

# Women's soccer team aims for higher ranking

By JAN PERRY  
Sports Writer



Photo by PETER ROCHA

Kristine Spense attempts to block a kick by Beth Daane during a women's soccer team scrimmage Wednesday night.

Texas A&M's women's soccer team is expected to have another good season in '84 — youth and inexperience aside.

The team is in its second year of the mandatory, two-year trial period that all newly admitted teams to the NCAA's soccer program are required to have.

They were admitted into the NCAA on a Varsity II level status beginning last year.

Prior to last year, the women's soccer team was categorized as an extracurricular sports club. The main difference between the two categories is that the team now meets the NCAA's minimum requirements and is eligible to compete in NCAA tournaments.

However, as a Varsity II level team, the players cannot receive athletic scholarships.

Laura Johnston, A&M's newly hired women's soccer coach, said she sees scholarships being offered to her players in the near future.

"It's just a matter of time," said the Austin native. "A number of people support soccer down here. I know I'm certainly dedicated."

Johnston says the same can be said for the rest of the team.

"Their dedication is absolutely wonderful," she said. "Since they're non-scholarship players, they're not being paid to play."

"Texas A&M is a good school that's academically tough," Johnston said. "It's asking a lot of them to play."

The coach said the team got off to a late start in practice this year because of her hiring. She's trying to compensate for that disadvantage by working the players extra hard in conditioning and skills training.

For additional practice, the players will scrimmage against men from the University, Johnston said.

"It will be my first time to see them all playing together on one side," she said. "What I've seen in their practice games with each other shows they're dedicated."

"I'm excited about the team. The girls are very coachable," she added. "They really give it their best effort."

The Aggies' season begins Sept. 22 with a game against Trinity University in San Antonio. They'll then go to South West Texas State University in San Marcos.

The team will also participate in

three tournaments this season in the University of St. Louis, Colorado College at Colorado Springs, Colo., and the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Fla.

Coincidentally, Central Florida was the last team Johnston coached for before coming to A&M.

"It's kind of neat to go back home," she said. "I hope we get to play them."

The two universities are destined to play each other in the finals of the tournament if they both win their respective elimination games.

Johnston said it is too early to predict how the team will perform this season. However, she did say the team was at a slight disadvantage because of their lack of playing experience together as a team.

She said the women are working hard together to make a strong, co-

hesive team. But this is difficult because of their small roster of 16.

"It'd be nice to have 18-20 (players) for depth and some insurance against injuries," the Johnston said.

In an effort to build up her squad, Johnston said she is still allowing tryouts for the team.

Johnston said because of the close-knit atmosphere, there aren't any prima donnas on the team. She said that's great from a coaching standpoint.

Overall, Johnston said she is excited with the team and that she is trying to better last year's excellent record.

Last year, the team finished 13th in the NCAA. Twelve teams went to the playoffs.

Johnston hopes that her dedicated squad will erase last year's bitter disappointment.

## Art contest deadline extended

The first annual Great Battalion Sports Art Contest judges are still in the process of opening the thousands of entries received so far. Because of the incredible response by our faithful readers, the entry deadline has been extended until Friday, Sept. 7, at 5 a.m.

The subject of the contest is to draw your ideal Aggie football player. Remember that the only restriction in the contest is that your masterpiece be on a white legal size paper and drawn in black ink. No crayons please.

The winning entry will be published in The Battalion next week. The winning artist will also receive the coveted B.G. Rodgers trophy.

Please mail or drop off entries in person to — The Great Battalion Sports Art Contest, The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas, 77843.

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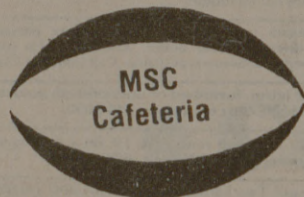


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