

Aggie polo team finding success despite obstacles

by John Wagner
Battalion Staff

After the Texas A&M polo team won the state championship April 4, a half-page advertisement appeared in *The Battalion*, congratulating the team and informing the student body of the victory.

The ad was bought by a member of the team.

And when the team showed up to present its championship trophy to Dr. Zerle Carpenter, head of the animal science department, they found that he was out of town.

It's been that kind of year for the members of the polo team — not enough money, no proper

facilities and no recognition. But without the money, without the facilities and without the publicity, they have succeeded in establishing themselves as a national power in the world of collegiate polo.

No small feat for a team that doesn't even enjoy the financial security that comes with varsity status, and yet has one of the highest budgets of all of Texas A&M's extramural clubs.

The members will say that it's pride that keeps them going. And pride that keeps the team winning, despite all the financial obstacles that stand in its way.

Their reasons for learning and playing polo are as diverse

as their backgrounds.

Larry McClure, the club president, is one of the four players who competed in the state championships. By his own admission, he doesn't have a good polo background.

"I was raised on a ranch, and when I first started playing polo, I said, 'You're not going to get me in one of those little saddles,'" McClure said.

But now the senior from Colorado City says it's his ranch-style raising that benefits him most.

"Your horse makes up a big majority of the game, and if you feel comfortable on that horse and if you can ride a horse well, then of course you're going to be a better polo player," he said.

John Cole's background is a tad more traditional. The sophomore from Greenwich, Conn., grew up around horses, but not on a ranch.

"I used to show horses, and I was on the United States Equestrian team when I was 16 years old," Cole said. "We were getting ready to go the Olympics and I just quit — I just got bored with it."

"I had done just about everything that had ever been done on a horse, and one day my father suggested to me that maybe I could get into a really fine college if I played polo."

Cole came to Texas A&M after meeting polo coach Mike McClery at the stables where he worked. McClery and several members of the Aggie team

were in Connecticut for the intercollegiate championships, and McClery persuaded Cole to head for College Station.

In March, the Aggies finished third in the intercollegiate championships, losing to the University of Connecticut. Both McClure and Cole say members of the team surprised themselves as well as the other teams participating.

"When we went up there, they didn't expect us to have a good team at all," McClure said, "and we kind of fooled ourselves and them."

UC defeated the Aggies in the last two minutes of the game, only to lose in the finals to California-Davis.

Cole and McClure predict good things for Texas A&M polo in the future, but both say the club has many problems to overcome before it can concentrate on growing.

The cost of keeping horses and traveling to matches is expensive, and much of the money comes from the players' own pockets. And the club's facilities for practicing and keeping horses aren't as good as they could be, the players said.

But the polo team goes on, and they are doing right well, thank you, Cole said the team just needs a little support.

"If we could get some support from the university, there is no doubt in my mind we could be number one in the nation next year."



Team members John Cole and Larry McClure and polo coach Mike McClery present their state championship trophy to Dr. Zerle Carpenter, head of the Department of Animal Science.

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Fernandez tops No. 4 seed at TAIAW event

Lili Fernandez of the Texas Aggie women's tennis team defeated the No. 4 seed at the Texas Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women state tournament Thursday in Fort Worth.

Fernandez, a junior, advanced to today's quarterfinal round by upsetting Lori Nelson of TCU 1-6, 7-5, 6-3. Texas A&M teammate Amy Closs lost to Susan Gerrell of SMU 6-4, 6-4 in another match Thursday.

Aggie coach David Kent said the victory was well-deserved.

"That was a big win when Nelson beat her time they played," Kent said. "She's in real good shape now."

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Argentine battles illness, heat to advance in tennis tourney

United Press International
HOUSTON — Second-seeded Jose-Luis Clerc, Argentina's No. 1 player, for the second day fought off more than his opponent to advance in the \$300,000 River Oaks International tennis tournament.

Battling a sinus problem aggravated by Houston's traditionally heavy humidity, Clerc Thursday defeated Poland's Wojtek Fibak, 6-2, 6-3.

The previous day, after upsetting local favorite Sammy Giammalva, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, Clerc said, "I feel bad. I'm really sick. I'm in a lot of pain."

Clerc complained of perspiration and error-ridden play Thursday. He was ahead of Fibak, 5-1, in the second set when he lost concentration and allowed the Pole to win two games, making it 5-3.

In the ninth game of the second set, Fibak had four consecutive break points before Clerc pulled out the win.

Top-seed Ivan Lendl used his powerful serve to defeat Ricardo Ycaza of Ecuador, 6-0, 6-4, and seeds No. 4 Peter McNamara, No. 6 Eddie Dibbs and No. 8 Andres Gomez also advanced.

Lendl broke Ycaza in the first, third and fifth games of the first set, playing well from baseline to baseline. He relied on nine service aces and seven service winners in the second set to overcome a spate of errors.

Lendl got his only service break in the second set with the games tied 2-2. Down 40-love, Lendl hit four straight winners and Ycaza then made an error to lose the final point of the game.

In the 10th game, down love-30, Lendl reeled off two service aces and two service winners to take the match.

Dibbs of Miami Beach, Fla., beat Gianni Ocleppo of Italy, 62, 7-6. The second set saw back-and-forth efforts throughout. Ocleppo pulled to the lead 3-2, then Dibbs won three straight to make it 5-3. Ocleppo then tied it at 5-5, and each won one game to make it 6-6 and require the tie-breaker. Dibbs took the tie-

breaker 11-9.

Gomez bested Rod Frawley of Australia, 6-2, 6-3, and maira of Australia, 6-3, 6-3. Erick Iskersky, 6-7, 6-3.

In other WCT action today, Elliot Teltscher of Florida, beat Steve Denton of Texas, 6-3, 6-3. Denton said he was lucky on some big points and said he was bothered by the slick surface.

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Bruins defeat Quebec on last-minute goal, 4-

United Press International
Ray Bourque would agree that when it comes to playoff goals, the latest is the greatest.

"That has to be the biggest of my career," the Boston defenseman said Thursday night after scoring with 55 seconds to play in regulation to give the Bruins a 4-3 victory over the Quebec Nordiques in Game 1 of their Stanley Cup quarterfinal series.

"I've scored in the playoffs before, but nothing like this."

Boston's stylish defenseman whistled a 30-foot wrist shot past

goalie Dan Bouchard after picking up a puck in the slot and faking around Quebec defenseman Andre Dupont.

The winning play began when Rick Middleton steered the puck out of the corner to the slot area, where linemate Bruce Crowder deflected it to Bourque, who did the rest.

"That was a masterful goal," said Boston Coach Gerry Cheevers. "A goal that a superstar gets. It was just a super play."

The Nordiques, who ousted

the Montreal Canadiens in the first round, led until 9:10 of the game. Then Steve Duchene took Keith Crowder's shot around defenseman Steve Duchene, Hoganson and slid a shot in a horn that the Canadiens tied the score 3-3.

In other playoff games, New York Rangers defeated New York Islanders 5-4, and Vancouver edged Los Angeles 3-2.

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