

Student athlete juggles sport, studies, 3 kids

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOZEMAN—Hey, college student-athlete, think dragging your weary tail out of bed for those 7:40 a.m. classes three days a week is drudgery? Try joining Taylor Pratt for daily 2 a.m. baby feedings.

Think figuring out how to

juggle classes, studying, practice and road trips is a colossal challenge? Try helping Pratt with his daily trips to day care, regular diaper changes and nightly bedtime stories.

Think you've got just enough time and energy to toss a TV dinner into the oven

after practice and before studying? Try playing sous-chef for Pratt, who cares for his three children after practice while putting dinner on the table for his wife, Jami, upon her arrival home from her full-time job at Bozeman's Wal-Mart.

"It's hard," concedes Pratt, a

21-year-old senior on the Montana State University men's basketball team. "I guess you just get used to it." At this point in life, there is no escaping the draining cycle.

Jami's job is necessary to pay for the diapers, groceries. Please see STUDENT /4B

Obesity surgery soars as people gain weight

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The adjustable band has been available in the U.S. only since 2001 but far longer in Europe and Australia where it is dominant. It accounted for 17 percent of U.S. obesity procedures in 2005.

A ring is placed over the top of the stomach and inflated with saline to tighten it and restrict how much food can enter and pass through the stomach.

Deaths from the procedure are only 0.1 percent compared to about 2 percent for gastric bypass. One recent study of Medicare patients found deaths a year after gastric bypass as high as 3 to 5 percent.

The band's reversibility makes it a better choice for children, some doctors say.

"It's becoming more well-known and more accepted. Patients like it because it's less invasive. It's an easier surgical procedure. It's safer," said Georgeann Mallory, executive director of the bariatric society.

"To me it is a very straightforward decision," said Dr. Paul O'Brien, director of the Centre for Obesity Research and Education at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. "I would strongly recommend that the consumer consider the safest effective procedure first," which is the band, he said.

American doctors have preferred bypass operations because they produce faster, greater weight loss. But new research by O'Brien and others calls that into question.

Combining results on

23,638 patients in 43 published studies, they found that bypasses beat bands for the first three years but were comparable after seven years, with excess weight loss of 55 percent for bypass and 51 percent for bands.

That impressed Dr. Edward Livingston, chief of gastrointestinal surgery at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and chief of bariatric surgery for the Department of Veterans Affairs national system.

"I really was not enthusiastic about bands until I came to Dallas from Los Angeles and saw the results from the group that I joined, which were quite good," he confessed. "What you can accomplish in a year with a gastric bypass you can accomplish in five years with a laparoscopic band."

Results would improve if Americans copied the Australians and included in the price of the band any future adjustments, Livingston said.

Glaucoma testing

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Awareness Month, EyeCare America, the public service foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology will offer free glaucoma eye exams. To see if you qualify, call 1-800-391-EYES (3937).

PlayStation ads disguised as graffiti

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA—The graffiti ads placed by Sony Corp. in several Philadelphia neighborhoods to advertise its PlayStation Portable game system have been painted over, apparently by members of the community, city officials said Friday.

The city and anti-bligh campaigners had protested the presence of the black-on-white cartoon characters riding the PlayStation like a skateboard, licking it like a lollipop or cranking it like a Jack-in-the-Box. The stealth marketing campaign has quietly popped up in San Francisco, New York and other large U.S. cities.

Philadelphia Managing Director Pedro Ramos, who sent a cease-and-desist letter to the company on Wednesday, said one ad was painted over as soon as it went up earlier in the week, and two others were painted over late Thursday or early Friday.

None of the work, he said, was done by city workers. In one instance, workers saw a man "who indicated he owned the property" painting

over one of the ads, the city said in a statement.

"While we were prepared to deliver on the threats in our letter to Sony, it is much more gratifying to hear that the solution came from the communities or the owners themselves," Ramos said in the statement.

The company did not respond to the letter or to a telephone message seeking comment, but a spokeswoman told Wired News earlier this month that Sony was hiring artists in seven cities—Atlanta, Los Angeles, Miami and Chicago were the others—to spray paint the pre-drawn designs.

The city could have sought modest fines allowed by city code or sued to recover any profit the ads produced. The Sony Corp. reported net profit of \$246 million for the quarter ending Sept. 30, when it shipped 2.75 million PlayStation Portables.

On the Net:

Sony:

www.sony.com/

Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight:

www.urbanblight.org/

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