

'Rocky' takes to the links

Aggie golfer to play Lopez

By SEAN PETTY
Battalion Staff

Texas A&M University may have its own female version of "Rocky" in golfer Rita Aguilar. Aguilar has accepted an invitation to play against Nancy Lopez, the hottest female golfer on the LPGA tour this year, and possibly the best golfer in history.

Much like the movie figure Rocky Balboa who took on the world heavyweight boxing champion in his hometown of Philadelphia, Aguilar will fly to her hometown of El Paso to play in front of her family and hometown crowd against Lopez. Yet, Aguilar is not the great unknown Rocky was; she is the current El Paso Women's City champion.

"I was really excited when I heard that I would get to play Nancy," Aguilar said. "It's a big opportunity and I'm honored that they asked me to play because it gives me the chance to see how the pros play and what it takes to make it on the pro tour."

"I first heard of the possibility that we would play in August. The people from the city (El Paso) wanted to have an exhibition match for the newly renovated Cielo Vista golf course as a promotional thing."

"I never thought that it would come about though because I knew how rough Nancy's schedule must be. Then in October, someone from the city called and asked if I could play this weekend. I told them that I would play if it didn't interfere with my playing for Texas A&M."

"I was really surprised that they got her because she does so many promotional matches that I didn't think she would make it. Plus, her price went up after she broke out of her slump, but they got her."

There's only one problem that stands in Aguilar's way: she must get herself and her clubs to Austin by Friday at 9:30 p.m. to catch her flight to El Paso.

"If you know anyone that is going to Austin Friday, let me know," she said laughing.

It is going to be a big step for Aguilar who has been playing only college golf. The task is made harder because Lopez may just be one of the greatest golfers to play the game, male or female.

Earlier this year Lopez won seven tournaments in a row, a feat that only she can claim. She went into a slump later but now has her game back winning major tournaments in Europe.

"I don't know," Aguilar said, "I think that the pressure is on

her. She is the one that has to beat the amateurs and all of the attention will be focused on her."

"But then there is going to be a lot of pressure on me because I'm going to be playing in front of my family and friends. I'm really nervous about that. Heck, they're selling tickets for three dollars a head out there."

Aguilar knows what competition and crowds are though, growing up with six brothers and three sisters, things can get pretty competitive.

She has recently had problems with her game and it seems to be the old get-back-to-basics approach that will solve her problem.

"I lost my feel for my swing," she explained. "You know it sounds simple that all you have to do is get the basics down again but it's really hard. My main problem was my takeaway from the ball. If you can't start right, you're going to have a hard time hitting the ball."

"I think I've straightened everything out pretty much this week and I've had some good rounds. Really all I want to do is play decently this Sunday."

Aguilar attributed her ability to get her game "back in the swing" to her coach, Kitty Holley

and Kay Don, women's athletic director.

"They really worked with me and helped me a lot and I am grateful to them," she said.

"Another person I owe a lot to is Bill Eschenbrenner (pro at the El Paso Country Club). He has taught me from the very start and knows all my weaknesses and tendencies. He also knows just what I am doing wrong and can usually tell me what's wrong without even seeing me play. He has helped over the phone and I don't know what I'd do without his help."

Aguilar will go to El Paso and stay through the Thanksgiving week.

"I'm really going to play hard Sunday because my whole family will be there (which is a gallery in itself). I am really going to play especially hard for my Dad. He doesn't get to see me play that much and I want to do well for him. My mother can manage to get away and see me play sometimes, but my dad doesn't have that chance."

So Aguilar heads back to the West Texas town of El Paso to play one of the biggest matches of her life in which she hopes to go the distance with the champion.

Raiders, Ponies hope for bowl

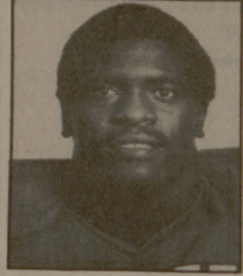
United Press International
LUBBOCK — Texas Tech, a pre-season pick as the Southwest Conference doormat, enters Saturday's contest with Southern Methodist somewhat less than a Cotton Bowl contender.

Nonetheless, the Red Raiders are supplying the SWC's top rusher, punter, and scorer at this point in the season and also sport its second-ranked players in pass interceptions and total offense.

But the Mustangs have a few leaders of their own.

average and tight end-turned-fullback James Hadnot already has stepped off 1,029 yards this year in eight games to top the rushing category.

Hadnot's 1,000-yard effort is the



James Hadnot

SMU will bring the nation's total offense leader and second leading passer, and the conference's top receiver, punt returner and interception leader to Jones Stadium.

Though a victory Saturday will not give either team a shot at the SWC crown, it could mean a bowl game somewhere for the winner.

The Raiders' Maury Buford, a Mount Pleasant freshman, leads the nation in punting with a 44.9 yard

best on the South Plains campus since Doug McCutcheon gained 1,068 yards in 1972. But the big 236-pounder from East Texas still has three games left. Those three Tech opponents—SMU, Houston and Arkansas—should provide some of the Raider's stiffest opposition, however.

Blade Adams, the Red Raiders' placekicker, is the top scorer in SWC with 58 points on 12 field goals and 22 extra points. He is nationally in field goal percentage.

Tech freshman quarterback Reeves, a hometown product, is second in conference total yards behind the nation's leader, Steve Ford of SMU. Alan Swann, a Tech freshman, is second in SWC in interceptions behind Mustangs' David Hill.

The Mustangs' D.K. Perry is the SWC in punt returns and second in kickoff returns. Ed Tolbert, Ford's battery mate, has more receptions this year than the closest conference competitor, fourth in conference scoring.

A crowd of more than 60,000 is expected for the 2 p.m. kickoff. Mustangs are 4-4-1 and 3-3-1 in conference and Tech is a surprise and 3-2.

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