

ILLINOIS FOOTBALL



Robert K. O'Daniell photos/The News-Gazette

Illinois quarterback Juice Williams begins his morning trek on the bus (above), and then it's a short walk (below) — with one of his three cell phones in hand — to class.

J U I C E

Juice Williams is the starting quarterback for an up-and-coming Big Ten program. He's also a loyal note taker in his Society and Leisure class, rides the bus on campus and loves the fish sandwich at McDonald's. The UI freshman allowed staff writer Bob Asmussen and photographer Robert K. O'Daniell to tag along for a typical spring day.

9:30 a.m.

You'd think the hotshot quarterback would have five-star accommodations. A flatscreen TV in his luxury apartment. Enough room to house his offensive linemen.

You'd be wrong. "This is our closet," Juice Williams says about the second-floor, Scott Hall dorm room he shares with Illini receiver Chris James.

Maybe it's because they are welcoming guests this morning, but the place is clean. Cluttered for sure, but tidy.

"We're not neat freaks," James says. There are the usual dorm room essentials: a television with the mandatory video game setup, two laptop computers, a minifridge and a microwave oven.

There are photos pinned and taped on the wall. The floor space is filled, mostly by a pair of twin beds.

Juice and James share everything: Food, drinks, clothes.

"We don't even separate our socks," James said. "We put them all in one bag."

"Anything he has, I can have," Juice says. "Anything I have, he can have."

The two have been friends since the sixth grade, when James' youth football team pounded Juice's squad 48-13.

"He said we had high school players on our team," James says. "I don't pay attention to that. He's just mad."

Juice and James have already booked an apartment for May, picking one out in February



before all the good ones were taken. The new place will be much bigger than the dorm room, which serves mostly as a place to sleep and store their stuff.

"We're not really here too much," Juice says.

Getting ready for another day of school, the two manage to stay out of each other's way.

Juice puts on a pair of long, blue Nike shorts and

a T-shirt that reads "Love what you do and do what you love."

This is one of the easy school days. Juice doesn't have a class until 10 and just two during the day. With spring practice starting, there is no 7 a.m. weightlifting session.

Waking up isn't always easy for Juice and James. They set multiple alarms. One missed day can mess up the year. Or, at the very least, get them in trouble with Illinois strength coach Lou Hernandez. Show up late for a workout and you have to spend more than an hour on the StairMaster.

And one missed bus ride can put Juice behind. Yes, Juice rides the free bus service from class to class. Though he has a car (a '95 Chevy Lumina), Juice parks it away from campus and only uses it to go shopping or back home to Chicago.

The buses, paid in part by student fees, stop every 10 minutes across from Scott Hall. Many times, Juice will chase the bus to catch his ride. Not today. He's actually a couple of minutes ahead of schedule.

The double bus, with a large hinge in the middle, is packed with students. Juice finds a seat and checks one of his three phones for text messages.

If they pick an All-American Text Messaging team, Juice will be at quarterback. He sends 50 to 60 a day and receives that many in return. He texts on the bus, in line at lunch and while waiting for the start of class. Some might question his throwing touch, but there is no doubt he has nimble texting fingers.

Please see JUICE, D-5

LOREN TATE: TATELINES

Busy Guenther still supportive



CHAMPAIGN — Illini sports peaked across the board in the school year of 2004-05.

They captured Big Ten championships in women's outdoor track and the male sports of wrestling, baseball, tennis and basketball (NCAA runner-up), took second in women's cross-country and men's gymnastics, and reached the NCAA Elite Eight in soccer.

Two years later, slippage is obvious and is in some cases distressing. "These things are cyclical," athletic director Ron Guenther said. "We've had an unusual number of injuries

More on colleges
Staff writer Paul Klee's weekly college basketball update, D-4.

And it's been a bad year from a behavioral standpoint, which is an institutional issue as well as a societal issue.

"We are just now getting into program reviews. In some cases, we are very young. Yoshi Hayasaki is rebuilding very quickly (finished fifth Friday in NCAA men's gymnastics). In other cases, like wrestling and men's basketball, we had injuries that handicapped our teams.

Please see TATE, D-12

TIM DAHLBERG: ON THE OLYMPICS

Have fund, Chicagoans



Landing an Olympics used to be a whole lot easier.

All it took was knowing who to bribe, finding out whether they wanted cash or Cristal, and being able to count to the magic number of votes needed.

Worked well for Salt Lake City, and Atlanta officials weren't above handing out a few trinkets to the right people, either.

Not coincidentally, those were the last two Olympics on U.S. soil.

Chicago will have to win the 2016 Games the new-fashioned way, without giving scholarships to the offspring of Olympic voters or lining their closets with luxury goods. Which is too bad, because there are people in that city who are awfully good at greasing the skids when need be.

Please see DAHLBERG, D-1



Zbigniew Bzdak/Chicago Tribune/AP

Former Olympians, from left, Cindy Rusher, Steven Maher and Kevin Bracken cheer the decision that Chicago will be the lone U.S. city that will vie for the rights to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.