

UTD Baseball, Softball Earn Third Straight Berths in ASC Championship Tournaments

RICHARDSON, TX - For the third consecutive year in their short history, both the University of Texas at Dallas baseball and softball teams will open play this weekend in their respective American Southwest Conference (ASC) Championship Tournaments.

The UTD softball team (23-15, 18-10) will begin play in the three-day, double-elimination ASC Championship Tournament Thursday at 7 pm against Texas Lutheran University (22-18, 17-11) at Southwest Park in Irving, TX. The UTD baseball team (21-19, 11-10) opens a best-of-three first round playoff series at Hardin-Simmons University (24-16, 15-5) in Abilene Friday at 7 pm.

The six-team softball tournament continues through Saturday. Games 2 and 3 (if necessary) of the baseball playoff are scheduled for 1 pm Saturday afternoon with the winner advancing to the four-team ASC Championship Tournament the following weekend, hosted by the highest remaining seed.

In addition to the title of ASC Champions, the winners of both the ASC Softball and Baseball Championship Tournaments will also earn an automatic bid into the NCAA Division III national playoff tournaments, which begin in mid-March.

This will be the third consecutive trip to the post-season conference for both UTD teams, which were started just four years ago. Both teams began earning trips to the tournament the first year they became eligible for post-season play in 2003.

Both UTD teams are entering the tournament one seed higher than they anticipated a week ago on the basis of tiebreaker advantages over their nearest rival. The softball team advances as the ASC East Division's No. 2 seed after finishing the season with doubleheader sweeps over defending conference champion East Texas Baptist and LeTourneau Universities. The finish moved the Comets past ETBU for the ASC East No. 2 seed behind divisional winner Louisiana College. The baseball team moved up a notch to the ASC East's No. 3 seed ahead of Mississippi College.

The Comets' softball team will open the three-day, double-elimination ASC Championship Tournament at 7 pm Thursday night against Texas Lutheran University (22-18, 17-11) at Southwest Park in Irving, Texas. The winner of that game advances to play West No. 1 seed Hardin-Simmons at 11 am on Friday.

Elimination games in the tournament are scheduled for 1 pm Friday with winner's bracket games set for 3 pm the same day. The final elimination game is scheduled for 11 am Saturday morning with championship game(s) at 1 and 3 pm (if necessary) Saturday.

In baseball, the tournament field has been expanded to eight teams for 2005. Teams will meet in a three-game series the opening weekend for the right to advance to the four-team, double-elimination ASC Championship Tournament the following weekend, hosted by the highest remaining seed.

Other first-round matchups include McMurry (No. 4 West) at East Texas Baptist (No. 1 East); Concordia-Austin (No. 3 West) at Louisiana College (No. 2 East); and Mississippi College (No. 4 East) at Texas Lutheran (No. 1 West).

For more information, visit our athletics website at: <http://cometsports.utdallas.edu>.