It streams over 30 million tracks and is really user-friendly. Whether the listener prefers to listen to new mainstream hits or discover new music, Spotify provides a well-rounded service to its users.

Comparison breakdown: While Spotify was begun in June of 2008, the first thing that came to mind was that the layout looked very similar to Spotify’s. Price-wise, Spotify is the same as most. However, what makes Spotify truly great is how simple it is to navigate through their app. While Apple Music does not offer the same access to discover new music as Spotify does, Tidal tops Spotify in finding new music. They are among the first to get their独家 content from artists like Jay-Z and Beyoncé. They plan to release Jay-Z’s new project, “4:44,” which will be exclusive to their users. Spotify is almost a necessity to truly download a reasonable amount of music.

The layout, design and idea are all factors in which Spotify truly pioneered in the music-streaming business. Look at the way Apple Music and Tidal have their lay-outs; from discovery pages to downloadable content, must derive inspiration from Spotify’s original ideas. It’s honest, if it weren’t for Spotify, services like Apple Music and Tidal might not be what they are today, or might not even be here.

One of the coolest new things Spotify has added is Spotify Codes, which allow you to share music with each other with the snap of a Spotify Code. It’s like a Snap-chat code, but instead of adding each other as friends, it shows the user new music.

Why subscribe: Despite all of these odds, Spotify still has the music quality fans are looking for, friendly, accessible streaming site. When you download albums, playlists, songs or albums to your "This is it" feature, the amount of space taken is a fraction of what it is to download music on Apple Music. If you have a phone with a floating space of 16 gigabytes (GB) or less, Spotify is almost a necessity to truly download a reasonable amount of music.

If you don’t have too much memory on your phone, Apple Music might not be the best route. Downloading music takes up a good chunk of memory and makes it pretty difficult to keep a wide variety and quantity of music. Unless you’re prone to deleting music ever so often to conserve memory, Apple Music might not be the choice for you.

Why it might not be worth it: Phone exclusive, memory hogger, hard to discover. Without an iPhone you would be turned away from subscribing to Apple Music because it is a phone’s library, and fairly easy to get the music to your phone. Also, Apple Music subscribers are among the first to get their hands on some new music. For example, Frank Ocean released his “Endless” audio movie exclusively to Apple Music subscribers, so any premium subscribers get to experience the art before everyone else. Apple Music also offers listeners more than just music. There are exclusive videos and iTunes radio stations that make $9.99 worth it.

Tidal Overview: It’s always easy toroot for JAY-Z, because the man is a legend. But, let’s be honest, when Tidal came out in 2015, Apple Music has captivated a plethora of users throughout the globe and especially through the iPhone user. The music service offers the first three-month free to any new user and it is definitely worth the trial. With just two years under its belt, it is going to be interesting to see where Apple Music goes in the future.

Comparison breakdown: Since the iPod, the iTunes library was the destination for purchasing and downloading music to devices and being the source for most users. Apple Music took the next step for mobile device users. It offers a way to discover new music and also download any music you had in storage in your iTunes library.

Why subscribe: Easily accessible, more than music, broad catalog. Any previous or current iPhone user would agree that Apple Music’s simplicity goes on a long way. It’s easy to download music to the cloud or the phone’s library, and fairly easy to get the music to your phone. Also, Apple Music subscribers are among the first to get their hands on some new music. For example, Frank Ocean released his “Endless” audio movie exclusively to Apple Music subscribers, so any premium subscribers get to experience the art before everyone else. Apple Music also offers listeners more than just music. There are exclusive videos and iTunes radio stations that make $9.99 worth it.

Tidal Overview: It’s always easy to root for JAY-Z, because the man is a legend. But, let’s be honest, when Tidal came out in 2015, Apple Music has captivated a plethora of users throughout the globe and especially through the iPhone user. The music service offers the first three-month free to any new user and it is definitely worth the trial. With just two years under its belt, it is going to be interesting to see where Apple Music goes in the future.

Comparison breakdown: While Tidal probably offers the most exclusive content out of the three music services, it seems that big investors, such as Jay-Z, Rihanna, Diddy, Paul, Beyoncé and Arcadio Fire are just counting down the days before they are out of business or bought out.

Recently, Sprint bought 33 percent of the company for a reported $200 million, so who knows what they have in store. However, as far as user-friendly, it doesn’t compare to Apple Music or Spotify. The app definitely lacks some getting used to.

Why subscribe: Best quality of music, deep quantity of music and mixtapes. For the music quality fan, Tidal is the perfect way to go. In fact, this January, the company announced that they would be partnering with UK company Master Quality Authenticated to improve their audio quality. Tidal is still the highest-quality music streaming site, delivering a variable FLAC quality to users. If you have the money, pay the $19.99 for incredible quality music and you will not be disappointed.

Also, the deep collection of music Tidal has to offer is impressive in itself. They offer a catalog of 46 million songs and exclusively offer new content from artists like Jay-Z and Beyoncé. They plan to release Jay-Z’s new project, “4:44,” which will exclusively stream through Tidal. For hip-hop fans and indie lovers, Tidal is almost a must. It’s so easy and accessible to find new music from independent artists, who release anything from LPS, EPs and even mixtapes. Each week they update their discover playlists, new music to check out and truly help people find new music based on their interests.

Tidal is one of the only music streaming services that truly gives the royalties back to the artists. One artist claimed that the royalties per track from Tidal are over three times more than what he would have paid by Spotify.

Why it might not be worth it: Layout, cost, lack of presence. Honestly, how many people do you know that have Tidal? It truly lacks the presence that Spotify and Apple Music have. Even though they are fairly new, it almost seems like the business is doomed to fail unless they amp up their subscription rate. The layout of Tidal takes some getting used to. In fact, it might take a couple trials of frustration and error to navigate through the app. For anyone not up for change, they may be turned away from Tidal’s confusing layout and may even cancel their subscription.

Even though it may offer the latest hits, it is spending $19.99 for high-quality music really worth it? The basic version is the same cost as Spotify or Apple Music, but is $9.99 extra really a bang-for-your-buck? The answer: it depends. If you are one of those who downloads music constantly, listens to music on expensive Bose headphones or a defi- nite speaker, then maybe it is. But if you listen to music on a day-to-day basis without much contextualizing behind it, then Tidal Hi-Fi might not be worth the extra cost.
Odd-Lab brings the heat

BY ANDRES GALLEGOS

Odd-Lab is an experimental place, where innovative props and choreographies are created, and where odd people reside. For seven years, Odd-Lab has taken fire as a dance partner and together they’ve captivated and astonished audiences across the Southwest.

When Georgina Armendariz, Jesse James and C.J. founded Odd-Lab in late 2010, they were hoping to create a professional fire troupe. Now the troupe consists of a dozen performers and their shows have taken them to Los Angeles, Malibu and Albuquerque. Odd-Lab has turned athleticism, artistry and prop manipulation into coveted entertainment.

In their performances, the flame is inches away from their faces, but it is the fascination with fire that feeds their business. Audiences are hardly interested in the LED shows that they also provide because no one cares about a light bulb breaking.

“It’s kind of like NASCAR. You’re watching because you think something might go wrong and maybe you’re secretly hoping that something might go wrong,” Armendariz said.

Fear, curiosity and awe are the emotions that jostle through the audience. Armendariz claims that both children and adults admire the extravagance, but one admires it more than the other.

“The kid audience is fascination and curiosity, the adult audience is generally fascination and maybe a little bit frightened for our safety,” she said.

While the spectators may gaze at the flames in awe, it is the adrenaline that pushes Odd-Lab performers into risking their skin for their art. Armendariz believes that what she does with fireheightens her senses and everything else goes out of her head.

“I feel like every time I start a new choreography, I’m starting all over again, I feel like it’s day one of me interacting with fire,” Armendariz said.

Not only does Odd Lab bring the heat close to the audience, but they also do it with extreme caution. Odd-Lab has had zero incidents in their seven years. This is due to their strict safety precautions such as setting a perimeter around the audience, having security to keep the audience outside of the perimeter and double checking that their equipment is functional.

“We started this group with safety measures and we’ve only been increasing them every time,” Armendariz said.

Odd-Lab has performed at Chalk the Block, Pride Fest, Ralph Paloma, the Las Cruces Farmers Market, the Renaissance Fair and the Neon Paint Party. Aside from festivals, they also work private events such as parties.

The performance in both events differs in the scale of the production that is presented. Party shows may run from 20 to 30 minutes with a basic, but still astounding, display of fire manipulation. Festivals are where Odd-Lab brings quality productions with themes and stories.

“Fire makes the artists of Odd Lab with adrenaline as they twirl, spin, toss and suck fire. There isn’t a lack of an audience in the entertainment business especially when there is a hazardous factor in the show.

“Everyone has a fascination for fire, it’s a natural element that all humans are attracted to,” Armendariz said.

Odd-Lab brings the heat on its “sister act” of fire, and is already seeing interest in El Paso.

“I feel like every time I start a new choreography, I’m starting all over again, I feel like it’s day one of me interacting with fire,” Armendariz said.

‘SISTER ACT’

The UTEP Dinner Theater presents “Sister Act.” The musical will open July 7 and run until July 22. Tickets for both dinner matinee and non dinner matinee shows will be available at the UTEP Ticket Center.

EL PASO ICE CREAM FESTIVAL

Cohen stadium will host the second-annual Ice Cream Festival, “Sundaes,” July 2. Kids 12 and under are free and General Admission tickets are $12. There will be live music, entertainment and food trucks.

HOMENAJE A FRIDA KAHLO

Alamo Drafthouse will be hosting an event in celebration of Frida Kahlo’s birthday on July 1. The event will include a screening of FRIDA, ballet folklórico, art workshops, music, food and a Frida Kahlo look-a-like contest. The event starts at noon and runs until 8 p.m.

LXSDDOS OPENING RECEPTION

LxsDos art duo are having an opening reception to showcase their borderland-inspired works. They will also feature art from the “Move Your Mind” summer camp. The reception opens at 5 p.m. at the Rubin Center for the Visual Arts.

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CONTACT: 915-747-6065
Since 2010, the UTEP tennis program has had six coaches in the last seven years. However, the Miners have finally seemed to find the right person after years of searching. Fernandez brings great experience, knowledge and a winning attitude. Most importantly, he brings a much-needed stability to the ailing program. Fernandez, a Puerto Rico native, has been teaching tennis since 1990 when he became a USPTA Certified Tennis Professional with the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA). A decade later, Fernandez earned his first collegiate coaching job when he took a Graduate Assistant position at New Mexico State while being an assistant coach, where he stayed from 2000 to 2003. During his first season, Fernandez made his way to FIU (2003-04) as a women's assistant coach and quickly left to Tennessee State for the 2004-05 season. In his one year with ETSU as a men's assistant coach, Fernandez helped lead the Buccaneers to the 2005 Southern Conference Championship with an undefeated record of 12-0. The Buccaneers earned themselves an automatic bid to the NCCA tournament.

At FIU, Fernandez thrived under Ronnie Bernstein, who was the head coach for the Panthers. Now, Bernstein is adjusting to his role as the head coach of a powerhouse school, the University of Michigan. Being able to learn and take in everything from the coaches above him has led Fernandez to where he is now.

"I did jump around at the beginning of my career because I didn't want to get pigeon-holed into a coaching style or a specific way of dealing with a student-athlete," Fernandez said. "The fact that I got to work under many great coaches, that experience is key for my success."

Fernandez found himself back with the Aggies as their assistant coach from 2005 to 2010. Fernandez worked under his mentor Don Ball at NMSU. It took a little while for it to sink in, but I knew I was going to wear orange and blue instead of crimson and white. But it's a very exciting opportunity and I'm looking forward to the challenge of taking over a program that has its ups and downs the last few years," Fernandez said. "I have a lot of plans for the future here. I'm here for the long haul."

With a world of experience leading into Fernandez's second head coaching job, the ceiling and future of UTEP tennis has not looked to be in quite some time. However, Fernandez knows how much time and patience it will take to build up a program from nearly scratch.

"The first thing is bringing some stability and comfort in a coach, I want to have people recognize the UTEP coach for longer than one year," Fernandez said. "The recruits need to know that I am going to be here for their entire career and that I'm here for a reason — it's to build a program for the long run. This isn't a stepping stone for me."

As soon as Fernandez stepped into his new office at UTEP, his work was cut for him. He immediately had to get to work on recruiting since only three players (Raven Bennett, Maria Paula and Lois Wagenvoord) from last year's team are returning next season. This left Fernandez with five spots to fill. Fernandez is searching for players who are going to give all their best to the team, their teammates and the university, and girls he can improve year-in and year-out.

"Right now I'm not really focused on wins and losses, I hope the UTEP community understands that," Fernandez said. "I don't want to look at that as much as the effort and the family atmosphere I'm trying to create. The better the atmosphere, the better we will do in the future."

Nearly three weeks into the job, Fernandez has done just that by snatching two incoming student-athletes in Emadi Martinez Hernandez from Mexican City and Alia Musumeci from Russia.

"As successful as Fernandez is with coaching, he is just as impressive when it comes to his players with his students before athletes," said Fernandez. In 2010, he garnered 42 Academic All-Americans. Another player that Fernandez helped NMSU receive a Public Recognition Award from the NCAA in May for posting a perfect 1,000 multiyear Academic Progress (APR). His Aggies finished with a 3.5 GPA average.

"His dedication has to be the most important. Realistically, these girls are not going to go pro. Maybe one out of 50 or 100 will actually be able to make it on the tour, so they have to take advantage of their education," Fernandez said. "Communication and building relationships with my players is key. I want to see how they're feeling in all their classes."

Building relationships with the players began from day one. They know Fernandez well and know his programs differently and are stoked for the new start.

Fernandez has high praise from the returners from last era and the team and he's looking forward to getting them motivated for a new year.

"I was kind of shocked to be named head coach after so many years at NMSU. It took a little while for it to sink in, but I knew I was going to wear orange and blue instead of crimson and white. But it's a very exciting opportunity and I'm looking forward to the challenge of taking over a program that has its ups and downs."

"I'm really excited about being a head coach. It's a sport for all different ages, all shapes, ages and sizes. That's what truly speaks a deep love for the sport for Willa Meana Steinack, a blocker for the Miners."

"We work with such powerful women and encourage women to do their best," she said. "If you look around, there's larger women, there's older women and they push you to be better. Some of the bigger girls are some of the fiercest competitors. We really work hard to get to where we are today."

Meana Despite that a program could be to do their best, she said. "You look around, there's larger women, there's older women and they push you to be better. Some of the bigger girls are some of the fiercest competitors. We really work hard to get to where we are today."

Fernandez said. "There's a lot of sports that don't get a lot of attention and this is one of them. It's a sport for all different ages, all different sizes."

"I've been playing for three years and it never gets old," she said. "It's a great experience and one that feels so exciting."
Smith brings strong, physical and mental game to UTEP

BY JEREMY CARRANCO
The Prospector

Forward Tirus Smith, out of Petal High School in Petal, Mississippi, will be suiting up for the Miners for the first time as a freshman this fall. The 6-foot-9, 230-pound forward will be an important boost to the Miners’ interior game both offensively and defensively.

“Whenever I dunked the basketball for the first time, that’s when I was like, okay I can do this,” Smith said. “I started playing AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) basketball and a bunch of the other guys were dunking and playing hard, and I was like dang, so I dunked it one time and I started getting scholarship offers.”

UTEP relied heavily on their guard play last season after Terry Winn announced he was leaving the program and it forced the new guys Paul Thomas and Ivan Venegas to step up inside, even with their lack of experience.

While it was nice to see Thomas develop and Venegas mature, the Miners lacked a consistent and strong attack in the lane. Had the Miners had a better presence inside, the start of the 2016-17 season could have written a better script.

The former Ole Miss commit has the potential to bring a much-needed size enhancement and aggressiveness for UTEP in seasons to come. Defensively, the ability to block and disrupt shots is another highlight for the freshman.

Smith surpassed the national average with one steal and two blocks per game in his senior season at Petal High. Offensively he put together 10 double-doubles and season-highs of 30 points (versus Neshoba Central High School) and 19 rebounds (versus South Jones High School).

The freshman averaged 4.2 points and 9.5 rebounds his senior season and scored a total of 1,005 points in just under three seasons of varsity basketball and was appointed to The Clarion-Ledger’s “Dandy Dozen” as one of the 12 best players in the state of Mississippi.

Miner fans should be excited about the newcomer since UTEP’s rich history has always been driven by stellar defense and hard play since the days of the legendary head coach Don Haskins.

“Getting stronger with the ball and better decision making with the ball in my hand,” Smith said when asked what he needs to work on to earn minutes his freshman season. “Being able to look inside for the guys on the inside and being able to get the guys on the wing off the screen, just learning the offense mainly.”

Many college players today lack the patience for a quality shot opportunity. In 2015, the total NCAA average field goal percentage sat at 43.49 percent, a drop of 0.75 percent from 2014 (44.24 percent).

Smith has come to realize that in college he will need to play hard on both sides of the ball no matter what, even when his or his teammates’ shots are not falling.

“The main thing I can control is how hard I defend and how hard I go rebound,” Smith said. “Shots may not be falling some nights, games that you may have a rough going in, but you can control how hard you are playing and as long as I am playing hard and defending, then I’ll be all right.”

The power forward may find himself earning minutes for Floyd in no time, apart from what he can do physically. With an attitude like his, Smith is a prime example of what many collegiate players stepping on the court for the first time should try and emulate.