

THE SKIFF



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ESPORTS FOUNDING,
COMPETITIONS AND
MORE

A STUDENT MEDIA PUBLICATION OF TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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COMMUNITY

Fort Worth female-owned businesses grow, starting on West Vickery

By **ELLA GIBSON**

STAFF WRITER, TCU 360

Fort Worth female-owned businesses are flourishing, and a business strip located on West Vickery Boulevard is proving just that.

Local businesses Cowtown Clay, Lila + Hayes and Cowtown Kids Art Studio all share similar stories. Not only are these companies architectural-ly connected, but they are owned and operated by women and by mothers.

Small businesses are a necessary piece to Fort Worth's growing economy, as customers are encouraged to shop locally.

These three businesses have experienced loyalty within the Fort Worth clientele and have become an integral part of the community of female-owned businesses.

Glenn Hegar, an attorney and Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, outlines the national position that Texas holds in female-owned businesses.

"Texas ranks third among all states for women-owned businesses, boasting nearly 1 million," said Hegar.

In the past two decades, this statistic has grown by 156%.

The growing number of female-owned businesses is due to companies like these making an impact on the community and paving the way for other aspiring female entrepreneurs.

Cowtown Clay

Cowtown Clay is a clay impressions studio that opened in January 2019.

Owned by Lindsay Minor and Kellie Wright, Cowtown Clay specializes in ceramic hands and footprints of kids and pets.

Minor and Wright were high school best friends and are now Fort Worth neighbors. After Wright mentioned the business concept, they decided to buy a kiln and began developing products.

"I said, 'Sure, let's give it a shot,' thinking it was going to be a once a month sort of thing that's now turned into a full-time business with five employees and a warehouse and retail space," said Minor.

Minor said that she also has a career as a part-time dentist.

The duo started their business out of Minor's house, making impressions in the dining room and later moving to Wright's back patio. Their marketing was focused on local neighborhood social media pages.

As their customer reach grew, so did their product line. Minor shared that their clay work extends beyond impressions.

"We do ornaments, jewelry, dishes and plates that go on a bookshelf," said Minor.

The studio also makes popular holiday platters and plates.

Cowtown Clay outlines various ways to order. One option is through mail order kits, where clay and directions are

sent to your address, allowing you to take impressions from your house before mailing back. Another option is through in-person appointments.

The clay studio is the first to create shadowboxes, which preserve impressions inside of an acrylic box with Schumacher Grasscloth backing.

Additionally, the studio offers paint-your-own bars where customers can decorate their own pieces.

Along with the development of products and national order shipments, Cowtown Clay has experienced major growth. They moved into their current studio space during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The studio has also had the opportunity to partner with local organizations.

One group that Minor and Wright have worked with is Abel Speaks, a nonprofit located in Dallas that supports parents with a terminal diagnosis for their pregnancy.

Often partnering with hospital NICU's Cowtown Clay provides these families with shadowboxes of their child. Minor explained that this was one of the studio's most meaningful products.

"It's a pretty cool keepsake to have when that's all you have," said Minor. "I'm just really glad that we can make something better than the not-very-good hospital molds for them to have."

The duo would like to expand their national

market during the next few years.

Though growing in other areas, Minor emphasized the importance of female-owned businesses in Fort Worth.

"There are so many female business owners here, and everyone lifts each other up and helps each other out," said Minor. "It's such a big small town."

Minor shared that her kids attend Cowtown Kids Art Studio classes and she often uses pajamas from Lila + Hayes.

The presence of female business owners is growing, and their community grows stronger with each business addition.

Lila + Hayes

Lila + Hayes is a clothing company specializing in Pima cotton pajamas and playwear.

Founded by Paige Casey and Amanda Galati in 2012, the duo was inspired to start a pajama line when comparing notes about what their children were wearing.

Inspired by the soft and detailed pajamas that their children wore as babies, Casey and Galati created a line of Pima cotton pajamas.

Lila, Galati's daughter, and Hayes, Casey's daughter, inspired the name of the business, marketing clothing for children.

In April 2012, Casey and Galati traveled to Lima, Peru for a Pima cotton trade show.

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After working with various groups, the team chose one manufacturer to source the material for their line.

Lila + Hayes started with layette sizing, up to 12 months old, and children's sizing in pajama styles and accessories. The business expanded to more prints and play wear and sizes for older ages.

Additionally, the company makes men's and women's sleepwear.

Similar to the development of Cowtown Clay, Lila + Hayes began locally. The duo sold their products at in-home trunk shows and gift markets around Fort Worth.

Three years later, the company expanded to wholesale, with showrooms in Dallas and Atlanta.

In their first season, Lila + Hayes sold to 25 stores, which has now grown to over 180. They explained that most of this expansion has taken place in recent years.

"I think the change in the way people shop, and so many people shopping online now has helped our business grow," said Galati. "It has a lot to do with our stores too, and brand awareness, as people see us in other parts of the country in a local boutique."

Galati and Casey both had day jobs before the growth of Lila + Hayes, but it quickly became their full time career.

The owners shared that partnering with other women in the market is one of the most impactful aspects of their business. Through their growth, they have met other businesses with similar stories.

"We knew that there were other women growing their business and doing the same thing, so we created a little coop, all under one roof, and we're all moms," said Casey. "And we share stories and we share trade secrets."

Apart from working with other women, Galati shared that one of their biggest motivations is to inspire the next generation of girls.

"You don't have to miss out on being a mom and being involved in your family to build a successful business," said Galati.

Lila + Hayes now operates off of Vickery Boulevard and many of its employees are moms who have a passion for creativity.

Cowtown Kids Art Studio

Cowtown Kids Art Studio shares a similar story to both of these female-owned businesses.

Founded in the spring by Macy Holloway and Natalie Ledyard, Cowtown Kids focuses on teaching art to children outside of the school classroom.

Holloway and Ledyard met when their daughters attended the same dance class. They found they shared a passion for teaching art.

In the spring of 2021, Holloway introduced the idea to start an art summer camp. The duo decided that the business would be located in Ledyard's screened-in back porch and they posted their idea on social media.

Holloway said that their posts received immediate positive responses.

"It was our dream and we wanted this for our kids, but we didn't know if we were the only people who wanted it," said Holloway. "And come to find out, we're not."

Many parents shared that the stress of at-home art projects was overwhelming.

The business experienced major growth in its first few months. Having been in operation for less than a year, Holloway and Ledyard have worked with hundreds of children.

The studio provides weekly after-school classes, holiday camps, family workshops and community events.

Cowtown Kids organized a Father's Day event in Clearfork to connect with the Fort Worth community.

"We believe that art is for everybody, and there shouldn't be any kind of restriction on that," said Holloway. "It's important to us to do community events because that opens that door for kids."

The studio also puts on a gallery night, where students showcase their work to friends and family. This was one of the projects that motivated the owners to move into a larger space.

Cowtown Kids started working in its studio on Vickery Boulevard in November 2021.

The duo emphasized that female-owned businesses are an important part of the community to show that women don't need to choose between a career and a family.

Holloway had a background in marketing while Ledyard had experience in art education. The women

were motivated to start down a new career path that would utilize these skills, and they did so with families of their own.

"You don't have to put off your dreams for a later date when it's possible to get it done in the present," said Ledyard.

These owners are some of the many women in Fort Worth that followed their-business dreams. The female-owned business community will only grow stronger as these women inspire more individuals to do the same.



An example of Cowtown Clay's products.

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ALUM

TCU alum ‘bleeds purple’ on some of Broadway’s biggest stages

By HAEVEN GIBBONS

STAFF WRITER, TCU 360

There’s no missing the Horned Frog memorabilia in the “star” dressing room of the Shubert Theatre. A “Go Frogs” sticker is fixed to the center of a mirror. Another sticker — a purple football helmet with white “TCU” letters — is in the top left corner. A purple and white gnome sporting a TCU hat hangs from the ceiling.

Ben Thompson was here.

Some of Broadway’s greatest stars, including Liza Minnelli, Robert Guillaume and John Travolta, have walked the halls and graced the Shubert’s stage. Thompson performed in 2013, as Miss Trunchbull in the musical “Matilda.”

Thompson, 41, is known for wearing a black ball cap emblazoned with purple TCU letters and throwing the “Go Frogs” hand sign when taking curtain calls. “I bleed purple,” said the Oklahoma native, who graduated in the fall of 2003.

He grew up around the theater world. His older sisters performed in “Annie.” His grandparents ran a small theater in Stillwater, Oklahoma. When Thompson performed as the leader of the Lollipop Guild in the “Wizard of Oz” for Theatre Tulsa, he was 8 years old.

His love of theatre was sealed at TCU. He declared it his major after being cast in “Jesus Christ Superstar.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Thompson (right) and his sister, Hallie (left), in *The Wizard of Oz*.

His TCU theatre professors never doubted his talent.

Thomas Walsh and Harry Parker both said they immediately recognized his natural talent when he first graced the Hays Theatre stage at TCU.

Walsh explained, “When you try to describe the ideal student and alum who represents the best of what TCU stands for, well, a simple but accurate answer would be: Ben Thompson.”

Thompson also performed in “A Funny Thing Happened in the way to the Forum” (Pseudolus), “My Fair Lady” (Freddy Eynsford Hill) and “Red Hot and Blue” (multiple roles) at TCU.

A December graduate, he arrived in New York City in January of

2004 in the middle of a snowstorm. It took six years, odd jobs and plenty of dead-end auditions before Thompson made it to Broadway.

After weathering the pandemic by producing content from his basement to pay the bills, Thompson was among the first wave of actors to return Broadway. Although now with a young family and a home in New Jersey, his goals are shifting.

Thompson is reprising the role of Earl in “Waitress” at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. He finished his first run in January of 2020, weeks before the coronavirus brought Broadway and the world to a screeching halt.

When Broadway reopened in June, “Waitress” was among

several shows revived with the hope of pulling audiences back. Previews started on Sept. 2. Opening night was Oct. 19 with Jennifer Nettles starring as Jenna.

Thompson’s Broadway credits include “American Idiot” (ensemble), “Matilda” (Trunchbull) and “Holler If Ya Hear Me” (Griffy).

“You never know that someone is going to make it because the odds are so astronomical, and there are so many things that are out of your hands,” Parker said. “What you can be is talented, trained, prepared and skilled. You can learn the ropes of the business and you can have a kind of certainty, but then you have to be lucky. After all of that, you have to be lucky.”

It snowed a foot and a half the day Thompson unloaded his U-Haul at his apartment in the Upper East Side on 81st Street.

“I was so bright-eyed and green when I moved to New York and coming from Tulsa and Fort Worth and moving to one of the biggest cities in the world, it was a steep learning curve,” Thompson said.

Growing up in Oklahoma, Thompson spent weekends in Stillwater, the “boondocks,” with his cousin. They hung out in cow pastures and drove a pickup truck through empty fields at night.

In high school, Thompson was the captain of the football team and the lead in the school play. He had a passion for football, but

there was nothing like the stage. His classmates voted him most likely to be caught singing in the halls.

The road to Broadway

In 2008, four years after Thompson arrived in New York, he booked the workshop of “American Idiot.” The musical — adapted from Green Day’s 2004 concept album of the same name — is about young Americans trying to find meaning in a post-9/11 world.

It opened in the Berkeley Repertory Theatre before moving to Broadway on April 20, 2010 with Thompson in the ensemble.

“It took me six years of grinding,” Thompson said. “I did some tours and regional shows, but those were for the experience. I was happy to be working, but it wasn’t what I ultimately wanted.”

The experience was humbling. At TCU,

Thompson had landed lead roles with ease.

“So, I moved to New York with talent, but no humility,” Thompson said. “This business can humble you really quick, and it did.”

Some days he would go to three or four auditions, but few called him back. During an unlucky streak in 2007, he went to 42 auditions and didn’t get one “yes.”

“Every audition was like playing the lottery,” Thompson said. “You hope you get that big job that puts you on the map, but it has to be the right show, at the right time, with the right people willing to take a chance on you knowing you’ve never done a Broadway show before.”

To make ends meet, Thompson took on odd jobs.

One of his side hustles was alphabetizing eight years’ worth of emails in the basement of a law firm.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Ben Thompson takes a mirror selfie in the star dressing room at the Shubert Theatre. His room is decked out in TCU memorabilia.

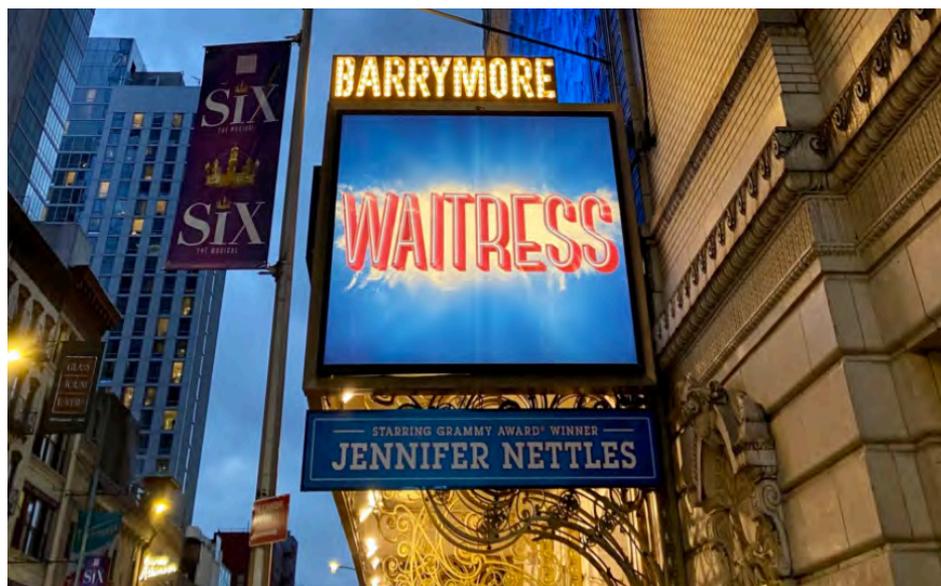


PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

The Ethel Barrymore Theatre.

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“It was awful, but I did what I needed to do,” Thompson said. “I didn’t want to give up on this dream that I had, and thankfully, I didn’t.”

Thompson’s perseverance eventually led to success.

“Ben listened to that voice inside of him that said, ‘Not only do I want to do this, but I think I can do this, and I believe I’ll be successful,’” Parker said.

A roll of show posters sits on the ground next to his makeshift studio in the basement of his suburban home. Thompson slides the rubber band off the poster: “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat starring John Sticatta.”

Two signatures in black sharpie are scrawled in cursive, “Ben Thompson” and “Kat Nejat.”

Thompson can’t figure out what year they met on tour.

“Was it 2006 or ‘07?”

The poster isn’t dated.

“But we were just platonic,” Thompson said. “We talked to each other like family. What

was great about it was that neither of us was trying to impress each other.”

The two were already in relationships, relationships that “fell apart” while they were on tour, Thompson said. When the tour ended, Thompson made what he thought was the obvious move and asked Nejat out.

She said no.

“Absolutely not. No. You’re younger than me, and I don’t want to date an actor,” Thompson said, mimicking Nejat’s response.

Nejat made her debut on Broadway in “West Side Story” in 2009. She is still the only woman to ever play both Anita and Maria on Broadway in the history of the show.

He said he told her, “Ok, look, you go date anyone you want. I’m not going to. I’m going to wait until you are ready for us to date, and you’ll come around.”

Still a no.

But after a date with a doctor, he said she realized, ‘I have this person that knows me better than my family. Why don’t I give him a shot?’

She called.

“What are you doing?”

“Nothing,” Thompson answered. “Want to come over, and I’ll make you dinner?”

“Ok, I’ll do it.”

“I’m going to warn you, though, I’m a really good cook. You’re gonna fall in love with me.”

She did.

The two married each other in 2010 and had a daughter together who was born in 2017.

Thompson’s career has stretched beyond the stage.

“He was obviously extremely talented.

Ben is full of energy, and he loves life.

He is an upbeat guy. He is an optimist,

and I think that has served him well

because the profession is so hard.”

- HARRY PARKER

THEATRE PROFESSOR, TCU

His film credits include “Leverage: Redemption,” “Single Drunk Female,” “Chicago PD,” “Little Voice,” “Law & Order: SVU,” “Daredevil,” “Bull,” “The Seagull” and “Freedom.”

Thompson has vocals in “The Greatest Showman,” “Dear Evan Hansen,” “tick, tick... Boom!,” “In the Heights,” “Vivo” and the “Sesame Street” podcast “Foley and Friends.”

Without those six years of hard work to make it on Broadway and those unlucky streaks of constantly being told “no,” Thompson said he wouldn’t have been able to handle the last year like he did.

“It taught me how to be resilient and got me ready for that wonder of, ‘What’s next, what’s next, what’s next?’”

Broadway had its final curtain call in March of 2020, and the stage lights went dark for 19 months.

Acting from home

Thompson, Kat and their daughter live in West Orange, New Jersey, or “Broadway West.”

Miguel Cervantes, Hamilton in “Hamilton”; Jenna Claire, Glinda the good witch in “Wicked”; and James Snyder, Harry

Potter in “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child” all live within five minutes of Thompson.

Thompson’s family made the move to the suburbs after “Waitress” had its final bow in



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Ben Thompson and Christopher Jackson at the “Hamilton” opening night party.

January 2020. But within months COVID-19 threatened to shatter their security.

Thompson and Kat have always had side hustles to help meet expenses. Thompson was a cycling class instructor; Kat doubled as a makeup artist. But the pandemic stopped it all.

“Not only did our main jobs go away, our side hustles did too,” Thompson said.

He and Kat turned into sound engineers, lighting designers, camera operators, directors of photography and acting coaches.

“We had to do self-takes,” Thompson said.

After putting their daughter to sleep, they spent hours filming auditions. They had to set up the lights, the camera, the sound and make sure the file was the right size before sending it off with the hope of landing a job.

“I’m a father and husband first, and I had to find a way to take care of my family,” Thompson said.

But weeks into the shutdown, Thompson got an email from composer Alex Lacamoire.

“Hey Ben, what’s your home studio setup? I need to record some stuff, and we’re looking for people with home studios.”

Lacamoire is a three-time Tony and three-time Grammy winner for his work on the Broadway musicals “Hamilton,” “Dear Evan Hansen” and “In The Heights.”

There was only one answer: “Yeah, I totally have it set up.”

That wasn’t true. Thompson’s 288-square-foot basement, soon-to-be studio, was filled with moving boxes waiting to be unpacked.

He called his best friend, Christopher Jackson, who was George Washington in the original “Hamilton” cast. The two acted in “Holler If Ya Hear Me” and Thompson has guest starred on “Bull” with Jackson, who plays Chunk Palmer in the main cast of the CBS television drama.

“What do I do?”

“Here’s the deal, give me 10 minutes, call me back.”

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Ten minutes later, Thompson called back.

Jackson told him to come to his house to pick up a mic, but when Thompson got there, Jackson gave him a computer, a keyboard, a guitar, a bass and a mic.

“What are you doing?” Thompson asked.

“I just put in my new studio, so I have all this stuff. Just take it.”

Thompson went home and set up the makeshift studio.

“It was already a competitive market and then when nobody has work, it’s even more competitive because people are less likely to pass on a job,” Thompson said. “And, I think, a lot of us went through almost an identity crisis.”

Thompson thought about going back to school to become a psychologist.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Ben Thompson's at-home studio, complete with a TCU coaster.

Jackson wouldn't let him.

“He said, ‘Ben, this is what you do every time you don't have a job,’” Thompson recalled Jackson telling him.

“You start thinking you'll never work again and that you need to find something else, but

you're an artist. Be an artist. Create something, write something, make some music tonight. Just figure out a way to do that, and it will cultivate something eventually.”

And it did.

Thompson got in touch with Bill Sherman, the musical supervisor of Sesame Street, and started singing songs for the podcast, “Foley and Friends.”

He recorded vocals for an Apple Plus movie, “In the Heights,” “Vivo,” “Dear Evan Hansen,” “tick, tick... boom!,” Rent's 25-year anniversary and “American Idiot's” 10-year anniversary.

He made over 20 audition tapes, and the

self-filmed auditions landed him two TV shows.

Back on the train

It's October. Thompson runs down the stairs of Penn Station and swipes his metro card, just in time for the 11 p.m. express train back to Jersey.

“Broadway was the goal, and I made it and then becoming a principal actor, not just in the ensemble, became my next goal, and my goals are constantly shifting on to what's next and how can it not only help my career but help my family. My decisions now are no longer career-centric,”

Thompson said.

One of Thompson's anxieties about things reopening is that he will see his daughter less.

“I don't like the fact I'm only going to see her for about three hours a day,” Thompson said.

Their “daddy-daughter days” are going to happen less often.

“It's daddy-daughter beach day! It's daddy-daughter beach day!” the two chanted in the car on the way to the beach in late September.

The skies were clear, the weather warm. The sun kissed their faces as they walked along the beach looking for seashells to take home to Kat.

“Spending time just the two of us is so rare,” Thompson said. “I love that kid and I would do anything for her, and I live for more moments like that. I hold onto them tightly.”

Rah, Rah, TCU!

Thompson said he will never forget what TCU and Casa Manana, a local Fort Worth theater that Thompson worked at throughout college, did to help him accomplish his dream.

When Thompson walked on to TCU's campus in the fall of 2000, his major was

undeclared. He was thinking about becoming a business or political science major.

Still, he auditioned for “Jesus Christ Superstar.”

“I was here during that production of ‘Jesus Christ Superstar,’” Walsh, one of his old professors, said. “Sometimes you get a student who comes in with a high acting IQ. That is, the student has a natural ability to know how to work in a rehearsal or a class or in performance and to find the truth and inner life of a character. Ben Thompson was one of those rare students.”

Thompson had a major.

“They were like, ‘You're not a theatre major? Who are you?’” Thompson said.

Parker, another one of Thompson's old professors, said one of the joys and pleasures of doing college theater is that it's a time when people are searching, experimenting and exploring what their interests might be.

After auditioning for and doing the show, Thompson realized he had found his people and his true passion.

“Ben knew instinctively how to command the stage,” Walsh said. “And our job was to get him into our program at TCU and teach him to understand the ethics and history of our profession, the expectations of a professional in our profession, and the fundamental skills and vocabulary of a ‘triple threat’ - actor, singer, dancer. He embraced our program and didn't look back.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Ben Thompson on Oct. 19 during his opening night of Waitress on Broadway. Thompson plays Earl and shows off his character's “Medieval” font tattoo.

“It's been fascinating and also really special to see how cool it is when everyone does work together, how much you can get done. When people make the decision to care for one another and care for the final product and make a commitment to each other, things get done really well.”

-BEN THOMPSON

ALUM, TCU

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“Professors at TCU really cultivated my love for acting, and played a big part in me feeling like I could do it,” Thompson said.

Thompson can’t resist representing TCU on the big Broadway stages.

“I’ve seen Ben take several bows on Broadway and he’s usually flashing the frog horns at bows,” Parker said.

“I don’t feel like I’m just representing myself up there,” Thompson said. “I’m representing everywhere I’ve come from and, by far, the biggest impact I’ve had was while I was at TCU, and without TCU and without Casa Manana in Fort Worth, I never would have had the education, I never would have had the belief in myself, so I do it to raise awareness for TCU because the school deserves more credit than it gets.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Cast members from “American Idiot” pose on the red carpet at opening night.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

Ben Thompson as Miss Trunchbull in “Matilda” on Broadway holding his dog, Gus.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN THOMPSON

The cast of “Waitress” on opening night 2021.

ESPORTS

Creating a legacy: Tuten talks TCU Esports competitions, funding and more

By **JD PELLIS**

EXECUTIVE EDITOR, TCU 360

A senior computer science major who's also president of TCU's Esports club lobbied and recruited so the club can one day turn into a varsity-level program.

In 2021, the Esports club operated teams for Rocket League, League of Legends, Overwatch, Valorant, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and Smash Ultimate and competed in conference play, placing second to the University of Texas in Valorant and fourth in League of Legends.

But in his four years with the club, Asa Tuten has never seen an in-person audience at his home campus.

"It is the one thing I want to leave a major impact on before I graduate this spring," said Tuten, the president of TCU Esports.

In 2017, Andy Rowland, a former collegiate student-athlete switched lanes

and became TCU's premiere Esports activist: campaigning, chartering and then competing for the program.

In their first year, Rowland and four other players competed in only one game, League of Legends. The team placed third in the League of Legends American Collegiate Esports League (ACEL) and won in an Esports tournament — DreamHack — against Baylor.

Rowland, who graduated from TCU in December of 2018, went on to become an Esports head coach at Dakota State University, the first of his kind at the program.

At TCU, there's no Esports head coach, but the program has continued to grow since Rowland left it.

Since 2017, the Esports club at TCU has gone from just five players and one team to 33 players and seven teams, numbers Tuten

said is "pretty good for a school of our size."

Still, it hasn't been easy for a TCU Esports team that many in the TCU community don't know exists.

"Not very many people know about us," Tuten said. "There are alumni who connect with us online and did not know we existed while they attended TCU. I meet people every day who had no idea we had an esports club."

Tuten also said TCU has had trouble competing because of the sheer size of the university, which decreases the odds of recruiting higher-ranked players and garnering local support.

"[It's] something I hope creating a space on campus would help fix," said Tuten.

Funding and support

Most schools struggle to dedicate a physical location to practice and play Esports, but many

have made shared spaces for their clubs. Oklahoma State took the lead by opening up a "state-of-the-art" Esports arena in the spring of 2021.

TCU Esports does not have a place to compete in person.

For the upcoming "Iron Skillet" matchup between TCU Esports and SMU Esports, TCU will have to travel to Dallas to compete, utilizing SMU's shared space.

The lack of space is partly an administrative and partly a funding issue. TCU Esports receives funding from SGA that covers about two-thirds of its budget, with the remainder covered from dues.

Tuten started a Frog Fund in the fall called the 2021 TCU Esports Project to help the organization reach its goals, but it didn't exceed his expectations.

As of Dec. 13, 2021, the fund had earned TCU Esports only \$205 of its \$17,500 target and has since ended.

"Most players have the proper tools, but one of the main reasons why we are looking to raise money is since many players have their personal computers that are heavy and large and are hard to move weekly just to play in-person," Tuten said.

By getting PCs and spaces on campus to play, Tuten said they could start hosting in-person competitions for TCU students to watch.

"We would be able to interact better with not only our teams, but with

the community," Tuten said. "By donating, we will be able to help show the university that [...] we can create a major organization on campus and help draw in a whole new audience to TCU."

Tuten has big aspirations for the program but he won't be able to see the fruits of his labor — at least as an active member.

Along with a new space and PCs for the club, Tuten hopes the program will be able to expand to games like Halo and Call of Duty.

"It's sad to build this up for the future but know I won't be able to use it myself," he said. "I think that next year will be a big stepping stone, though. Hopefully, by that time, there'll be someplace that players can utilize."

More than a game

TCU Esports is in its developing stages and has not been certified as a varsity program under a governing body, meaning it isn't able to compete at the highest level for prizes, but Tuten said that could change soon.

The largest governing body for Esports on the collegiate market is the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE). To make it to the highest level of competition, programs must be "school-sanctioned esports programs," according to the NACE Collegiate Starleague (CSL) website.

TCU has been placed in the "challenger division," while SMU

and 219 other universities are under the "varsity division," according to the NACE Collegiate Starleague (CSL) website.

TCU's Valorant and Rocket League teams did perform in CSL this year but not at the varsity level.

One of Tuten's goals for TCU Esports has been to turn it into a varsity-level program, which would make possible sponsorships and additional scholarships.

"If administration were to recognize esports as a major competitor in the realm of entertainment, we would be able to have a lot more opportunities to expand our platform," said Tuten.

With the growing market, especially after a pandemic where many traditional sports struggled, it's no surprise that collegiate Esports has started to garner collegiate attention.

In 2019, however, the NCAA's Board of Governors voted against getting involved in Esports on an organizational level. The NCAA cited concerns over the male-dominated nature of esports and the extreme violence of some titles.

The decision was not a reflection of the industry's lack of potential.

In the same year the NCAA declined its involvement with collegiate Esports, the "League of Legends" World Championship attracted an audience of over 100 million, more than any other sporting event that year including the Super Bowl.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASA TUTEN

Members of the 2021 TCU Esports Project.

Many universities have already taken notice of the frontier that is collegiate esports, and it's only a matter of time before TCU has to take another serious look at its program.

Upcoming events for TCU Esports

TCU Esports has a couple of events in its sights this coming spring, which can be streamed live on TCU Esports' Twitch channel.

The Smash Ultimate team plans to compete in College Crew Battles, League of Legends will compete in College League of Legends (cLoL), and most other teams will compete in some sort of league this

spring, Tuten said.

TCU Esports will take on SMU Esports in a competition that will feature League of Legends, Overwatch, Valorant, CS:GO and Rocket League. That matchup is slated for

Feb. 19, 2022, at 10 a.m. in Dallas, Texas.

Tuten said the TCU-SMU rivalry matchup is about "raising money for charity and just having a fun day of competing."

For more details, join

TCU Esports' Discord server at discord.gg/tcuesports or follow them on Twitter.

SPORTS

Party foul: TCU basketball sees record crowd wasted in blowout loss to Texas

By COLIN POST

SPORTS EDITOR, TCU 360

It was a tale of two scenes.

The first was one of hype, electricity and excitement.

It was pregame. TCU was coming off of a ranked, upset win on the road. Texas had lost two of their last three. A record-setting 8,412 fans piled into Schollmaier Arena to see the two rivals clash.

The line for the record 3,594 students to get in went down the block. They shuffled in, filling well beyond the normal three sections they were allotted. Anything slightly athletic done by the Frogs in warmups stirred them. During announcement of the starting lineups, the building was shaking.

The second was one of solemnness, lifeless faces and silence.

The final buzzer sounded, and less-than-half of the historical crowd remained in their seats. The Frogs trudged off the court, heads down in defeat.

For the sixth-straight time, TCU had lost to Texas on the basketball court, and this one was in blowout fashion.

"I haven't had many losses like this," head coach Jamie Dixon said.

"This is bad."

A monstrous 33-13 run late in the first half by the Longhorns had given the Frogs a 20-point deficit by halftime, and they would never recover, falling 73-50 on Tuesday night in their worst loss of the season.

Texas forward Timmy Allen did the most damage to TCU, scoring 12 of his game-high 16 points in the first half alone to help the Longhorns pull away.

Guards Courtney Ramey, Marcus Carr and Andrew Jones joined Allen in double-figures for Texas, combining for 37 points.

For just the third time this season, TCU was outrebounded in the contest. Not only did they lose the overall rebounded battle by 10 (41-31), but their nine offensive rebounds were far outweighed by 15 from Texas.

The Longhorns turned those offensive rebounds into 12 second-chance points, compared to just six for the Frogs.

A silver lining for TCU was superstar guard Mike Miles' first double-digit scoring effort in four games. He finished with 14 and was joined by forward Emanuel Miller (13) as the only two Frogs in double-digits.

Miller added a career-high five blocks.

Despite a somewhat return to form, Miles had little good to say to the media postgame.

"It's embarrassing. There's not too much to say," Miles said. "Everything went wrong. I don't think we did anything right. We got what we deserved."

Before things got out of hand, the Frogs won the opening tip, and Miles imposed his will right away. The sophomore blew past the Longhorns for a layup on the opening possession before doing the same exact thing on the Frogs' next time down the floor.

That started a sequence of the two teams trading blows. Texas scored two-straight buckets to take the lead. Then, TCU hit two-straight shots to regain the advantage.

Just over six minutes into the game, the contest saw its fourth tie, as a layup by TCU forward Eddie Lampkin knotted the score at 10.

Then, despite the thunderous voices of thousands of fans behind them, the Frogs went ice cold.

For four minutes exactly, TCU went without a score, missing four shots during that time. Meanwhile, Texas

could not miss, popping off on an 11-0 run.

The Frogs would pull back within seven moments later, but they struggled to gain any real momentum. The Longhorns went on yet another run, this one 14-3, late in the half to go up by 18 with 3:17 remaining.

Things went from bad to horrendous for TCU quickly. With 2:24 left in the first half, an and-1 by Texas guard Andrew Jones made it 41-20 in favor of the Longhorns.

Even in the face of a 20-point deficit, the Frog fans still chanted "Defense!" as they tried to will an ounce of life into their team.

"We want to thank our fans. They were tremendous. I guess we set a record," Dixon said. "They showed up, and we did not."

At the half, TCU trailed 43-23. Despite 13 fouls committed by Texas, 7-for-14 shooting from the free throw line by the Frogs had prevented them using that to their advantage.

To add insult to injury, TCU went 0-for-9 from behind-the-arc and committed eight turnovers in the first 20 minutes.

A slight push by the Frogs early in the second half got the crowd



PHOTO BY ESAU RODRIGUEZ OLVERA

TCU forward Emanuel Miller (2) takes a jumper with a hand in his face in the Frogs' loss to Texas on Jan. 25, 2022.

rejuvenated. Just over three minutes in, TCU was within 17, but Texas answered immediately with a three-pointer from Jones to return the arena to a silence.

That was the way it went for the rest of the game. Each time the Frogs found success on offense, they squandered the momentum by giving up a score defensively.

Only twice in the entire second half did TCU score two or more field goals unanswered by Texas, allowing the Longhorns to push their lead as high as 24 at one point (11:19 remaining).

The closest the Frogs would pull was 15 with just over five minutes remaining, but the Longhorns responded to that with an 8-0 run to push it right back to 23.

TCU finished the game an abysmal 2-for-16 from

deep, committing 13 turnovers along the way. After being the hero on Saturday against Iowa State, guard Damion Baugh finished with as many turnovers (5) as points.

While the game was surely one to forget for the Frogs, Miller emphasized postgame their need to learn from the disappointment going forward.

"I think if we just completely forget about this game, then we're not going to learn from it," Miller said. "I think there's so many things we can learn from this game."

The going only gets tougher for TCU going forward, as they host No. 19 LSU on Saturday. Tip-off is scheduled for 11 a.m. on ESPN2.

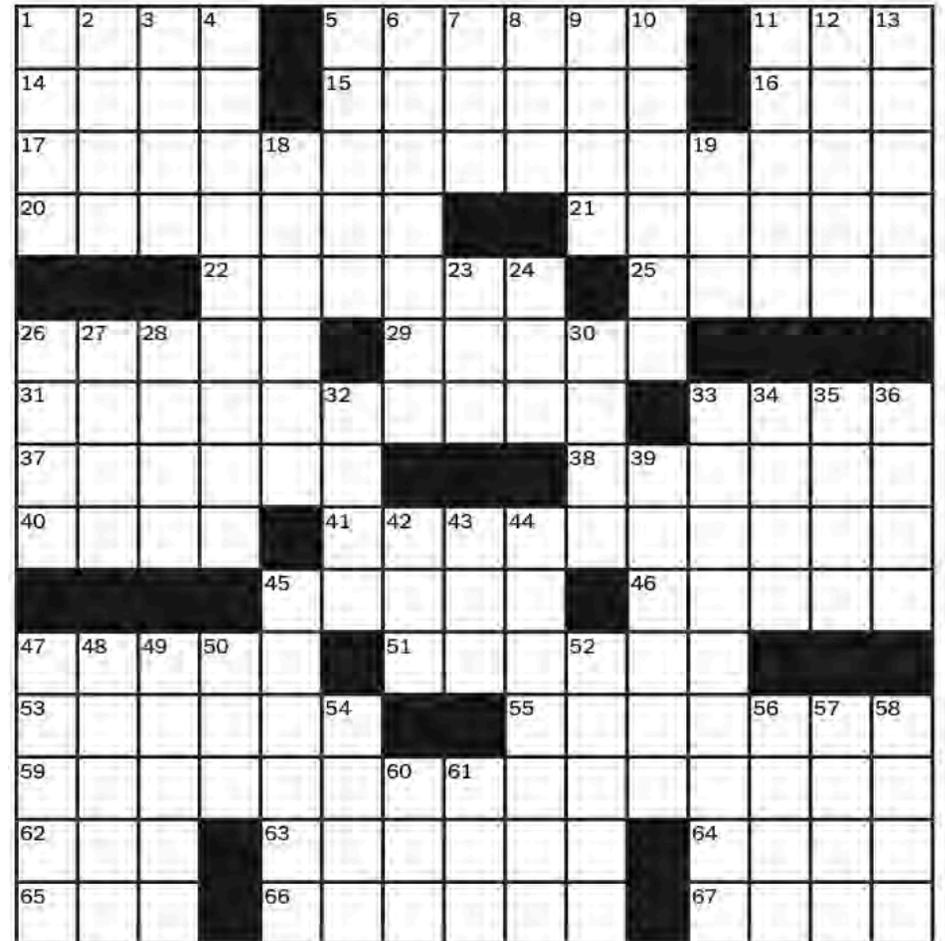
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The New York Times Edited by Will Shortz

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| <p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 When said three times, how an overlong comment might be summarized</p> <p>5 Morgan Stanley acquisition of 2020</p> <p>11 Shock, in a way</p> <p>14 Let up</p> <p>15 Get something just right</p> <p>16 Word aptly hidden in "I've got this!"</p> <p>17 Reef deposit hung on the holiday tree?</p> <p>20 Is unobliged to</p> <p>21 Popular web browser</p> <p>22 Something an Australian might throw on the barbie</p> <p>25 Beats (out)</p> <p>26 Heath genus that's also a woman's name</p> <p>29 Certain international soccer championship, familiarly</p> <p>31 Noble gas you can't live without?</p> <p>33 It's 1 for 90°</p> <p>37 Occasion on which to sing the hymn "Up From the Grave He Arose"</p> | <p>38 Word with candy or ball</p> <p>40 Things caught at a beach</p> <p>41 Starbucks order for a man's man?</p> <p>45 True</p> <p>46 Essential character</p> <p>47 Cause of the moon hitting your eye like a big pizza pie, in song</p> <p>51 Sugar or flour</p> <p>53 Car model with a musical name</p> <p>55 Miami five</p> <p>59 Buys tickets for a couple of friends for a Polynesian getaway?</p> <p>62 Something it's good to get a hole in?</p> <p>63 Archers</p> <p>64 Trash day reminder</p> <p>65 Passage blocker, maybe</p> <p>66 New citizen, perhaps</p> <p>67 What cynophobia is the fear of</p> | <p>2 Get ready to skate, with "up"</p> <p>3 Lead-in to a Southern "-ville"</p> <p>4 Tries to wrangle the unwrangleable</p> <p>5 "Christ's Entry Into Brussels in 1889" artist</p> <p>6 More ragged</p> <p>7 ___ shot</p> <p>8 In the way of</p> <p>9 45, e.g.</p> <p>10 Does some cave art</p> <p>11 Free-fall phenomenon, informally</p> <p>12 Good thing to bring to the field</p> <p>13 North and South, but not East or West</p> <p>18 Gobble down</p> <p>19 Chicago airport code</p> <p>23 ___ shot</p> <p>24 For</p> <p>26 At all</p> <p>27 Org. that gives out "gold" but fights pirates</p> <p>28 Teeny-tiny</p> <p>30 "Kiss her ___ for me" ("A Holly Jolly Christmas" lyric)</p> <p>32 Western gas brand</p> | <p>33 District of Columbia advocacy subject</p> <p>34 Hankering</p> <p>35 N.Y.C. neighborhood next to the Bowery</p> <p>3 6 Great-great-great-great-great grandfather of Noah</p> <p>39 Dish that may be served folded</p> <p>42 Old-timey agreements</p> <p>43 Like Santa, in traditional depictions</p> <p>44 Butter up, say</p> <p>45 Doesn't disturb</p> <p>47 Start of an English auto name</p> <p>8 2016 animated film with songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda</p> <p>49 Pitch-perfect</p> <p>50 Explorer John</p> <p>52 Give a buzz</p> <p>54 Small thing</p> <p>56 Opposite of exo-</p> <p>57 Full of anticipation</p> <p>58 Besmirches</p> <p>60 Historical event given its current name in 1939: Abbr.</p> <p>61 "!!!"</p> |
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Carpe Diem by Niklas Eriksson



Niklas Eriksson

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Dustin by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Horoscope

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
 ★★★★★ Today you want to do something different. Obviously, travel would be perfect. ("I'm outta here!") Certainly, your ambition is aroused, which is why you will make something happen. Note: Bosses and authority figures favor you. Tonight: Explore your options.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 ★★★★★ You continue to make a strong impression on others because the Sun is at the top of your chart. You might make a great impression on a boss or parent you haven't seen in a while. Today you can't ignore issues about shared property. Tonight: Check your finances.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 ★★ Today you have to cooperate with others because the Moon is opposite your sign. You'll have no trouble doing this, because you are quick to adapt. Meanwhile, keep your pockets open, because gifts and favors will come your way. Tonight: Cooperate with others.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 ★★★★★ You might have to work on behalf of someone else today. Fortunately, you might attract someone helpful. Having said that, you also might attract someone who will test your patience. (You win some, you lose some.) Tonight: Get organized.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 ★★★★★ This is a playful, fun-loving day! Even if you're working hard, others will be supportive to you. You might attract someone to you today who is chatty and will make

demands on your time. (This is not surprising, because you often attract people to you.) Tonight: Socialize!.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 ★★★★★ Today you're happy to relax at home among familiar surroundings. You feel like you need a break. This doesn't mean you're not still working hard and giving it all you've got, because you are. Yes, you can handle it all right now. Tonight: Relax.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 ★★★★★ It's easy for you to be in touch with your creative talents now. Others might use this same influence to enjoy sports events and playful activities with children. Basically, you want to enjoy life, and ideally you would a vacation. Who knows? Tonight: Study and learn.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 ★★★★★ Your ability to persuade

others is strong now. Today you might focus on financial matters and cash flow. Perhaps you want to sell something. Perhaps you want to buy something. (You'll get what you want.) Tonight: Banking and finances.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 ★★★★★ Because the Moon is in your sign today, your luck will be slightly better than all the other signs. Why not test this and ask the universe for a favor? See what happens. Meanwhile, guard against transportation delays. Tonight: You have the upper hand.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 ★★★★★ Today it's a mixed bag. With Mars and Venus in your sign, you feel charming and keen to associate with others. However, the Moon is hiding in your chart, which is the opposite influence. This makes you want to retire

and hide behind the scenes. It's your choice. Tonight: Be low-key.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 ★★★★★ This continues to be a strong time. Nevertheless, ex-partners and old friends from your past seem to be back on the scene. Today an important conversation with a female friend might occur.

Tonight: Set goals.**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)
 ★★★★★ You're high-viz today! People notice you. In fact, they seem to know personal details about your private life. Be aware of this in case there are details you have to take care of. (We all have our little secrets.) Tonight: Look good.

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COMMUNITY

Blessed Feet: A charity reaching young athletes around the world

By **ELLA GIBSON**

STAFF WRITER, TCU 360

A TCU baseball pitcher is putting new life into old cleats.

Sophomore pitcher Luke Savage founded the charity Blessed Feet in 2020 to supply used baseball cleats to young athletes around the world.

Before starting Blessed Feet, Savage attended two mission trips to the Dominican Republic during high school.

Through ongoing conversations with a mentor and coach, he learned that many children who participate in sports do so without appropriate shoes and gear.

Through this experience, the charity, Blessed Feet, which is currently seeking nonprofit status from the IRS, was founded.

Knowing that he had many old cleats of his own, Savage started this organization to encourage others to pass

on shoes that they no longer use.

“This organization is important to me because I feel like I have a duty to use the platform I’ve been given to help others,” said Savage. “I feel like there is no better way to do that than be able to use two things I love – through shoes and sports.”

Individuals can donate cleats by contacting a volunteer, mailing or bringing them to a drop-off location. The location’s address can be found on the organization’s website. Those who don’t have gear can donate through the website.

The charity sends donated cleats to organizations internationally, including in the Dominican Republic. Other cleats are brought to local Fort Worth groups.

Additionally, donors have the option to customize their cleats



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE SAVAGE

Luke Savage, a member of TCU Baseball, poses next to donated cleats for Blessed Feet.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE SAVAGE

Luke Savage, a pitcher for the TCU baseball team, poses next to a stack of gear donated to Blessed Feet.

when donating or dropping off.

Individuals can send in a design when donating or customize shoes themselves as volunteers. Customization involves painting various colors and designs. Other volunteer opportunities include picking up, packing and dropping off donations.

According to the

organization’s website, Blessed Feet focuses on cleats because “feet are the foundation to the body.”

In the future, Savage would like to extend the organization’s global reach.

“I want to be able to take the organization internationally to where we can have annual drives and events to help benefit kids in need,” he

said.

Since 2020, Blessed Feet has experienced growth locally and impacted athletes internationally. The organization provides an opportunity for the Fort Worth community to make an impact across the globe.

SPORTS

TCU track and field finishes second at Texas A&M Invitational

By **MICAH PEARCE**

STAFF WRITER, TCU 360

TCU’s indoor track and field programs traveled to College Station to compete in the Texas A&M hosted meet last Saturday. Both the men’s and women’s teams finished in second place behind several impressive individual performances.

Graduate transfer Kasey Staley broke the TCU indoor pole vaulting record the week

before with a vault of 4.10 meters. In College Station, Staley finished in second in the event with a vault of 4.07 meters.

Despite breaking height records, Staley is focused on the indoor track and field postseason.

“One of my biggest goals for this indoor season is to qualify for nationals. My second biggest goal is to place at Big 12s, which is ironically as big of a goal as qualifying for

nationals,” said Staley.

The women’s middle-distance runners also showed out for the Frogs. The three TCU representatives, Jasmine Muhammad-Graham, Lailah White and Rylan Engels finished first, second and third, respectively, in the 800s. Just under three seconds separated Muhammad-Graham and Engels.

On the men’s side, senior Lakelin Conrad competed in the 3000 meter race, where he

finished fifth with a personal best time of 8:30. After cross country season, moving to the track meant focusing on a new race goal for the veteran.

Two men’s sprinters, Robert Gregory and Jais Smith, both advanced to the finals in the 60 meter event. Gregory went on to win in a time of 6.76 seconds. Smith finished close behind, finishing fourth with a 6.84.

In the men’s 200 meter sprint, Tinotenda

Matiyenga won in a time of 21.12 seconds. David Seete also won his event, the 400 meter sprint, in a time of 47.97.

Rainey Anderson finished third in the preliminaries with a time of 8.29 seconds, which earned him a spot in the finals. There, Anderson dropped a time of 8.07 to earn a second place finish.

Devin Robinson scored a podium spot in shot put. He claimed second place with a

throw of 16.42 meters (53’10”). He was behind first place by a little over two meters.

With both the men and women placing second at this meet, the future looks promising for the Horned Frogs indoor and outdoor seasons. TCU will return to action this weekend (Jan. 28-29) in Lubbock at the Texas Tech Open and Multis.