

Tuesday, September 12, 1989

Ags drop to No. 22 after weekend upset

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

SEATTLE (AP) — Texas A&M dropped seven spots to No. 22 in the Associated Press poll yesterday after a 19-6 defeat by the University of Washington.

Washington coach Don James, whose 1984 team finished runner-up to national champion BYU, was happy after his team's season-opening victory Saturday.

But he said experience has showed him that rankings are only important at the end of the season.

"It's a little bit early to worry about polls," James said. "If we would have lost, we wouldn't have been ranked."

He said it was understandable the nation's voters took notice of Washington. A&M defeated Louisiana State in its own opener

the previous week.

"We beat a highly visible team that had a great win under their belts," he said.

When Washington State beat Brigham Young last week, first-year coach Mike Price jokingly suggested the Cougars deserved to be ranked No. 1 because they were the only 2-0 team in the nation.

Yesterday, Price's Cougars were 23rd in The Associated Press college football poll.

"I'm disappointed," he said tongue in cheek. "Our 24-hour ranking as No. 1 didn't come through Friday."

Price took over a Washington State team that went 9-3 and beat Houston in the Aloha Bowl last season under Dennis Erickson. Erickson left after

See Poll/Page 8

Lady Ags see action

By Richard Tijerina
Of The Battalion Staff

For the Texas A&M Lady Aggies volleyball team, it's been a case of home sweet home.

At least for now.

Texas A&M, who has played at

Lady Aggie Update

- **Today:** A&M plays the Sam Houston State LadyKats tonight at 8:30 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.
- **Record:** 1-3.
- **Next game:** Buckeye Invitational in Columbus, Ohio on Sept. 15-16. A&M plays Iowa State at 5 p.m. Friday, with Saturday's consolation and championship matches set for 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. (CST).

home for the first two weeks of the 1989 season, finishes a five-match homestand tonight against Sam Houston State in a 7:30 match at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

After tonight, the Lady Aggies hit the road to compete in the Buckeye

Invitaional Sept. 15-16 in Columbus, Ohio.

The Lady Aggies (1-3) won second place in last weekend's Reebok-Hampton Inn Invitational. Yvonne Van Brandt and Krista Hierholzer were named to the all-tournament team, with Van Brandt claiming Most Valuable Player honors.

Van Brandt broke Chris Zogata's career school-assist leader Friday night. With 164 assists so far this season, Van Brandt now has 2,996 assists during her career at A&M.

The Lady Aggies hold a 20-4 edge in the series with Sam Houston State (5-5), including their last three.

A&M Coach Al Givens, who used several of his less experienced players in last weekend's tournament, said he isn't afraid to keep experimenting until he finds the combination that will win.

"Depth isn't a problem this year," Givens said. "We want to hurry up and find a lineup that we can go with from here."

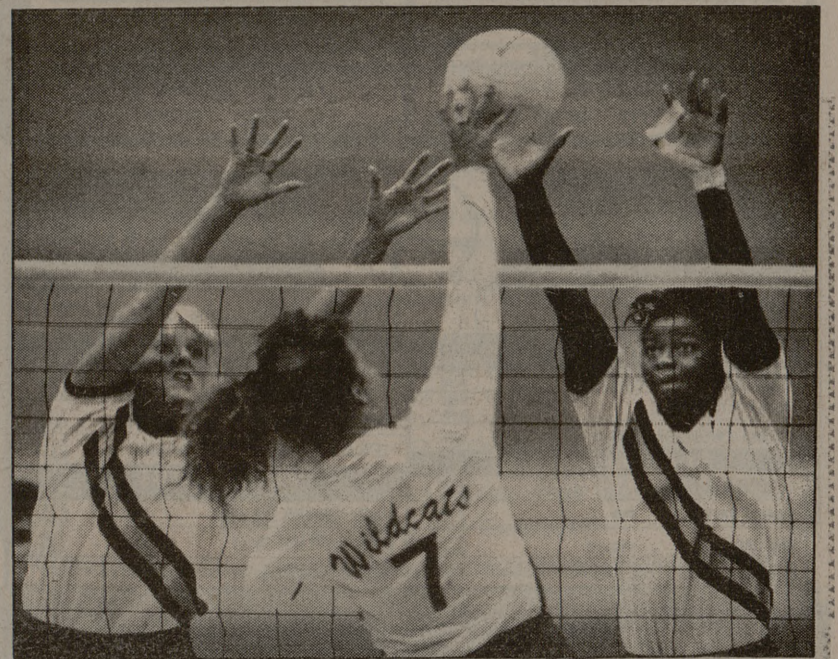


Photo by Jay Janner

Krista Hierholzer and Monika Daniels will try to get the Lady Aggies on the winning track against Sam Houston tonight.

John McEnroe may be back, but does the tennis world care?

Yes world, Mac is back.

It was a little more than ten years ago the young tennis star who had pimples and a red bandana around a big haircut emerged from out of the pack to become the sport's next dominant player, causing the early retirement of Sweden's Bjorn Borg.

Ten years later, John McEnroe finds himself in a similar position — fighting to emerge from a pack of talented players to become the sport's next No. 1.

In his two-year hiatus from the sport, which he took because he needed time off from tennis to raise a family and attend some Los Angeles Lakers games, tennis suffered — no longer having McEnroe to criticize or marvel at.

Wimbledon now seemed boring, and tennis was without its loudest champion.

But in his absence, new stars emerged. Ivan Lendl, McEnroe's longtime bridesmaid in the early 1980s, matured and has been the sport's top player since 1985.

Boris Becker, the wunderboy from West Germany, came out of nowhere to capture three Wimbledon championships and one U.S. Open



Richard Tijerina
Assistant Sports Editor

Stefan Edberg, when consistent, became one of two dominant players from Sweden. The other was Mats Wilander, who had the No. 1 ranking last year but has since suffered from "McEnroitus" — premature burnout from the game of tennis.

Now McEnroe's back, or so they say.

He actually has been back for two years, but has been beaten so badly by so many average players that some are wondering if he can ever recapture the form that made him so good.

In his first two years back from his sabbatical, McEnroe's game suffered.

First-round losses at the U.S. Open. Second-round losses at Wimbledon. Injuries. Temper tantrums. McEnroitus. McEnroitus. McEnroitus.

But this year has been a pivotal one for McEnroe. He won three tournaments and saw his ranking soar to No. 4 — his highest since he quit tennis in 1985. He has lost only five times in 1989.

Coming off his third tournament victory of the year in Indianapolis, his hopes were high coming into the Open.

But a second-round loss to the 114th best men's player in the world gave McEnroe a shot of reality: Though he's advanced far in his comeback to regain the No. 1 ranking, he still has far to go.

He's regained most of the serve-and-volley game that made him so dominant, and he's even regained the anger that made him a genius on the court.

But McEnroe has somewhat mellowed with age and fatherhood, and now he must seek the consistency that will allow him to

play well against the Lendls, Beckers and Edbergs.

Surely, he has seen the future of men's tennis — and it does not include John McEnroe.

At 30, his competitive playing days are nearing their end. He will get even better, and his doubles championship in this year's Open, the first championship of any kind in a Grand Slam event since 1984, suggests he's on the verge of being a Grand Slam force again next year. All he has to do is stay healthy.

Jimmy Connors, like his former fiancée Chris Evert, is ready to retire. Connors has to know the writing's on his wall when trainers now must feed him fluids intravenously after matches.

Lendl too is approaching the age where he's going to become beatable. Becker's triumph over him Sunday was the first danger sign.

Wilander has vanished from the game. He's admitted he's bored with the sport and

that he only prepares for the Grand Slam tournaments. Goodbye, Mats.

Edberg is young, talented and ready to become a dominant force.

Becker is young, talented and *already* has become a dominant force.

That leaves a couple of young Americans to pick up the slack from aging heroes McEnroe and Connors — Andre Agassi and Michael Chang.

Agassi, the stonewashed wonder who had such a dominating year in 1988, and Chang, who became the youngest French Open champion in history in 1989, are major forces in the game.

But they're not even old enough yet to be watching *twentysomething*, and are a few years away from realistically beating the top players consistently.

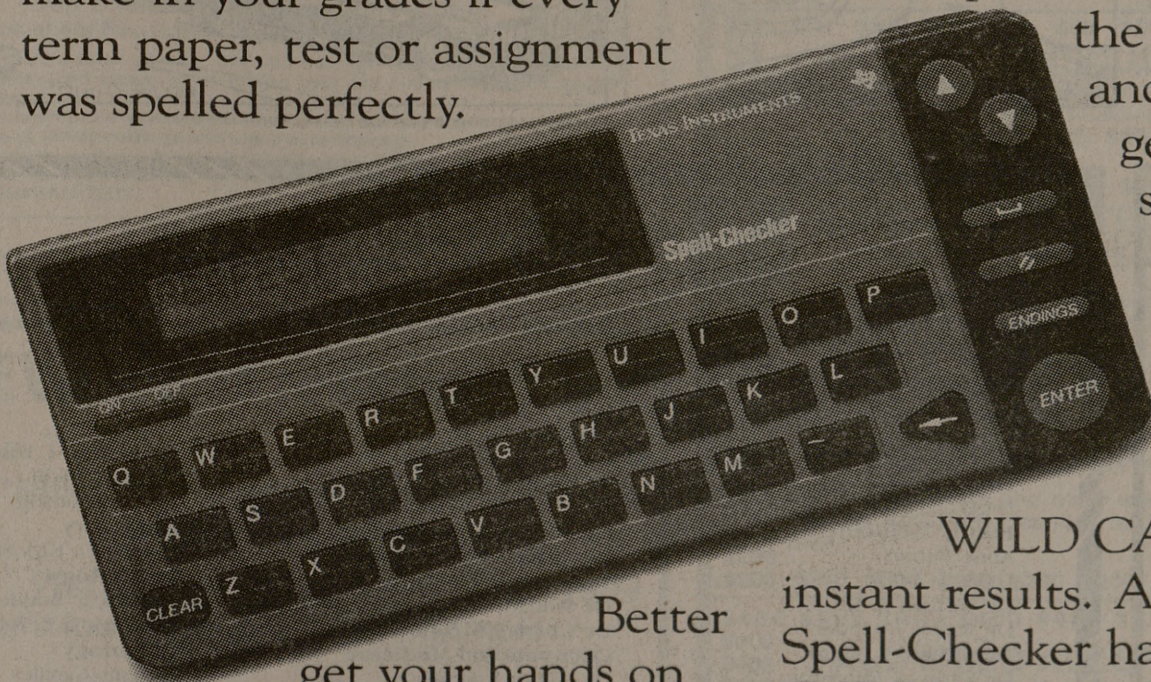
McEnroe may be back, but he's learned a harsh lesson: Although the tennis world missed him while he was gone, they didn't wait for him. Now, it's ready to leave him behind.

Where have you gone, Bjorn Borg?

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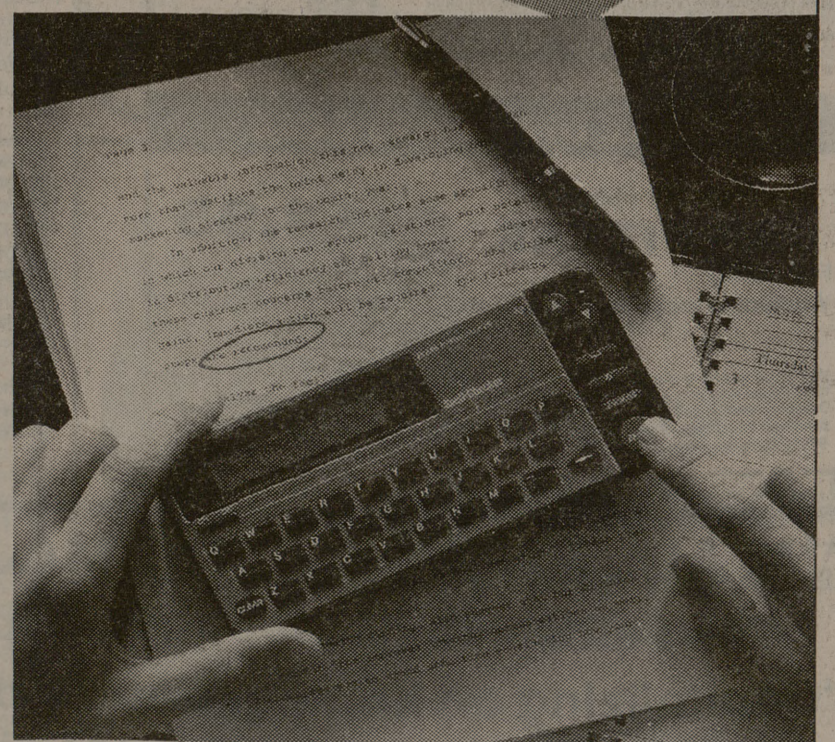


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