Survey reveals health benefits increase amid shutdown

Isaiah Ramirez

Maintaining physical wellness amid the COVID-19 pandemic may present itself as a difficult task to maintain, but a recent study conducted by UTEP researchers revealed El Paso's stay-at-home ordinance has had a positive impact on some of its residents.

According to the data, 37% of participants said they improved their exercise practices by trying and adapting to new fitness activities, while 15% said they increased their outdoor recreation activities.

"When we had our lab shut down and we noticed that there were these changes to people's diets and health and access to food, we were curious to how it impacted the West Texas region," UTEP assistant professor of kinesiology and the study's principal investigator, Cory M. Smith, Ph.D., said.

Within the study, a survey was conducted during September 2020 to El Paso and Las Cruces residents, with questions regarding the initial stay-at-home ordinance that went into effect on March 24, 2020.

The survey's 75 questions focused on a person's personal changes in physical activity.

UTEP professor conducts early detection cancer research

Victoria Rivas

UTEP professor of chemistry and biochemistry Wen-Yee Lee, Ph.D., is conducting research on early detection methods for prostate cancer.

Lee was invited to join a team of researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Johns Hopkins University, Cambridge Polymer Group, Prostate Cancer Foundation, Harvard University, among others, to develop a detector for prostate cancer.

The detector mimics a canine nose and brain, which according to Lee, is 200 times more sensitive to locate chemical and microbial content of an air sample to help detect prostate cancer. The overall goal is to make the device accessible through cellphones and help determine various cancer types in the future.

Lee started her research in 2012, after reading an article claiming dogs and cats can smell and detect several types of diseases.

"So that was the inspiration; I actually mimic the dog," Lee said. "If a dog can do it, we can do better. So, in fact, that is where the idea came from, the drive to compete with dogs."

Lee decided to center her research on prostate cancer, one of the leading causes of cancer death among men, because she wanted to focus on a gender-specific type of cancer.

"Originally, I was thinking about doing breast cancer as well because breast cancer again is a little gender-specific. Even though a few males will also have breast cancer, but it is relatively at a much less degree," Lee said. "But I was not able to establish a steady source of supply."

The research compares various compounds found in urine samples from a cancerous group and a non-cancerous group.

Lee said she uses urine samples due to UTEP's limited supplies and the research conducted at UTEP is developing a miniature detector that can mimic a canine nose and brain. This device will essentially help detect prostate cancer, hoping to save multiple lives due to the sensitivity the device will be able to detect within a person's body.
Navajo Nation’s struggles during pandemic

Anthony Pina
The Prospector

Many families in the United States have faced hardships and struggles over the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While citizens of the United States are worried about their health, they at least have a hope of surviving the virus, unlike the indigenous population that make up the Navajo Nation.

This indigenous nation wasn’t discussed as much as New York was, yet it was the hardest hit community in all of America, mostly due to the lack of resources and other cultural factors. The Navajo Nation is in the southeast region of the United States, it is home to a population of about 240,000 indigenous people. More than 28,000 COVID-19 cases have been reported and this virus has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people. By comparison, the infection rate for New York is 1.9% of the total population, whereas Navajo Nation’s infection rate is 3.4% of the total population.

Navajo Nation president Jonathan Nez attributed several cultural factors such as people living in multi-generation households, lack of plumbing, electricity, etc., lending the proper funds necessary to handle a pandemic like COVID-19.

Despite all these setbacks and lack of aid, Nez remains hopeful since called A.R.I.S.E. has worked to combat the virus. The Navajo Nation has barely seen 60% of the COVID-19 cases reported daily. Through these issues, the tribe continues to persevere and combat the virus as best as it can.

An organization at UTEP called A.R.I.S.E. has worked to bring awareness to indigenous communities and how underserved they are. It aims to assist Navajo Nation and other indigenous communities by donating to them during these times.

‘I’ll say something interesting is the raised awareness of how our reservations are. More than ever, I’ve had people asking me about the Navajo Nation because it was on national television about how bad the communities were hit, it was the first time a lot of people actually saw the reservation as it is,’ founder of A.R.I.S.E. Cheyanne, said.

“People were shocked at the lack of plumbing, electricity,” Cheyanne said. “So this whole mess has hopefully put the spotlight on that many Natives face into perspective, but memories are short, so not sure how much that impact will last.”

Anthony Pina is a guest columnist studying digital media production at UTEP and may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

A Navajo family stands outside its home with face masks to prevent COVID-19 at Monument Valley, Arizona.

Photo courtesy of Arun Rath

OPINION

2021, the year of self-compassion

Editor’s note: Elisa Dobler is a guest columnist working as a clinical counselor for UTEP’s Counseling and Psychological Services.

Elisa Dobler
The Prospector

We are now four months into 2021 and many people wonder out loud and in private, “what do I even like being around? Did I take a deep breath, longer today? Did you cook or experience a mental health uninterrupted hour? Did you feel good about walking ten minutes longer today? Did you cook something amazing that you were proud of? Did you simply maintain a routine today? Applaud your efforts. Just as we had to adapt to a new way of living last year, now must slowly adapt to whatever our new normal is. It’s going to keep evolving and we’re going to have to evolve with it.”

Honor the journey you’ve been on, reach out to others when you need support and most important of all – please grant yourself grace and self-compassion as you navigate 2021 and every year after that. Be considerate with the words you use with yourself.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call the Miners Talk Crisis line (direct line) at 915-747-0291, Emergency Health Network 915-779-1800, or the Center Against Sexual & Family Violence 913-593-7200. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call 911 or visit your nearest Emergency Room.

Elisa Dobler may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.
UTEP’s Living with Loss helps students cope with grief

The Prospector

Nicole Lopez

UTEP expands vaccination program to household members

The Prospector

Vicente Carrasco

Victoria Rivas

Cancer from page 3

their less intrusive ability than blood samples, as they do not require a certified nurse to be present with the researcher.

“Urine has more volume,” Lee said. “You can easily give me 15 milliliters of urine sample, but you would not be able to give 15 milliliters of saliva or sweat even.”

Although the research project is still at an early stage, Lee hopes that if her study is successful, it can help the health system and benefit those who don’t have good medical insurance or don’t have the financial ability to get medical procedures done.

“If this technique that I am developing is mature, then I can actually pack everything up in a mobile vehicle, or an RV and I can drive this vehicle to every location and just have them put it in a cap, and I can do the analysis,” Lee said. “I don’t need any medical personnel to go with me.”

Lee said the research aims to create a good early detection method that is accurate, easy, and culturally sensitive.

“This is just something that I can see happening, if more research is poured into it,” Lee said. “I’m sure this can be done; we just need to develop it.”

Up to now, Lee’s research method has shown 90% accuracy and has potential to detect blood cancers.

Lee hopes to expand her research in the future by helping detect bladder and breast cancer.

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SELC hosts Love Your Body week

At UTEP SELC’s ‘Love Thy Self’ workshop, coordinator, Daisy Marquez, spoke about the importance of not speaking negatively about one’s body.

According to research conducted in 2015 by the Pew Research Center, 21% of teens felt worse about themselves after using social media. The Renfrew Center Foundation found 70% of women and 50% of men between the age of 18 and 35, edit their images before posting them on social media.

“[I]f you’re trying to compare yourself to your peers, students, or just kind of a social media image then it’s just really important to take a step back,” Marquez said.

Marquez recommended writing the mantra down in a journal. Once finished, a person can close the journal and put it in a safe place if they feel the need to speak those words to themselves in the moment. “They’re just tools that you can take with you,” Carrasco said.

“[T]he more we start getting vaccinated, the more we can start having in-person events,” Avolos said.

The event followed UTEP health regulations by requiring face masks and encouraging social distancing. Payan and organizers also kept in mind the length of the event as it lasted 3 hours, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The workshop concluded with Marquez providing body acceptance mantras for individuals to say daily out loud such as “my body is phenomenally the least interesting thing about me,” “other people’s beauty is not an absence of mine,” “I’m happy when I practice my body,” and “I wear what I please.”

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The event followed a news release sent by UTEP Heather Wilson on March 3, which explained UTEP’s plan for an in-person Fall semester with what it expects will have social distancing relaxed on campus.

“[W]e know circumstances may change and we will continue to monitor the situation and adjust accordingly, including monitoring the impact of variants of the disease,” Wilson wrote. "But people also need to register for the vaccine online for campus to resume in-person next semester.

"It will be a new experience for people to get vaccinated while they are here at UTEP," Avolos said. "All you got to do is fill out the waiver if you’re a student and you get the vaccination for free whenever they send you in.

As of March 29, anyone age 16 and older, regardless of occupation or health issues, is eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine in Texas, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. UTEP recently expanded its Vaccination Program services to faculty and staff eligible household members.

"If you have diabetes, have received the COVID-19 vaccine," Carrasco's husband developed blood clots, so is also a high-risk patient, "I’m not saying you should never exercise, but it’s probably not the best thing to do," Carrasco said.

"It was about the importance of not speaking negatively about one’s body," Marquez said. "I think people are trying to compare themselves to other people’s social media image then it’s just really important to take a step back."

"It’s none of my business in general, and I try to make sure that the language that I use for myself and those around me is inclusive."

During the presentation attendees shared their own experience with self-love, including the struggle of stretch marks and how they began to embrace them as something beautiful rather than an imperfection.

"I’m not saying you should never use a filter," Marquez said. "But if you find yourself comparing yourself to your body, your skin to other individuals, you might be comparing it to a filter," Marquez said.

"It’s none of my business in general, and I try to make sure that the language that I use for myself and those around me is inclusive."

"You are loved," Carrasco said. "We appreciate all of the love that you’ve shown."
I’ve been attracted to crystals since I was a little kid. When I used to go to Mesilla, New Mexico, I would try to collect all the crystals they had in the shops. I never truly understood why I felt so attracted to these shiny rocks, until Summer 2017. That was when my spiritual journey began when I finally understood the value of crystals and how they have affected my entire life. My cousin, Ronnie, took me to a crystal shop to show me tarot cards and I was so invested in discovering myself and all the different properties each crystal’s frequency had that I lost myself in the process.

From that day on, I felt like I was a different person from Hindu Culture. The earliest mention of the term “Chakra” is said to come from Vedas, the four holy books of Hinduism that correspond to this chakra are citrine, cornelian, and golden topaz. If this color green is associated with the womb. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are amethyst, clear quartz and the color orange and is associated with the sex organs, bladder, prostate, and womb. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are citrine, cornelian, and golden topaz. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “over-sensitive, hard on yourself, feeling guilty for no reason, frigid or impotent.” To balance yourself you must find pleasure in life’s activities and embrace the changes that are necessary.

The second is the sacral chakra or “Muladhara,” located at the base of your spine. It is symbolized by the color red and is associated with the skeletal structure. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are hematite, tiger’s eye and bloodstone. If this chakra is ungrounded you may feel “emotionally needy, low self-esteem, self-destructive behaviour and fearful.” To balance yourself you may want to meditate with the suggested crystals while connecting to the Earth. The second is the sacral chakra or Sveshindra, located at the lower abdomen. It is symbolized by the color orange and is associated with the sex organs, bladder, prostate, and womb. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are citrine, cornelian, and golden topaz. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “over-sensitive, hard on yourself, feeling guilty for no reason, frigid or impotent.” To balance yourself you must find pleasure in life’s activities and embrace the changes that are necessary.

The first is the root chakra or “Muladhara,” located at the base of the spine. It is symbolized by the color red and is associated with the skeletal structure. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are hematite, tiger’s eye and bloodstone. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “emotionally needy, low self-esteem, self-destructive behaviour and fearful.” To balance yourself you may want to meditate with the suggested crystals while connecting to the Earth. The second is the sacral chakra or Sveshindra, located at the lower abdomen. It is symbolized by the color orange and is associated with the sex organs, bladder, prostate, and womb. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are citrine, cornelian, and golden topaz. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “over-sensitive, hard on yourself, feeling guilty for no reason, frigid or impotent.” To balance yourself you must find pleasure in life’s activities and embrace the changes that are necessary.

The third is the solar plexus or “Manipura,” located in between the navel and base of sternum. It is symbolized by the color yellow and is associated with the digestive system and muscles. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are aventurine quartz, sunstone, yellow citrine, and calcite. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “feeling of being alone, insecure, an anxiety attack.” To balance yourself, you may want to meditate with the suggested crystals while connecting to the Earth.

The fourth is the Heart Chakra located in the center of the chest. It is symbolized by the color green and is associated with the heart, chest, lungs, and the circulation system. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are aquamarine, turquoise, rose quartz, and emerald. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “feeling of rejection, loving too much, unworthiness, inability to receive love, and self-pitying.” To balance yourself you must be aware of the opportunities for growth and development that come from forming loving relationships with others.

The fifth is the Throat Chakra or “Vishuddha,” it is located centrally at the base of the neck. It is symbolized by the color blue and is associated with the mouth, throat and ears. It has everything having to do with communication and self-expression. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are lapis lazuli, turquoise, and aquamarine. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “holding back from self-expression, unreliable, arrogant, or holding inconsistent views.” To balance yourself you must open yourself to your personal intuition and internal wisdom.

The seventh and final chakra is the Crown or “Sahasrara,” located at the top of your head. It is symbolized by the colors violet, gold and white and it is associated with the upper skull, cerebral cortex, and skin. The crystals that correspond to this chakra are amethyst, clear quartz and herkimer diamond. If this chakra is unbalanced you may feel, “constantly exhausted, can’t make decisions, and no sense of belonging.” To balance yourself you must expand your horizons, expand your consciousness and have a more fluid, joyful and healthy life, bringing a new spiritual perspective. Chakra balancing is usually combined with other alternative therapies, since holistic approaches require an understanding of the chakras for healing, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the self. Crystals can be used to assist these types of approaches through aromatherapy, reiki, reflexology and even astrology.

The need for balance in your consciousness will open a new way of understanding yourself better.
Introduction of a new read, ‘Thirty Talks Weird Love’

Alyson Rodriguez

UTEP Creative Writing Adjunct Lecturer Alessandra Narváez Varela debuted her first novel, “Thirty Talks Weird Love.”

The novel centers on Anamaria Aragon Sosa, a girl who lives in Ciudad Juárez in 1999, during the first femicide wave. Anamaria is obsessed with making it to the honor role of her strict school and is also, as the Math honors student, interested in math and logic. She is visited by Thirty, a woman who claims to have traveled from the future and to be Anamaria’s 30-year-old self.

Thirty’s mission is to help her younger self live a better, kinder life, a life of greater awareness. Narváez Varela, originally from Ciudad Juárez, graduated from UTEP in 2008 with a B.S. in Biology, a B.A in Creative Writing in 2011, and a Bilingual MFA in 2017. Some of her accomplishments include publishing her first novel “Thirty Talks Weird Love” with Cinco Puntos Press this past summer and recording its audio book for Listening Library, include the publishing of her chapbook “Here” by the University of Houston in 2018.

Her most recent accomplishment was being recognized by the Academy of American Poets’ Poem-a-Day series. “It’s a wonderful honor to be recognized by the Academy of American Poets. This was made possible by Professor Sasha Pimentel, who, as the Math guest editor for the Poem-a-Day series, solicited work from UTEP alumnae because she’s a passionate advocate for border poets and poets of color,” Narváez Varela said.

“There were also students who not only stopped going to campus, but also stopped working and going anywhere else. The first months were in total lockdown, which changed the students’ attitudes and ways of thinking about what to wear for each online class or meetings.

“When the pandemic started, I wasn’t working at the time, so I used to join my classes in shorts, and all my wardrobe had months without being used,” said David Mendoza, a student pursuing a master’s degree in manufacturing at UTEP.

Once times like work started opening and campus was accessible again, students slowly returned to their pre-quarantine fashion. “Now that I am working on-site, full time, I join my classes right after work. It’s easier to wear a button-down shirt and jeans most of the time,” Mendoza said. At the same time, when restrictions were open, students found themselves dressing for what activities they have planned.

“Most of the time, I like to dress well for school because one of my requirements at work was to dress appropriately and with no sportswear,” Olivia said. “However, it depended on my planned activities for the day to choose my clothes; for example, I would pick pants instead of jeans if I didn’t have to work that day and planned to go to the gym after class.”

Slowly, students have gotten back to their personal lives and normal activities like going to the gym, restaurants, or returning to work.

Clases are still not entirely in-person, but once campus offers in-person courses, students say they will change how they dress, whether they choose to dress in their pre-covid fashion or come to class in pajamas, only time will tell.

Graphic by Hugo Hinojosa

Students quarantine fashion is constantly evolving

Nicolette Parse

One year after the COVID-19 pandemic reached Juárez and El Paso’s borderland, students continue to have online classes. While some students got used to getting and being ready for remote classes and dressed casually, other students stayed comfortable and wore pajamas.

“All these changes when going to the online system, I honestly never cared much about my clothes while studying from home. Mostly I would wear my pajamas during the morning classes, and if I had classes in the afternoon, I would just wear a random t-shirt and some jeans,” Armando Olivas, a senior civil engineering major, said.

Some students used to plan what to wear for each day they were coming to campus or knew which clothes they were comfortable with. After classes changed to an online format and as more time was spent at home, some students began to stop worrying about what they were going to wear.

“I used to wear mostly jeans, a nice blouse or shirt, and sneakers to walk around campus. Once room classes started, I wore a blazer in case I turned on the camera, but still had my yoga pants and no shoes,” said Ana Sofia Pasante, who recently graduated with a bachelor’s in industrial and Systems Engineering from UTEP. “Now it is faster for me to get ready for classes and meetings because I no longer take the time to think about what to wear. If I am in a hurry, I stay in my pajamas.”

A book, a lamplight and a pencil to mark words and phrases you like, is the cheapest classroom in the world for writers.

“A book, a lamplight and a pencil to mark words and phrases you like, is the cheapest classroom in the world for writers,” Narváez Varela said. “Instead, I’m a teacher and a writer, and I feel blessed by this combo! Teaching is a vocation; a dream I never thought being a writer equated with a ‘real’ job. This is common among children of immigrants; we view a handful of professions as valid: medicine, law, engineering, accounting. That said, if it weren’t for my struggles with depression, I wouldn’t have tried to be a doctor and a writer.”

“Thirty Talks Weird Love” takes place in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, where Anamaria, a 13-year-old lives. One day a woman comes up to Anamaria, who claims to have traveled from the future and to be Anamaria’s 30-year-old self.

According to Narváez Varela, her poem “23 Reasons Why Mexicans Can Still Be Found in a Walmart” is a poem that only an editor and poet like Pimentel would offer such a special platform to, since she understands border dynamics and what the pain the community has been through. Varela’s inspiration to write about the August 3rd shooting was to make sense of the emotions surrounding the surrounding this ruthless attack. She also wanted to remember the 23 victims and fight for the closure of hate crime, and to highlight the richness and uniqueness of our community in a moment when some of us may have felt fearful. The way she formatted her poem was inspired by Joan Felipe Herrera’s “187 Reasons Why Mexicans Can’t Cross the Border.”

Varela never thought she would be a writer. She was born and raised in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico and began writing stories and poems at a young age. She was also very focused on school, science and writing were her favorite subjects. Varela credits her love for reading from her mother, who was also an avid reader. However, she says that being a child of an immigrant, she didn’t think she’d ever be a writer.

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Julian Herrera may be contacted at prospector@utep.edu.

more about Thirty Talks Weird Love can be found at cincopuntos.com. Varela’s poem “23 Reasons Why Mexicans Can Still Be Found in a Walmart” can be read at poets.org.

Vegan Diet from page 5

customers order as soon as possible after the menu is posted, because many options sell out quickly. Grown Together also offers a catering service with individual accommodations and a variety of cuisines.

The Queen’s Table Vegan Cuisine is said that they’re El Paso’s first completely vegan fast-food restaurant. Founded in March 2018 by Quyen Adalja Aza, The Queen’s Table specializes in inexpensive, unRefined, unRice and unFish dishes. Classic foods such as chicken and waffles, burgers, wings, and even Southern-inspired dishes like Jambalaya are made completely vegan and health-conscious. Though the restaurant is closed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their website offers deals from their market to purchase all the ingredients necessary to cook their vegan meals at home.

One of the most resourceful and resource-friendly sites for the vegan community is El Paso in the El Paso. VeganOfficial Instagram page. The page shares a variety of vegan restaurants, organizations, products, and recipes that can be replicated at home. More importantly, they share informative cards with suggestions on how to curate a properly balanced diet and ensure that each individual obtains the necessary nutritional and vitamin values.

Interactive and impactful, vegan activism and lifestyles are well on the rise in the El Paso community.
SPORTS

Michael Cuviello, Heriberto Perez
The Prospector

APRIL 6, 2021

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PAGE 7

Mike Anderson

Michael Cuviello, Heriberto Perez
The Prospector

As the final four winds down to Baylor versus Gonzaga for the NCAA national championship, fans of UTEP continue their annual prayer vigil for another Texas team not to win. UTEP fans are automatically Gonzaga fans as they feel another Texas team winning has the potential to diminish UTEP and Don Haskins’ accomplishments. Unfortunately, this accomplishment from over 50 years ago has been UTEP’s one defining achievement as a basketball program. There is no debate the 64-67 teams for the Miners were among the country’s top teams, winning the 1966 Champion and reaching the sweet sixteen the other two seasons. There is also no question of the impact of integration the championship team had on college basketball as the first team to start five black players in a game.

The pre-1970 Miners known as Texas Western won a total of nine NCAA tournament games while losing only three games. No matter what happens, the championship team of 1966 will forever be enshrined in half of fame history. In the 51 years since the decade of the seventies began, the Miners have only won one NCAA tournament game in that time, losing 13 games. During the seventies, the Miners reached the NCAA tournament twice and lost both times in the first round by double digits in the original round of 32 contests.

In the eighties, the Miners had a resurgence in 1984 with a 27-4 record and a WAC Championship that propelled UTEP back into the NCAA tournament for the first time since the 1975 season as number four seed. In the second round’s opening game, the Miners lost the number five seed UNLV Running Rebels 73-60. In 1985 the Miners were upset in the WAC tournament but made the tournament as an 11th seed. In the first round, the Miners upset number six seed Tulsa for its first tournament win since 1967. The Miners could not advance no further as UTEP lost to North Carolina State in the second round. The next season, the Miners were eliminated in the first round. UTEP earned another bid to the NCAA tournament in 1987 as a seventh seed, winning its second tournament game since 1970 over Arizona. In the second round, the Miners ran into an ultra-talented Iowa team that was loaded with four future NBA players and, after leading at the half, ended up losing 82-40.

After making the tournament once again the following year and being bounced in its first game, the Miners returned to the tournament in 1989 as a seventh seed. In the opening round, the Miners overcame NCAA freshman of the year, Mohamed Abdulouf and had 33 total points. UTEP ran out of gas versus perennial Big 10 power Indiana in a 92-69 blowout loss in the next round.

1990 saw the Miners go to a first round upset victory over Southern Miss in the NCAA tournament with an overtime exit to Minnesota 64-61. After missing the tournament, the previous year with a 16-13 record, the Miners returned to the 1992 tournament as a ninth seed. This season would be the last truly relevant season for UTEP basketball history as the team would win two games in a tournament for the first time since the sixties.

1991 was a pivotal season not because of any notable achievement on the court but because the NCAA placed UTEP on probation for recruiting violations that limited scholarships for the next three seasons but did allow post-season play. The Marlon Mahey led Miners upset number eight seed Evansville University team in a hard-fought 55-50 opening-round matchup. In the second round, UTEP pulled off one of the biggest upsets in NCAA tournament history with a 46-40 win over the top-seeded Kansas Jayhawks. In the sixteenth round, the Miners faced tournament upset number eight seed Evansville. UTEP led by future Laker Nick Van Excel and lost an exciting 69-67 game to the final four bound team. It has been 29 years since UTEP last won an NCAA tournament game in one of its most exciting seasons and tournament run of all time. Since, the Miners made the tournament three more times and lost in the first round of each of those seasons. Overall, the Miners have a 14-16 tournament record but only five of those wins have happened in the last fifteen years.

While UTEP had a half of fame coach in Don Haskins with his 719 victories and multiple conference championships, overall, since the seventies, UTEP no longer enjoyed its brief status as a college basketball national power that it once was. In the last 30 seasons, the Miners have only made the national tournament five times and have currently gone 31 straight seasons without a single bid and 29 years since a win. The last truly great UTEP basketball player last played in 1989, the soon-to-be hall of fame bound Hardaway. UTEP was last nationally ranked in 2010 and has only been ranked three times in the past 30 seasons and has not finished the season ranked since 1986.

Not since the sixties has UTEP had a player named to an all-American team and only two players in history have been named as such. Outside of Tony Archibald and Hardaway, no UTEP player has gone on to become an NBA all-star and there have only been three UTEP players drafted in the first round of the NBA draft in its history. None of this negates that UTEP has a rich basketball history that had El Pasoans flocking to the arena to see, especially during the eighties when UTEP was a regular tournament team. It just illustrates that outside of a few years in the sixties, the university has never been a basketball power.

The one in which the history of a UTEP fan has been the ability to take pride in the basketball team’s historic achievement. The fans at the arena fill the Don Haskins Center.

The UTEP Miners opened conference play splitting a doubleheader, winning game one 7-4 and not getting on track in a 10-1 loss to Southern Miss in game two.

In game one, the Miners trailed 4-0 after one inning but were able to narrow the gap to one run by the end of the third inning. In the bottom of the fourth inning, third baseman Kasey Flores came up to bat with the bases loaded and four hits through with a grand slam to give the Miners a 7-4 lead. For sophomore Flores, this was her first career home run of her career. The 7-4 margin would be all the scoring for the rest of the game as the Miners went on to win by that score.

Freshman pitcher Mackenzie Collins got the win for four innings of work while allowing six hits and four runs, while sophomore Zaylie Calderon pitched three innings of shutdown ball for the save allowing no hits. In game two, the Miners could only manage two baserunners in the first two innings, while Southern Miss, with a pair of doubles, set up baserunners and jumped out to a 5-0 lead. Miners starter Isabella Kelly was pulled from the game after registering no outs in the second inning with five runs surrendered. At the bottom of the third inning, junior shortstop, Pate Cathey, was able to hit a single into the gap, followed by a steal of second base. With a runner in scoring position, sophomore center fielder Dalis Mendez broke through with a single to get the Miners’ first run of the second game, now trailing 5-1 after three innings.

Alisa Davis led off the fourth inning with a home run for Southern Miss to extend the Miners deficit to 6-1. For the Miners, a promising inning with a double from first baseman Brierena Medina ended with two runners stranded as the Miners failed to score a run. In the top of the fifth, the Miners, after recording the first out, surrendered a two-run homer then a double before Davis hit her second home run for the day for Southern Miss giving them a 10-1 lead. UTEP started the bottom of the fifth with a double from Morales but three straight grounders ended the game with the Miners trailing by nine runs for a 10-1 defeat by mercy rule.

On Saturday’s opening game, the Miners’ lack of offense carried over into the first three innings as the team had only one hit. Starting pitcher, Kety struggled in the second inning, giving up three walks which resulted in two runs scoring for the Golden Eagles as the Miners trailed 2-0 early.

In the top of the fourth, the Miners gave up two straight singles that were followed by a three-run homer from Davis for her third of the weekend. A two-run homer by Bunch extended the Golden Eagle lead to 7-0 going into the bottom of the fourth inning.

A Cathey single led off the Miners fourth inning that was highlighted by back-to-back doubles by Santos and Karina Samoza that led to a three-run inning as the Miners trailed 7-0.

As the final four winds down to Baylor versus Gonzaga for the NCAA national championship, fans of UTEP continue their annual prayer vigil for another Texas team not to win. UTEP fans are automatically Gonzaga fans as they feel another Texas team winning has the potential to diminish UTEP and Don Haskins’ accomplishments. Unfortunately, this accomplishment from over 50 years ago has been UTEP’s one defining achievement as a basketball program.
After winning its first Conference-USA (C-USA) tournament match in a decade against Southern Miss in a straight-set victory, the UTEP Miners were finally able to defeat the Western Kentucky (WKU) Hilltoppers, the lone undefeated team in C-USA losing in straight sets.

The 19th nationally ranked Hilltoppers won their second straight C-USA tournament match with a three-set victory over the Rice Owls in the championship game. For the year, WKU lost only four total sets in the season while winning 63 total sets.

"Our city is proud of our program," head coach Ben Wallis said. "The one thing that you can say about a city like El Paso is that once (it sees) somebody is showing progress and that they want to win and are competitive, people are going to come out and support you."

UTEP had won 15 straight sets and five straight matches heading into the C-USA semifinal. The Miners now fall to 0-10 lifetime against the Hilltoppers in matches and have never won a set against WKU. "A top-20 team that has weapons exposed today with our inexperience," Wallis said.

Starting off the first set with a kill from junior Paulina Perez Rosas, the Miners took the lead early 1-0 as both teams went back and forth until WKU pulled out to a 1-3 lead. From this point, the Hilltoppers' frontline took over as WKU scored the next six points of the match to extend its lead to 17-9.

The Miners were able to run off two straight points as the team fought back to trail 17-11, but for the rest of the match that would be as close as UTEP would be able to get to WKU as the Hilltoppers won the opening set 25-13.

In the second set, an early seven-point run had the Hilltoppers leading 9-2. The Miners would be unable to get any closer than that margin for the rest of the second set as WKU won 25-9 in a commanding fashion.

The young Miners came out early in the third set with its back to the wall, showing some fight as UTEP jumped out to a 7-3 lead over WKU. The Miners made multiple forced errors as the Hilltoppers went on a devastating 14-point run to take a commanding 17-7 lead. The Miners were able to muster only four more points for the rest of the match as UTEP fell in the third set 25-11.

Leading the way for the Hilltoppers was Lauren Matthews and Paige Briggs, who had 11 and 10 kills, respectively. Overall, WKU had 45 kills to 21 for UTEP. Leading the Miners in kills was Ross with six kills and Serena Patterson with 5. WKU had 35 digs to the Miners' 18 for the match.

"I thought Patterson had a good day," Wallis said. "I thought she was in control of what she was doing." Four players for WKU hit for a .300 or better and middle blocker Matthews hit for .471.

"The two skills that helped us win a lot all year were the serve and the reception game and they both weren't there today," Wallis said. "We had too much inexperience on the floor to beat a high-level team."

For UTEP, it was a disappointing end to a great season when one saw the team finish second overall in the West Division. The Hilltoppers were the only team to beat UTEP and featured three first-team all-conference players in Briggs, Matthews and Nadia Dieudonne. Dieudonne led the conference in assists with 12 per game. Matthews led the conference in blocks with 87 and was fifth in the conference in kills with 266 overall.

UTEP had its first winning season since 2012 in Wallis's second season as coach. Senior Cheryanne Jones finished her finest season for the Miners with a first-team all-conference selection that saw her finish second on the team in kills with 152 and post an attack percentage of .322. Jones was the lone senior on the team.

Patterson was named second-team all-conference, and Ava Palm was named to the all-freshman team for the Miners. The Miners will return a much more experienced team next season that now knows what level it will have to play to match the conference's next level.

Photo courtesy of UTEP Athletics

UTEP volleyball celebrates its first Conference-USA tournament victory in a decade over Marshall, April 1.

Michael Cuviello
The Prospector

The Hilltoppers are headed to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2014 and second overall in school history. The tournament will be held in San Antonio, Texas. The Miners will travel to El Paso for the opening round on April 15-16.

Softball

Southern Miss 7-3 after four.

That would be all the offense the Miners would be able to mount in the game as the Golden Eagles added two more runs to win 9-3. In the final game of the series, Kasey Flores hit her second grand slam of the weekend in the bottom of the second inning to give the Miners a 6-2 lead. After three-inning, the Golden Eagles had narrowed the UTEP lead to 6-4.

Flores again came through at the bottom of the fourth with Cathey on base singling home her fifth home run of the season, with到这里。After four innings, the Miners now led 7-4. At the bottom of the sixth, Cathey again got on base, followed by a walk for Flores that set up a run for a Golden Eagles double that made the score 8-4 for UTEP with one inning remaining.

Southern Miss was able to get two baserunners in the final inning but were held to one run as the Miners sealed an 8-5 victory for the weekend split with Southern Miss.

For the game, Flores went 3-3 with six runs batted in and had two grand slams and 10 runs batted in on the weekend. For the year, Flores has four home runs and 17 runs batted in. Mendez had six hits for the weekend and leads C-USA with a .519 batting average in 19 games. She also leads the conference in on-base percentage with 28.

The Miners will travel to Birmingham, Alabama, to compete in a four-game C-USA series with the University of Alabama at Birmingham April 9-11.

Southern Miss 11-0 before four.

The Golden Eagles took the lead early on a double by Cathey in the first inning, followed by a walk and a single that scored the runner to lead 2-0. The Miners would be unable to mount in any serious threat to the Golden Eagles lead until the fifth.

The Miners would be able to mount a second five-run inning in the sixth, but the Golden Eagles affiliated three runs over the final three innings to win 11-0. The Miners had nine total hits for the game. Overall, the Miners had 11 shots and four were on goal, the Mean Green had 33 shots, and nine of those were on goal.

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