

D Sports

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

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McGregor shelling out the cash

Montgomery's Milton McGregor is a well-known man for a number of reasons. Most recognize his name as a dog-track owner, and many people have varying opinions on the industry that has made him an extremely wealthy man.

However, he's certainly stepped up to the plate when it comes to aiding the cause of college basketball in this state.

Just last month, McGregor pledged the first \$1 million toward construction of a new basketball arena at Troy. The school's old Sartain Hall is considered both an eye-sore and the last major facility holding Troy back from becoming a major player on the Division I scene. Get 8-9,000 seats or so in an arena, and Troy will be able to attract some big-name non-conference opponents, or perhaps even more importantly, look far more attractive to Conference USA. Imagine Memphis coming to Pike County.

But Troy's not the only place McGregor has made a difference. Last week it was announced McGregor and his wife Pat have pledged the same amount to Auburn's new basketball facility. They pledged the money in honor of daughters Kim McGregor Brown and Cindy McGregor Benefield.

Construction on Auburn's \$92 million arena is to begin this summer and will include a practice facility, coaches offices, a museum for Auburn athletics and two food courts. Fans will also enjoy the ambiance of the new place, as they will be considerably closer to the action than they are at Beard-Eaves Coliseum.

There have been five so-called "recognized" preseason college football polls released thus far this year and the Southeastern Conference, as expected, is well-represented. Georgia, Florida, LSU and Auburn were all ranked somewhere, with the Bulldogs looking more and more as if they will be a likely selection for No. 1 when the Associated Press poll comes out in August.

The SEC has produced the last two national champions in Florida and LSU, with the Bengal Tigers being the only school to win the BCS championship game twice since its inception.

All told, almost half the league has a coach who has won some form of a national title. Les Miles, Nick Saban, Urban Meyer, Steve Spurrier and Phil Fulmer all wear rings signifying their respective accomplishments, and Mark Richt and Tommy Tuberville have SEC championship rings.

That may explain in part why an SEC team probably has a better chance to lose a game and still stay in the title hunt than teams from most other leagues. Last year, LSU became the first club to play for all the marbles after suffering two defeats, the last a home-field decision to Arkansas in game 12.

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Quote of the week, from Alabama's Saban, while speaking to a Mobile civic club:

"Everytime a Tide fan puts their head on their pillow they ought to hope and pray John Parker (Wilson) has a good year. The best chance we have to have a good team rests on the fact he's a two-year starter and he's improved and played with more consistency."