

Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

There's No Place Like Home

Matt Freije is thriving with his Vanderbilt family.

By NELSON BRYAN

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT KANSAS IS the home of college basketball. James Naismith, who invented the game at the YMCA training school in Springfield, Mass., started the ball bouncing at the University of Kansas in 1898. More than 100 years later, senior Matt Freije brought that basketball-rich tradition with him from Kansas to his collegiate basketball home at Vanderbilt.

A native of Overland Park, Kan., Freije grew up playing basketball in the school yards and at home. He is the second oldest of seven children, with a brother and five sisters, and began playing organized ball in the fifth grade.

"Growing up, ever since elementary school, you were either a KU or a K State fan," he says. "It made for a good rivalry between friends and classmates."

After completing a high school career during which he was named Mr. Basketball by the Kansas Coaches Association, First-Team All State, Metro Player of the Year, and MVP of the Sunflower League, it was time to pick a college. There was some family sentiment that he remain close to home. However, an early recruiting visit by Coach Kevin Stallings was key in his decision to put Kansas in his rearview

mirror and set his sights on Nashville.

"They were one of the first schools that started recruiting me," Freije says of his choice to attend Vandy. "I built a good relationship with Coach Stallings, and I picked Vanderbilt because of him. Prior to my visit, I pretty much knew I wanted to come here, as long as the facilities were decent."

Beyond decent facilities, the Freije family wanted to make sure Matt's collegiate home would be just that—a home. "They did a good job showing us that it's a good family here, and I could surround myself with good people. We liked it."

During his collegiate career, the 6-foot-10-inch, 249-pound forward was named to the SEC All-Freshman team, Third-Team All-SEC as a sophomore, and Second-Team All-SEC as a junior. He entered the 2003–2004 season with numerous preseason accolades. *Media Day* named him Preseason SEC Player of the Year, as did *Athlon* magazine. Five publications tapped him as preseason All-SEC.

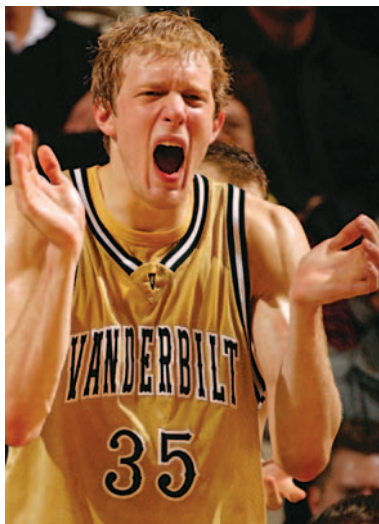
Early this season he set a school record for single-game consecutive free throws made with 18 of 18 in a 70–63 victory over Indiana, while scoring 32 points and grabbing 13 rebounds. He entered his final season as Van-

derbilt's 19th career-points leader with 1,284 points, 440 points shy of Phil Cox's career record. He scored 520 points last season for a 17.9 per-game average.

As his career has developed, so has his on-court composure and focus. "When I was a freshman and it was so loud in here," he says of Memorial Gymnasium, "I lost focus a little bit and wasn't really thinking about what I should be doing. Now, like in the Michigan game, when it gets really loud it helps get you fired up. Now I'm able to keep thinking about what I need to be doing, not lose myself in the volume of the crowd, and be able to keep my composure."

Freije's growth has been reflected in the team as a whole and in his fellow seniors in particular: guards Russell Lakey and Scott Hundley, and forward Martin Schnedlitz. "When we came in we were so little and immature in a lot of ways," Freije recalls. "We came in with six, and we're leaving with four. The friendship we've built with each other, and how much we've grown as people and basketball players, has been amazing. I've made friends who are going to last me a lifetime. I wouldn't trade that for anything."

Freije will finish his collegiate career with a major in economics and hopes to parlay his talent and expertise into a professional basketball career. "I'm just going to wait to see how the season unfolds, and hopefully that opportunity will be there. Whether it's in the States or somewhere else, I'd really like to keep playing."





{Sports Roundup}

Football: Cutler Named SEC Player of the Week

Sophomore quarterback Jay Cutler was named Southeastern Conference Offensive Player of the Week by SEC officials after leading the Commodores to a 28-17 victory over Kentucky on Nov. 15, throwing for four touchdowns and rushing for 129 yards.

A native of Santa Claus, Ind., Cutler is the first Commodore offensive player honored by the SEC since quarterback Greg Zolman was selected on Sept. 20, 1999.

The Commodores also were named Team of the Week by SI.com, *Sports Illustrated* magazine's Web site.

Cutler's 129-yard rushing total was the second-best performance ever by a Commodore quarterback against an SEC opponent. Marcus Wilson rushed for 136 yards against LSU in 1980. Cutler's 18 touchdown passes in a single season is the second-highest total in Vanderbilt history. Whit Taylor completed 22 touchdown passes in 1982.

Men's Golf: Commodores Win Tournament of Champions

The Vanderbilt men's golf team won its fourth tournament in three years by claiming the Coca-Cola Tournament of Champions, hosted by the University of Tennessee in October.

The Commodores stormed back from fourth place on the final day, shooting 9-under-par to finish at 15-under-par for 54 holes. The Swedish National Team, the leader after 36 holes, was second while Tennessee finished third, seven shots back. Mark Donnell, a junior

from Mobile, Ala., led the Commodore golfers. He placed sixth individually at 7-under-209.

Two years ago the Commodore men won the Adams Cup championship. A year ago Vanderbilt won its own Mason Rudolph Championship and the Johnny Owens Invitational at Kentucky.

Women's Golf: Wood Wins LPGA Futures Qualifier

Vanderbilt senior Courtney Wood parlayed a rain-shortened tournament into a first-place finish in the 2004 LPGA Futures Golf Tour Qualifying Tournament in November. She finished with a three-day total of 211, 5-under-par.

Because the Futures Tour begins in March, in the midst of Vanderbilt's season, Wood will miss the first



Wood

part of the tour. "I'll start playing as soon as school golf ends," she says. "The tour ends in September, so I'll play as many tournaments as possible." The Brentwood, Tenn., native earned honorable mention All-America honors along with first-team All-SEC and Academic All-SEC accolades as a junior.

She won the 2002 Trans National Championship and the 2002 Tennessee State Open, and shared the 2002 Tennessee Amateur of the Year award with teammate Sarah Jacobs.

Soccer: Women Named to All-SEC Team

Vanderbilt soccer player Jennifer Lewis was named to the All-Southeastern Conference First Team at the SEC Tournament Awards Banquet in November. It was the second consecutive year Lewis earned first-team honors. Lewis, a senior midfielder from Birmingham, Ala., played in all 17 regular-season games and scored her first goal in the regular-season finale at St. Louis. She helped lead the Commodores to a No. 6 seed in the SEC Tournament after missing the tournament last season for the first time.

Defender Monica Buff of Lilburn, Ga., was named to the 2003 SEC Freshman Team. She had an assist on the game-winning goal against LSU.

Kendra Sasa, a senior defender from Wheat Ridge, Colo., was named to the SEC Good Works Team. Sasa's community service projects include serving as chair of the Kids Field Day at Vanderbilt and as the NCAA representative to the Student-Athlete Leadership Conference.

The Commodores ended the regular season with an 8-6-3 record.



Cutler



Vanderbilt hockey against Middle Tennessee State University

Pro Players Host Nashville Youth

Fifteen Nashville high school students got a December trip to San Francisco, courtesy of Jimmy Williams, BS'01, and Jamie Winborn, BS'03.

Williams and Winborn, teammates on the football field as Commodores, remain teammates as San Francisco 49ers. The two financed and hosted a Bay Area weekend for students from inner-city Nashville. The itinerary included sightseeing, visits to Stanford and San Jose State universities, dinner with players, and attendance at a 49ers game. The students also assisted at a toy drive outside Candlestick Park.

It is the second year that Williams, a cornerback, and the first year that Winborn, a linebacker, have flown a group of Nashville youth to the Bay Area. The players are work-



Williams, below center, with Nashville students in San Francisco

ing through Backfield in Motion, an organization that operates academic and athletic programs for Nashville fifth and sixth graders. The high school students mentored the younger kids through the program's VIP adjunct, and the trip was a reward. In addition, they receive scholarship money toward a college education.

Cora Named White Sox Coach

Joey Cora, A'86, has been named third base coach with the Chicago White Sox.

The former Vanderbilt shortstop played for the White Sox during 1991–94. He also played with the San Diego Padres (1987, 1989–90), Seattle Mariners (1995–98) and Cleveland Indians (1998), hitting .277 with 30 home runs, 294 RBIs, 624 runs scored, and 117 stolen bases

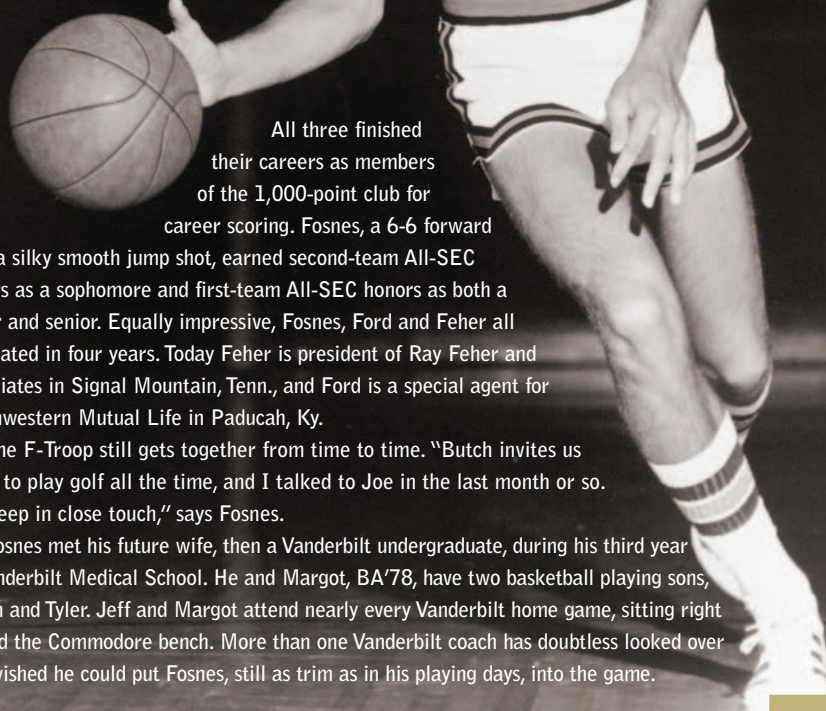
{Where Are They Now?}



People in Springfield, Tenn., know Dr. **Jeff Fosnes**, BA'76, MD'80, as a talented solo family practitioner at Northcrest Medical

Center. Vanderbilt basketball fans remember Jeff Fosnes as a member of the celebrated "F-Troop," along with fellow teammates and classmates Joe Ford, BA'76, and Butch Feher, BA'76. They helped Vanderbilt win the SEC championship in 1974.

Fosnes as a member of the "F-Troop"



All three finished their careers as members of the 1,000-point club for career scoring. Fosnes, a 6-6 forward

with a silky smooth jump shot, earned second-team All-SEC honors as a sophomore and first-team All-SEC honors as both a junior and senior. Equally impressive, Fosnes, Ford and Feher all graduated in four years. Today Feher is president of Ray Feher and Associates in Signal Mountain, Tenn., and Ford is a special agent for Northwestern Mutual Life in Paducah, Ky.

The F-Troop still gets together from time to time. "Butch invites us down to play golf all the time, and I talked to Joe in the last month or so. We keep in close touch," says Fosnes.

Fosnes met his future wife, then a Vanderbilt undergraduate, during his third year at Vanderbilt Medical School. He and Margot, BA'78, have two basketball playing sons, Cavan and Tyler. Jeff and Margot attend nearly every Vanderbilt home game, sitting right behind the Commodore bench. More than one Vanderbilt coach has doubtless looked over and wished he could put Fosnes, still as trim as in his playing days, into the game.

in 3,374 at-bats and 1,119 games. He made the All-Star team in 1997, hitting .300 with 11 home runs and 54 RBIs.

Before being named to his new position, he managed Montreal's Single-A Savannah, Ga., affiliate in the South Atlantic League, finishing with a 58-80 record. He began his coaching career in 2000 with Class A Daytona in the Chicago Cubs System.

Taylor Named Living Legend

Whit Taylor, who quarterbacked Vanderbilt to its last bowl game in 1982, was honored during the 2003 Southeastern Conference Football Championship festivities as a "Liv-

ing Legend." He and representatives from the remaining SEC schools were honored at a Friday night banquet and introduced to a crowd of 80,000 at the championship game in the Georgia Dome.

During his Vanderbilt career Taylor owned nearly every Vanderbilt single-season and career passing record and was named consensus All-SEC as a senior in 1982. Since 1994 each SEC-member school has nominated a football alumnus to the Living Legends team who has either been a first-team All-SEC performer, an All-American or an academic All-American.