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**DT**

VOLUME 121, ISSUE 44  
TUESDAY, FEB. 2, 2021

# Creekside closed

# Residents removed

*Creekside residents were told in Dec. they would need to move out.  
Then, the deadline was moved up and they were given hours to leave.*

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## RESEARCH

# Researchers identify how drug fights COVID-19

By Kevin Vu  
 @Kevin\_Vu\_

Researchers at the University of Texas published a study Jan. 28 explaining how remdesivir, the only COVID-19 antiviral drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration, works to fight COVID-19 infection.

The COVID-19 virus is able to infect a person by copying itself with other cells in the body, said co-author Kenneth Johnson, professor of molecular biosciences. COVID-19 has an error-correction mechanism that allows it to remove mistakes that would stop the virus from spreading, Johnson said. This finding could potentially allow drug companies to develop a drug that is easier to take to treat COVID-19. Currently, the drug requires an injection.

Remdesivir is an antiviral drug that was first worked on and approved for the Ebola virus, said David Taylor, assistant professor of molecular biosciences.

The study sheds light on remdesivir and how it combats COVID-19. Johnson said remdesivir blocks COVID-19's RNA polymerase, which would have allowed the virus to copy itself onto other cells. Despite COVID-19's error-correction mechanism, the virus isn't able to remove remdesivir because it is rapidly incorporated and buried by other molecules.

Taylor said he compares the reaction between COVID-19's polymerase and remdesivir to a photocopier and a paper jam.

"The polymerase is like a photocopier," Taylor said. "It wants to keep making copies of the viral genome so it can keep replicating. Remdesivir causes one of those papers to get jammed in the machine, so you can't make more copies and

can't keep relocating and infecting." Biochemistry graduate student Tyler Dangerfield said the team was able to identify remdesivir's trick by recreating the process of a patient infected with COVID-19 receiving remdesivir in a lab dish. The team froze the reaction between the polymerase and the remdesivir, allowing them to observe how remdesivir does its job.

Dangerfield, who worked to prepare the COVID-19 polymerase, said this was the most challenging part of the project for him, taking him three months to complete.

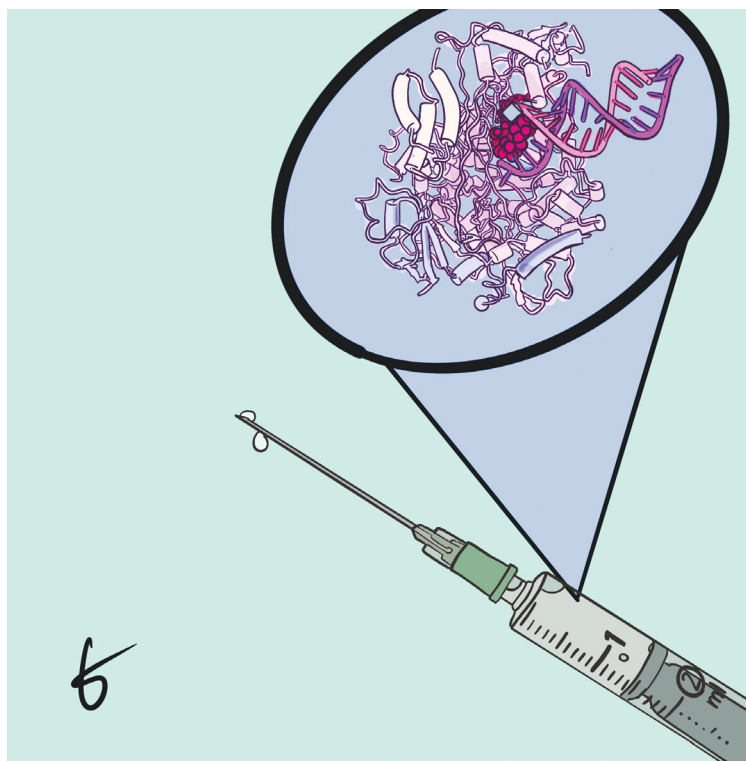
"A lot of the times when you try to study proteins that are made in bacteria, they are not made that well," Dangerfield said. "That was really kind of (a) frustrating time because you don't really know if it's going to

work or not, you just have to try."

Taylor said as more COVID-19 strain mutations emerge, it's only a matter of time until researchers need to develop more effective antiviral treatments against the virus. The discovery of remdesivir's process will allow drug companies to find ways to make more effective antiviral drugs.

Johnson said if patients with COVID-19 realize they are infected early on, they can potentially go to a hospital and get treated with doses of remdesivir through injection for a four to five day period.

"It would be much nicer if you got a positive COVID test and they could give you a pill to take home with you, and if you start feeling (the) earliest symptoms, you just take the pill," Johnson said.



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## AUSTIN WEATHER

TODAY Feb. 2	TOMORROW Feb. 3
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stonks??? i only have time to invest in the d\*ily t\*xan

## STATE

# Gov. Abbott opposes defunding police

Abbott has threatened to withhold funding from cities that don't comply, such as Austin and Dallas.

By **Tori Duff**  
@torianneduff

**G**ov. Greg Abbott is pushing for the Texas Legislature to create laws penalizing cities who reallocate funds away from the police.

Last August, the Austin City Council reallocated \$150 million — over a third — of the Austin Police Department budget. These reallocations were passed to fund alternative ways to respond to crime and crime-prevention programs following the Black Lives Matter protests during the summer and constituent calls to rethink policing.

However, the reallocations have sparked backlash from some political figures including Abbott, who has repeatedly claimed such budget changes endanger public safety.

"Cities that defund the police — they make it physically impossible for citizens to live safely," Abbott said in a press conference last Thursday. "That is why we must make it fiscally impossible for cities to defund the police."

Abbott said on Twitter that property crime and homicide rates have risen in Austin as a result of police fund diversions. However, according to a study by Richard Rosenfeld, former president of the American Society of Criminology, there is no evidence of a correlation between violent crime and defunding police departments. Additionally, Abbott's claims about property crime only account for burglaries, and overall property crime rates have fallen in Austin by 2% since 2019, according to PolitiFact.



JAMIE HWANG / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Police officers were stationed at the gate as people gathered in front of the Capitol to protest police violence on May 31, 2020.

Abbott previously expressed disapproval for a proposal to cut police funds in Dallas, which failed to pass. In 2020, Dallas began their RIGHT Care program, which involves a clinical social worker, an officer in the Dallas Police Department and a paramedic responding to 911 calls involving mental illness. In the ZIP codes served by the RIGHT Care program, arrests dropped by 8%.

Abbott's press office did not return a request for comment on this story.

Scott Bowman, associate professor of criminal justice at Texas State University, said every city should review city-funded activities to make sure their budget is effective.

"I think prevention programs, diversion programs, anything that minimizes mass incarceration, should absolutely be looked into as an alternative to reactionary policing," Bowman said. "(Cities) should use evidence-based research to determine or assess those prior to large-scale financial obligations."

Greg Casar, District 4 City Council member, said Austin's budget reallocations fund community issues the police are not suited to address, such as responses to mental health, homelessness

and domestic violence.

"If we actually want to address the issues in our community, then we need to change our budget priorities and shift away from over-policing as a tactic and reinvest in community solutions," Casar said.

SafeHorns President Joell McNew said APD is seeing manpower shortfalls since the reallocations, as fewer officers are available for community outreach.

"(Abbott) is making a stand and saying collectively that he is committed to keeping Texas safe," McNew said.

Architecture senior Andre Rezaie, campus director of University Democrats, said there are a lot of programs that could use funding from the city council budget aside from the police department.

"There're so many other issues around town like mobility, parks and trails, and roads that could use improvement, ... Austin public health, especially since we have a pandemic going on," Rezaie said.

In lieu of city officers, Abbott has expressed support for setting up state policing by the Texas Department of Public Safety in areas of central Austin, including the Capitol and UT campus. At the press conference last Thursday, he said this issue would be addressed in the future.



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## COLUMN

# Improve transfer admissions

*Texas Admissions must support prospective transfer students throughout the application process.*

By Ezra Gomez  
Columnist

Planning for school starts far before the first day of class, and for transfer students, school preparation starts months in advance. From perfecting their applications to working multiple jobs to cover student loans, many transfer students put in an incredible amount of time and work so they can attend classes at The University of Texas.

This intense process does not need to be further complicated by the UT Office of Admissions. A few transfer students have reported difficulties when dealing with Texas Admissions, especially when it comes to timely admission and consistent messages.

“It was just a very overwhelming experience, especially when you’re trying to sell yourself.”

GIGS HODGES  
YOUTH AND COMMUNITY STUDIES JUNIOR

We know at least two different transfer students encountered problems with communication when they transferred to UT. We encourage the admissions office to do all it can to ensure these issues don’t become widespread.

Gigs Hodges, a youth and community studies junior specializing in social studies through the Urban Teachers program, was perplexed throughout most of her experience transferring to UT, especially before she became an official student. She had called the admissions helpline numerous times, but it wasn’t until mid-June that she was finally informed she had been admitted to UT for the fall 2020 semester.

“I had already kind of thrown in the towel on thinking about going to UT,” Hodges said. “It

was super inconvenient because I was already changing gears to move somewhere else. I didn’t have a place to live at the time, I didn’t have a job because everything was so up in the air and I kind of felt defeated because I hadn’t heard anything back.”

Sustainability studies freshman Destiny Simpson shared a similar experience. However, she was a spring transfer who wasn’t officially admitted into the University until Jan. 26.

“I’m at home so it’s no problem at all, but looking at my housing application, I still have not

received a housing contract even though originally I was going to be on campus this semester,” Simpson said.

Simpson and Hodges both said they felt led on by the admissions team in regards to how long it took the University to admit them.

Kathleen Harrison, communications manager for the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, said in an email that the reason UT is so late to admit transfer students is because the University must delay some of its decisions until the

applicants who were in the process of completing their required 24 hours of transferable coursework at their current school submit their transcripts.

However, this does not explain why the admissions team, while polite over the phone, caused confusion while handling the requests from Simpson and Hodges.

“There is a chance I would not have been a late admit had they told me that the transcript I had sent them in the admissions process was the wrong one,” Simpson said. “I had to call them the day before it was due after emailing them five days before.”

Even though Hodges, Simpson and the transfer students who share this experience are more than grateful to be students at The University of Texas, they felt overwhelmed when dealing with the ins and outs of the transfer process.

“They were friendly, but they weren’t consistent in their information,” Hodges said. “Luckily, it all panned out, but it was just a very overwhelming experience, especially when you’re trying to sell yourself.”

The UT Office of Admissions needs to be more consistent with not only promptly informing transfer students when they have been admitted but explaining how to apply in a timely and efficient manner.

*Gomez is a journalism freshman from Lewisville, Texas.*



JUWON YOO / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

## CAMPUS

# Creekside residents abruptly removed from residence hall

By **Skye Seipe**  
@seipetc

UT told residents of Creekside Residence Hall they had to move out Jan. 27 after they were originally told they had until Jan. 31 to move to another residence hall.

On Dec. 15, University Housing and Dining told Creekside residents the dorm would close Jan. 31 to consolidate students living on campus, according to an email to residents obtained by The Daily Texan. Creekside residents were asked to move to Moore-Hill Residence Hall, or request to move to a different residence hall, according to the original email. Residents were not informed the move date changed to Jan. 27 until that afternoon.

“Circumstances have changed and everyone and their belongings must be out of the building by the end of today,” the Jan. 27 email said. “Due to the shortened time frame, we will work with residents to coordinate moving all belongings from Creekside starting today. If you are in your Creekside room, staff will assist you with your move.”

According to the email, UHD staff would enter the rooms of residents who were not on campus to gather their belongings and relocate them to their assigned rooms in Moore-Hill.

A Creekside resident, who requested anonymity due to their employment by the University, said UHD staff began bagging residents’ items shortly after 3 p.m., minutes after the email was



CONNOR DOWNS / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

As Creekside residents moved out of their dorm, bags of sheets lined the hallways of Creekside Residence Hall on Jan. 27.

sent at 2:47 p.m. Jackson Shilliday, a Creekside resident, said UHD employees left the dorm at about 5 p.m.

University spokesperson J.B. Bird said the date was moved up because undergraduate hybrid classes started in person Feb. 1. The University announced on Jan. 8 classes would be going online.

“That’s just one of those things, we wish we’d done it all at the same time,” Bird said when asked why students weren’t informed of the change earlier. “It wasn’t optimal.”

Civil engineering senior Shilliday, who has lived at Creekside since his freshman year, said it was shocking to receive news that they had to move out by Jan. 31 when they couldn’t move back to the dorms until Jan. 15.

“If you replace the words ‘UT Housing and Dining’ with ‘landlord,’ ... it would be a wild, wild story for a landlord to come to you the day of and say, ‘You have X number of hours to move out, move all of your stuff to this other place a couple blocks down the road,’” Shilliday said.

Bird said residents were told they would have to move out in December as part of UT’s financial mitigation.

“(Closing Creekside) allows us to keep costs in check,” Bird said. “It also congregates students

closer to resources, closer to the activities in the campus community.”

Bird said he wished the University had told residents earlier to give them time to plan their move-out process.

“It is not convenient,” Bird said. “There are inconveniences for everyone.”

Art Markman, head of the academic working group for COVID-19 planning, said there were discussions about turning Creekside into a COVID-19 isolation facility, but he wasn’t sure if the change would occur.

Bird said he believes the University has discussed turning Creekside into an isolation facility, but could not confirm if clearing out residents was related.

“You do have to discuss a lot of options to make sure you’re ready to handle the very rapidly evolving conditions of a pandemic,” Bird said.

The anonymous Creekside resident said UHD handled the situation irresponsibly.

The resident said many students, being “typical college students,” hadn’t started packing and were waiting until the last minute to move out.

“They placed a burden and urgency on all the staff and residents in the middle of a regular class day and in the middle of a pandemic and it was just irresponsible,” the resident said.

## FEATURE

# Dancing for a cause

*Bhangra dance team is using their platform to raise money and awareness for Indian issues.*

By Fiza Kuzhiyil  
@fiza11k

**I**n the Indian state of Punjab, farmers camp out on the cold streets to protest new agriculture laws. Over 8,000 miles away in Texas, an Indian student dance team brainstorms about how to raise money for the farmers.

Texas Bhangra, a University of Texas Punjabi dance team, raised \$1,276 and bought over 50 weatherproof tents for the protesting farmers. The team's co-captain, Shania Paul, said they use their social media platform to raise money and awareness for causes affecting Punjabi people as a way to honor the culture.

Paul said Bhangra dance moves are derived from Punjabi agricultural practices. One of these movements, called fasla, resembles wheat blowing in the wind.

"We wanted to do this fundraiser for the farmers in Punjab especially because



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Various members of Texas Bhangra, a University of Texas Punjabi dance team. The team uses their platform to raise money and awareness for Punjabi causes.

everything that we do ... originates with them," Paul, an electrical and computer engineering senior, said. "I feel like it's kind of our duty to give back to that community."

In August 2020, millions of Indian workers went on strike from their jobs in the fields to protest against laws minimizing government protection of agricultural labor. Team member Ishpal Singh said her family members were farmers in Punjab before they moved to America. She said she urged Texas Bhangra's

fall executive board to take action on the issue.

"The whole reason that we do Bhangra (is) to celebrate the harvest, and without a harvest, without farmers, there's really nothing to celebrate," Singh, a supply chain management sophomore, said. "It's a very somber time right now."

In May 2020, after the team came under new leadership, team co-captain Shaili Mehta said Texas Bhangra shifted their social media content from competitions and accolades to social justice

issues, including the Black Lives Matter movement.

"When you participate in a dance form, it's really difficult and unfair to separate the dance form from its culture because that's where it comes from," Mehta, a supply chain management senior, said.

Paul said neither of the team captains are from Punjab, but they both share a love and respect for the dance and culture.

"You don't have to be Punjabi to be able to enjoy this dance form," Paul said. "For me, especially whenever I

first started, I fell in love with it immediately because it was so energetic. I love the adrenaline that you feel when you're doing it."

Due to the pandemic, Mehta said the team only competes in virtual competitions which cost less to attend, leaving extra money for fundraising purposes.

"Competitions are really important, but team culture and what we stand for is a little more important," Mehta said.

After posting a Venmo fundraiser for the Punjabi farmers on their personal social media pages, the team raised over \$600 and matched the donations. The funds were sent to a team member's connection in Punjab, who bought and distributed weatherproof tents for the protestors.

"We wanted to make sure that we were gonna know exactly what's happening with the money," Paul said. "Most organizations were kind of just donating to (aid) organizations, but we wanted to do something a little bit more personal."

She said the team creates a culture around the music, dance and the Punjabi culture, which is why they find it crucial to acknowledge current events.

"It's not just about the fun and the dancing," Paul said. "We've got to be able to give back to the community as well."

## FILM

# 'Judas and the Black Messiah' tells emotional, relevant story

By Noah Levine  
@ZProductionz

In a moving character study that explores an important point in America's racial history, Daniel Kaluuya and LaKeith Stanfield continue their industry takeover.

"Judas and the Black Messiah," directed by Shaka King, is the latest Warner Bros theatrical release to hit HBO Max. The film follows the emotional true story of Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton (Daniel Kaluuya) and FBI informant William O'Neal (LaKeith Stanfield). The narrative intertwines the experiences of the two men, emphasizing their complex perspectives and inner battles in the face of an increasingly violent police force in 1960s Chicago.

Sure to garner Oscar nomination buzz, Daniel Kaluuya's performance as Fred Hampton is raw and emotional. In several speech-delivering sequences, Kaluuya captures the essence of the charismatic orator that was Fred Hampton as he inspires roaring Black Panther crowds. His presence exudes power and demands respect in every scene. Kaluuya never backs down emotionally or physically despite his character experiencing an extremely difficult set of circumstances. Dominique Fishback's calming

Deborah Johnson reveals a more intimate side of Hampton, allowing Kaluuya to showcase his range. His consistency with such a nuanced character is one of the film's strongest points.

LaKeith Stanfield rounds out the leading performances with his role as FBI informant William O'Neal. O'Neal's allegiances are tested as he is torn between the ideologies of the Black Panther Party and his responsibility as an informant. Stanfield's portrayal oozes slick confidence and pride for the majority of the film. But as the police close in on the Party, his careful poise is shattered.

Caught in the middle of a fight for social justice, O'Neal's character serves as the narrative link between the Black Panther Party and the FBI. His exchanges with officer Roy Mitchell (Jesse Plemons) offer an unsettling insight into the racist corruption coming from within the Federal Bureau.

The narrative spans several years, highlighting important moments from the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther



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(back to front) Daniel Kaluuya as Fred Hampton and LaKeith Stanfield as William O'Neal in "Judas and the Black Messiah." The film follows the true story of the Black Panther Party.

Party's history. The spotlight shifts between O'Neal and Hampton, showcasing key points in their respective experiences, from Hampton's prison sentence to O'Neal's painful ultimate decision about where his loyalties lie. Despite a heavy focus on just two characters, "Judas and the Black Messiah" also spends adequate time navigating the complexities of its supporting cast of characters.

Cinematographically, "Judas and the Black Messiah" is stunning. The blue-tinted nighttime sequences are visually

engrossing, and the intimate angles dial up the emotional connection. Production design brings 1960s Chicago to life alongside moonlit streets and misty alleys. The visual aesthetic seeps through every aspect of the film, surrounding its characters in a reflective and authentic environment.

With a heart-wrenching ending that will leave audiences shattered, "Judas and the Black Messiah" is a thought-provoking, educational and layered film about a period of history that in some ways feels eerily similar to the present.

## MUSIC

# The Sound of UT: Riya Mahesh

By Morgan-Taylor Thomas  
@mtthomas\_

Four-year-old Riya Mahesh didn't have much choice in attending her first piano lesson, her mother pulling her along by the hand. While the piano was soon replaced by a guitar, her love for playing music would become a lifelong creative outlet.

Now a biology and math junior, Mahesh not only performs as a one-woman show, but is also the vocalist and rhythm guitarist in a nameless one-woman, two-man band. Influenced by Phoebe Bridgers, Taylor Swift and a love for books, Mahesh produces an indie rock sound drawing from her own personal experiences.

**The Daily Texan:** How do books influence your sound and songwriting?

**Riya Mahesh:** Joan Didion is my favorite author, and I got into her because Phoebe Bridgers said "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," which was Didion's first essay book, had really influenced (Bridgers' album) Punisher. I was like, "Wow, that's awesome," so I read the book, and I was hooked. I think when you focus on lyrics, books and prose tend to be really influential because you can take ideas people have and put them into a song. It's a little more creative and requires more thought.

**DT:** How has this past year of pandemic life affected your music?

**RM:** It's funny because I pretty much have only written sad songs because that's just kind

of the place I've been. But recently, I've entered a very healthy relationship, which has been odd because I've had to learn how to fictionalize and write sad songs about things that didn't happen to me. For example, I wrote this one song ... based off of my relationship, but it wasn't sad enough. When you make indie sad girl music, ... it's a little hard to channel (being sad) when you're not. And I mean, there's an art to writing a happy song, but I haven't quite

figured it out.

**DT:** What is it like being a biology and math major while also being a musical artist?

**RM:** At the end of the day, the only thing besides people that has consistently brought me joy is music, (so) it's important for me to prioritize that. For me, the way (music) is very unstructured in my life ... is a very liberating thing. I still have music alongside very structured biology and math. This past month,

I was studying for my MCAT, and ... it was the longest time I had gone without music. But then when I came back to Austin and started working with my band again, it was like this creative rejuvenation because I'd been creatively suppressed for some time.

**DT:** What do you hope for yourself and your music in 2021?

**RM:** I think the cool thing about not pursuing music

as a career is that I don't really have to worry about becoming successful, so I think the plan is just making as much music as I can. I'm hoping to release this EP that I'm working on with my band within the next couple of months, and then (I'm) going to start recording (my) Quiet Light album, which will be really nice because I've been writing that album for a year now. So I'm really excited to record more music ... and open a lot more doors.



Riya Mahesh poses in front of Shoal Creek Greenbelt with her guitar. Mahesh produces indie rock music while studying biology and math.

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## MEN'S BASKETBALL

## Texas back at full strength

Head coach Shaka Smart will be back on the sideline after a weeklong quarantine.

By Nathan Han  
@NathanHan13

Shaka Smart set the tone right out of the gate Monday in his first media availability since returning from testing positive for COVID-19.

In the first question, the Texas men's basketball head coach was asked how it felt watching the short-handed Longhorns lose to then-No. 24-Oklahoma while in isolation.

"Not very enjoyable," Smart said bluntly.

A somber and, at times, frustrated Smart said he experienced "significant symptoms" while recovering from COVID-19. He got out of isolation Sunday for the team's first practice with its full roster in 19 days.

The vast majority of the team was in quarantine or isolation at some point during that 19-day period, Smart said. One day, the head coach held a workout with only two players.

He emphasized a need to focus on the players' health — both mental and physical — as the NCAA and Big 12 Conference march forward with college basketball through the pandemic.

"There needs to be extreme consideration given to the total effect of everything on the players, student-athletes, where their minds are at, how they're doing with ev-



Head coach Shaka Smart speaks to the media on Nov. 12, 2019. Smart is returning to the sidelines for the team's Tuesday night game against No. 2 Baylor after self-isolating for a week due to COVID-19.

JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

erything," Smart said. "These guys have done such a good job just hanging in there and navigating through some challenging parts of this."

Senior guard Matt Coleman said he had to quarantine for seven days and then play just a few days after coming back from isolation. Red-shirt sophomore forward Brock Cunningham was allowed to be with the team during its last game against Oklahoma but had to watch from the bench as Texas lost.

Smart also said it's been a challenging few weeks for the players and there have been other obstacles the public is not aware of.

But as long as the team passes its final COVID-19 tests Monday, everybody, including Smart, will be back just in time for the No. 6 Longhorns' matchup against No. 2 Baylor on Tuesday at the Frank Erwin Center. The Bears have trounced every team they've played so far, winning by at least eight points in every game in their undefeated 16-0 season.

The quick turnaround from the first practice with the entire roster Sunday to playing the Longhorns' toughest opponent this season Tuesday doesn't faze Smart.

"We're in the Big 12," Smart said. "This is what you sign up for

when you come to play or coach in this league."

Texas' first matchup against Baylor on Dec. 13 was postponed due to COVID-19 issues within the Bears' program. Texas' last scheduled game against Kentucky on Jan. 30 was canceled after a Wildcats player tested positive for COVID-19.

As frustrated as Smart was discussing the past few weeks, the head coach expressed equally as much gratitude for the opportunity to get back to the court.

"It's easy to take something for granted if you get to do it every day," Smart said. "But if you go 19 days without having a full group to-

gether, then you get to be back, ... yeah, it's a very emotional and moving thing even just to be out there trying to get better at guarding the ball screen or transition defense or whatever it may be."

It's clear Smart's bout with COVID-19 and his time in isolation watching as his team floundered affected the head coach. But he said it was a "much longer conversation than we have time for now."

Instead, Smart is focused on Baylor despite the events of the past few weeks.

"We're just trying to roll with the punches, man," Smart said. "We're trying to do the best we can."

## TENNIS

# Longhorns battle inexperience in early season

By Nathan Han  
@NathanHan13

Heading into the 2020-21 season, the loss of two of the best players in college tennis lingered over the narrative surrounding the Texas men's tennis squad.

"In many ways, I think last year's team was perceived to be the Christian (Sigsgaard) and Yuya (Ito) show, plus a bunch of the freshmen," head coach Bruce Berque said.

Now, it's just the freshmen.

But the young and inexperienced group shook off the whispers surrounding the program early in the season. Texas started 4-0, topped No. 9 Florida 4-3 on Jan. 23 and jumped up the rankings to No. 4 in the nation.

Then, on Saturday, Texas fell to No. 6 Baylor in a close 4-1 match.

"We're good enough to have a chance to beat any team we play this year," Berque said. "I think we proved that when we beat Florida and battled tooth and nail with Baylor."

But the next day, the Longhorns barely squeezed by Arizona State 4-3. Berque had been preaching consistency to the team, who learned their lesson in Sunday's upset scare.

"We didn't approach the match the same way we did in the Baylor match," Berque said. "In that respect, I think our youth and inexperience



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Senior economics major Yuya Ito floats in mid-air during the USTA Futures tournament on Nov. 20, 2019. The team is currently 5-1 on the season, highlighted by a 4-3 win against then-No. 9 Florida on Jan. 23.

were apparent. ... We're not quite there yet."

The difference from day-to-day was most obvious in doubles, the first matches of the day.

Against the No. 10-ranked Baylor doubles team, Texas sophomores Siem Woldeab and Eliot Spizzirri won 6-4 to help the Longhorns clinch the doubles point. Then Woldeab and Spizzirri dropped to Arizona State's top doubles pair

in a 6-0 loss the next day.

"That should never happen," Berque said. "That's a reflection of those guys not approaching the match the same way. If there was ever a time to learn that lesson, it's doubles."

With Ito and Sigsgaard gone, it's now up to Woldeab, freshman Micah Braswell and Spizzirri to play top opponents match-in and match-out as Texas' top singles players.

With that responsibility comes a need for consistency, Berque said.

The good news for the Longhorns is that they'll have the opportunity to work on consistency Feb. 6 against Incarnate Word and Texas A&M Corpus Christi before the ITA National Team Indoor Championship comes the weekend after.

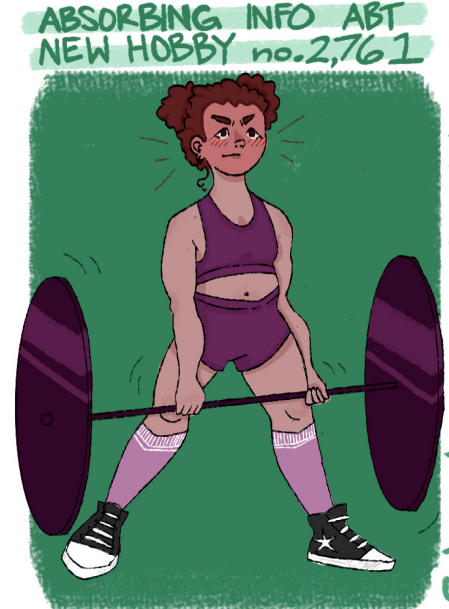
"It's got to look the same no matter who

we're playing," Berque said. "Sometimes it requires a loss for it to hurt enough to learn the lesson, so that's what I'm looking forward to see if we can approach these matches the same way we will in the Indoor Championships next weekend."

Lack of consistency and inexperience aside, one thing is clear from Texas' start to the season: The team has the

firepower to beat any team in the nation. After all, the Longhorns still are the defending national champions, however long ago that feels.

Texas will need every bit of that firepower against a stacked Big 12 schedule, with five other ranked teams to come in conference play, including a rematch against Baylor and a match against No. 3 TCU.



## Cartoon Cryptids



Rocky Higin

## BASEBALL

# 'Today feels like a fresh start': No. 9 Longhorns back practicing after long layoff

By Nathan Han  
@NathanHan13

After a layoff of almost 11 months, it's official: Opening day is less than three weeks away for the Texas baseball team.

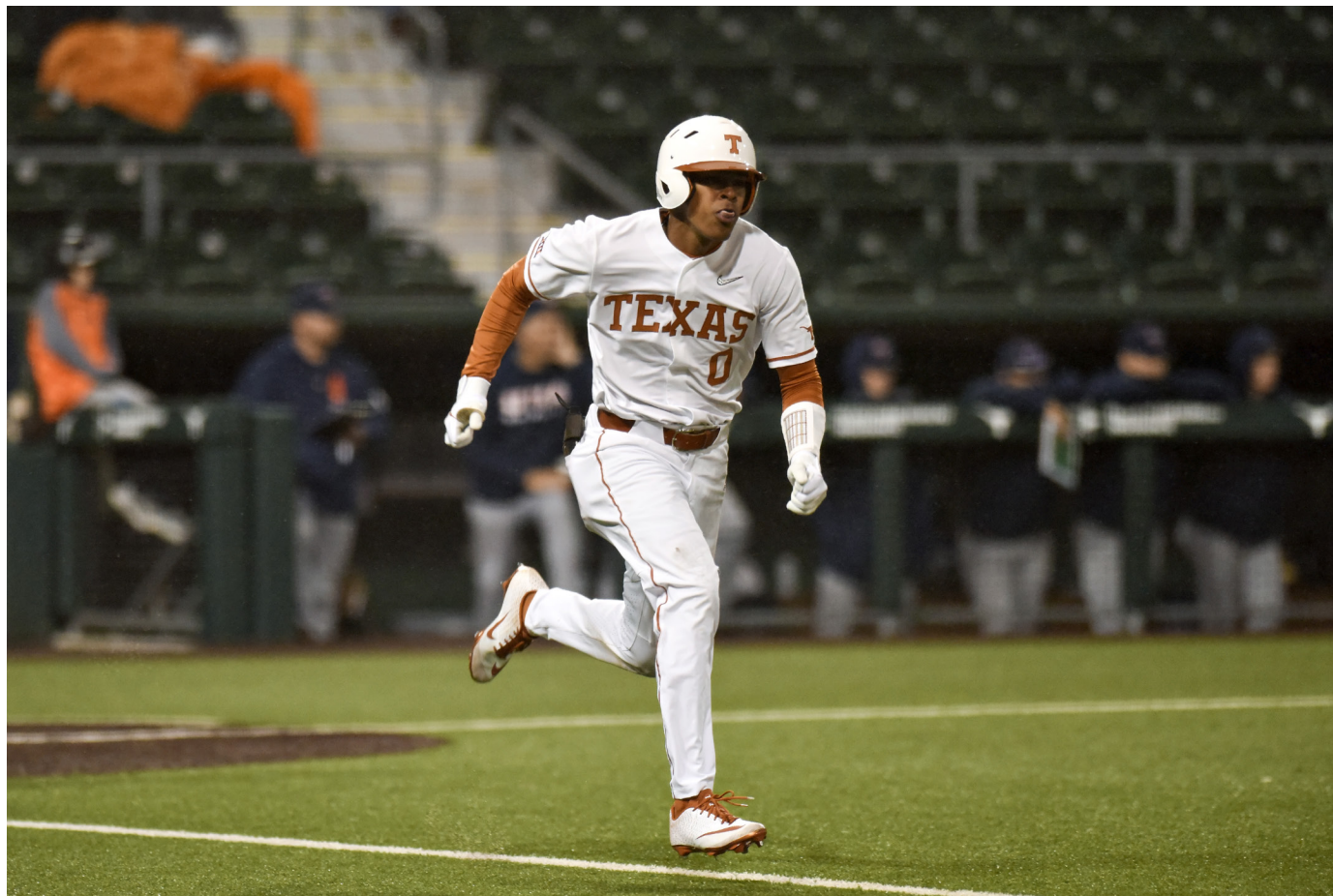
The Longhorns had their own "opening day" last Friday when they returned to UFCU Disch-Falk Field as a full squad for the first time this year. Last year's team started an impressive 14-3 before the season was shut down due to COVID-19.

"Today feels like a fresh start," head coach David Pierce said in a Jan. 29 preseason teleconference. "The one thing I was really impressed with the team is they look great. When they came back, they were in shape. I think you can really see their appreciation of coming back."

Texas was unable to return to practice over the summer, instead spending their time on Zoom calls that "started getting really old," Pierce said. While the team was able to get back on the field in the fall in limited fashion due to health and safety protocols, pitchers' arm health was one of the biggest issues after the extended layoff.

"The health factor tells us that for longevity, for our guys to have a shot to be healthy in April, May, June, we're going to have to be a little more cautious early on," Pierce said.

One player in that pitching group who Pierce said is ready for day 1 is redshirt sophomore Ty



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Sophomore shortstop Trey Faltine hustles down the first base line during a game against The University of Texas-San Antonio on Feb. 19, 2020. Faltine is one of the headliners for a Texas baseball team that was picked to finish third in the Preseason Big 12 Coaches' Poll.

Madden. Madden will take over the reins as the Longhorns' Friday starter after an impressive sophomore campaign and the departure of ace Bryce Elder to the MLB Draft.

After Madden and likely Saturday starter redshirt freshman Pete Hansen, the pitching rotation is still an unknown, with a mix of veterans and true freshman competing for the Sunday starting role and jockeying for

bullpen innings.

"We joke about us being the old guys and always talk about how we've seen a lot of some of these young cats," redshirt junior pitcher Tristan Stevens said.

Stevens might be listed as a junior, but the relief pitcher is in his fifth year of college. He's part of a group of Texas veterans that have been around the program for a long time and stuck around due to

the extra year of eligibility granted by the NCAA after last season was cut short.

Redshirt senior Austin Todd was last year's best hitter, according to Pierce, and the outfielder is in his fifth year as a Longhorn. Redshirt junior Zach Zubia will continue his power hitting duties from first base in his fifth year as well. Both of those players might have left Texas to go pro had the MLB Draft not been

shortened to five rounds.

"For us, it's kind of like we're soaking it all in," Stevens said. "Because of how the season unfolded last year, it can be taken away from you really quickly. That's what we're trying to let these (freshmen) know, like, 'You're here and I know we have these goals but enjoy it, enjoy each day because it can be taken away from you.'"

Texas will need Todd and each player it can get in a season where COVID-19 related absences are expected. But right now, the No. 9 Longhorns have their full squad intact and are looking forward to a daunting three-game series to kick off their season in Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, on Feb. 19 against No. 7 Mississippi State, No. 8 Arkansas and No. 6 Ole Miss.