

Even better than last year?

A&M Consolidated ready to build on 1989's runner-up squad

Associated Press

The coach of undaunted A&M Consolidated says his team's first game of the new season Friday night should be an early indicator for chances of erasing last year's near miss.

More than a thousand other Texas high schools open the 1990 football season this weekend.

Coach Ross Rogers says A&M Consolidated hopes to make up for last year, when it won 14 straight games before being shut out 14-0 by Chapel Hill in the state 4A championship game.

The Tigers are ranked No. 1 among the state's Class 4A teams in the Associated Press high school pre-season Top Ten. Running back Cliff Groce and quarterback Tommy Preston are among 15 returning lettermen.

A&M Consolidated opens at nearby Navasota, a longtime rival and ranked No. 3 among Texas' Class 3A teams.

"We're just 20 miles apart, so it's a good rivalry," Rogers said. "They're peren-

nially tough in Class 3A; they would match up with most 4A teams across the state.

"They've got a lot of quickness and skill players. Defensively, they run to the ball real well."

Chapel Hill plays at Henderson in the only other game matching members of the Top Ten. Chapel Hill is ranked second and Henderson eighth in 4A.

Additional top-ranked teams are Aldine in 5A, Vernon in 3A, Groveton in 2A and Thorndale in 1A.

Aldine plays at Houston Madison Saturday, Vernon goes across the Red River to play Altus, Okla., Groveton hosts Coldspring and Thorndale journeys to Franklin.

For other Class 4A teams with title aspirations, the bad news is that Rogers considers his A&M Consolidated team better than last year's team was at the same time.

"We feel good about where we're at, and no doubt we're ahead of where we were this time last year," Rogers said.



"It's just a question as to how much better we'll get," he said. "Last year, we didn't have a lot of confidence at the start of the year, but once we started winning, we kept getting better and better. "It seemed we improved immensely from week to week. The question is

whether this year we can continue improving week to week, like we did last year."

A 235-pound tailback, Groce ran for 1,722 yards and 14 touchdowns last year. Preston, a 6-2 and 190-pound quarterback, threw for 1,683 yards and 10 touchdowns a year ago. He added 488 yards and eight touchdowns rushing.

In the first day of fall practice, Preston suffered a separated shoulder and didn't get back in pads until Wednesday.

Aldine Coach Bill Smith has 19 lettermen back, including five offensive and seven defensive starters from his team that took a 14-1 record into last year's state championship game with Odessa Permian.

Permian returns only two starters from its championship team, but still is ranked No. 4 in Class 5A.

Running for 1,650 yards, Aldine running back Derrick Johnson was all-Greater Houston last year.

Center Travis Coleman, also all-Greater Houston last season, and tackle

Roderick Jordan, who was all district, head the Mustangs' offensive line.

On defense, Smith has six players back who were all-district a year ago.

A year ago, Chapel Hill was one of the Cinderella teams of Texas schoolboy football.

The Bulldogs had only a 5-4 record after nine games and finished only second in their district, but won their last seven games, capping off the season with the victory over A&M Consolidated.

Henderson, this week's opponent, is the last team to have beaten Chapel Hill. Henderson won last year's game, 22-6.

"I don't think we could have picked a much stronger team to start against," Chapel Hill coach Dickey Meeks said.

Meeks has 16 lettermen back, including eight offensive and four defensive starters.

Meeks' biggest returning star is running back Kendrick Bell, who rushed for 1,737 yards and 23 touchdowns last season. But Bell won't play against Henderson, said Meeks.



Richard Tijerina
Senior Sports Writer

Johnny Mac's Open comeback a true success story

John McEnroe has turned the comeback disappointment of the year into the biggest story of the U.S. Open.

McEnroe, tennis' angry version of *thirtysomething*, is poised to make his first Grand Slam finals appearance for the first time since 1985. He's one match away.

Not seeded at this Open and ranked 20th in the world, McEnroe is playing better than he has in the last five years.

Somehow, somewhere, McEnroe has found in the past two weeks the biting serve, the touch serve-and-volley game and the desire that has eluded him since 1985.

Frankly, 1990 has been one year the former No. 1 player in the world would rather forget.

He was kicked out of the Australian Open for throwing one too many temper tantrums. Then he skipped the French Open because of a back injury.

Next came Wimbledon, the tournament his game is made for and the one he's won three times. But he lost in the first round — his earliest exit there since 1978.

But something strange happened as he made his way through the U.S. Open draw. He kept winning.

McEnroe has earned his semifinal appearance. He didn't lose a set in his first three matches and has eliminated two seeded players — No. 10 Andre Chesnokov and No. 7 Emilio Sanchez.

All that stands in the way of the final is Sampras, a 19-year old from California with a booming serve and powerful groundstrokes.

It won't be an easy match for McEnroe — Sampras beat him in the Canadian Open just last month.

But McEnroe pointed out that he's playing much better now than he was then. And he said the New York crowd gives him the energy he needs to play well.

McEnroe knows that at 31, he won't be around for too many more Opens. And he'll be playing someone that he said may be the next great player in tennis.

"There aren't that many out there who play like me," McEnroe said after his quarterfinals win over David Wheaton. "They're all big hitters these days. But I'm sure that soon there'll be a young guy who comes up that'll play my kind of game."

"Tennis is that way. I'd like to say he won't play as good as me, but I'm sure pretty soon you'll see a bigger and better version of John McEnroe."

He dominated Wheaton in the quarters. And if he continues playing the way he has, he'll make mincemeat of Sampras. That will give him a finals opponent of either Boris Becker or Andre Agassi.

And whether he wins the Open or not, it doesn't matter. Mac is back. For how long, we don't know. But his improbable path through the tournament has become exactly what he's wanted to do these past five years: a true comeback.

Simon says stretch?

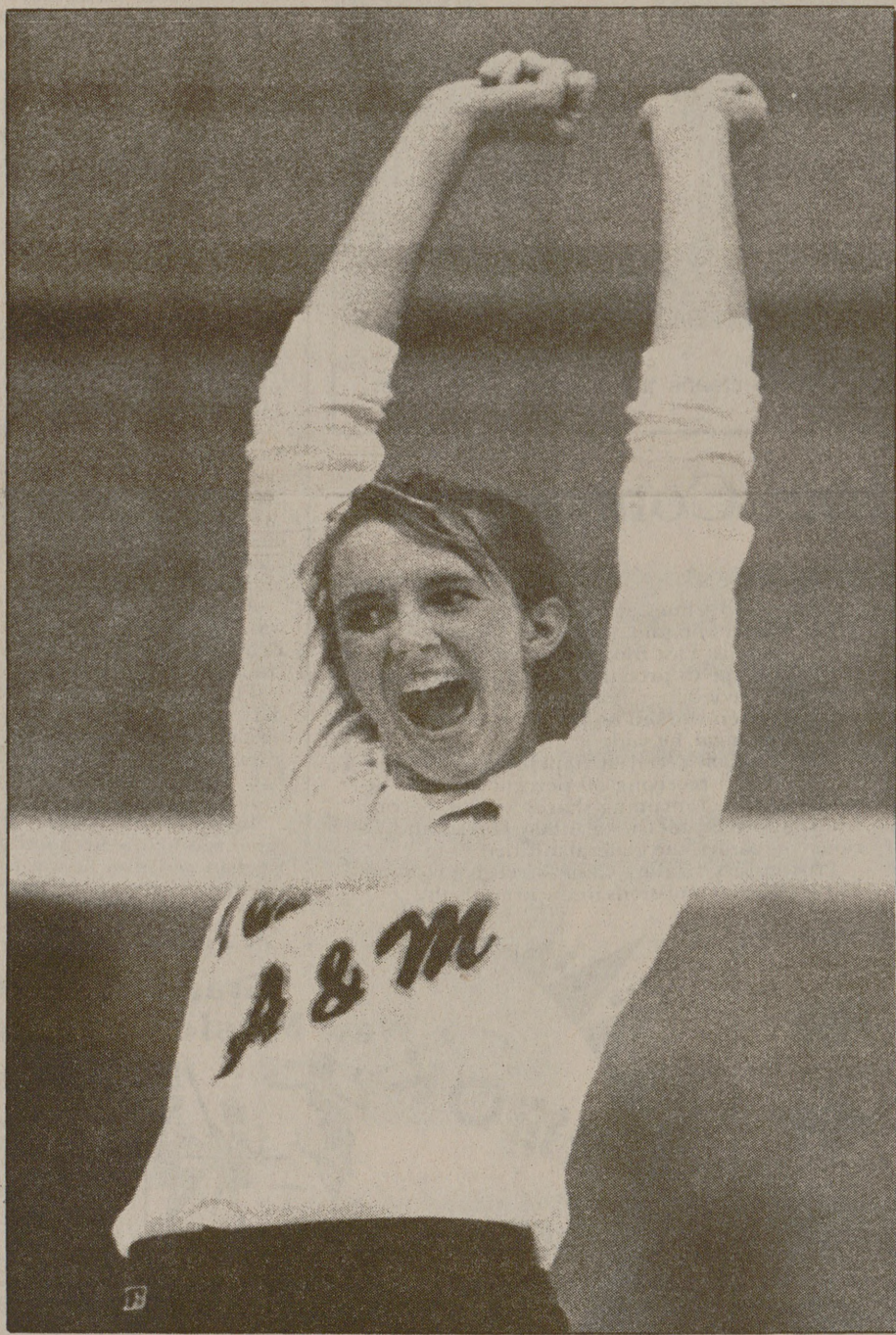


Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

A&M volleyball player Amy Cumings reacts to a kill in last weekend's match against Hawaii. The Lady Aggies will be at home this weekend in matches with North Texas and Idaho at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

See volleyball advance /Page 9

Becker, Agassi roll U.S. Open down to four

NEW YORK (AP) — Andre Agassi put on a show of blast-away tennis to set up a fiery match against Boris Becker in the U.S. Open semifinals.

Agassi, hungry for his first Grand Slam, chewed up Soviet Andrei Cherkasov 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 Thursday night.

America's top player and the leader of the pack of young sluggers on the tour, Agassi, 20, walloped deep shots relentlessly and kept Cherkasov on the defensive in every set.

Cherkasov beat baseliner Michael Chang in the third round. Agassi took every opportunity to charge the net and kill the ball on the run.

Agassi took a 4-2 lead in the first set. He finished the set with a service winner to take the game at love.

It was more of the same in the second set and third, Cherkasov breaking Agassi a few times but Agassi coming right back with his relentless assault.

"He has powerful groundstrokes. I think

the best in the world," said Cherkasov, a 20-year-old born on the Fourth of July. "He was too good. He was always quicker and quicker. I feel tired."

"I wanted to stay disciplined and discourage him early," Agassi said.

Becker, the defending champion, took a slower approach in winning, awakening from a first-set stupor after a flare-up at the umpire, then breaking down Aaron Krickstein's one-dimensional baseline game.

After winning 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3, Becker smiled slyly and said his chances of capturing his first Grand Slam title this year were "pretty good," now that Ivan Lendl has followed top seed Stefan Edberg out of the tournament.

Becker predicted a long match against Agassi.

"He puts so many balls back. You have to run down so many balls," Becker said.

Asked to forecast the outcome, Becker said, "6-4 in the fifth set for me."

Mavs' Tarpley given two years' probation

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas Mavericks forward Roy Tarpley was put on two years' probation Thursday for driving drunk in Dallas last year — an arrest that led to his third suspension from the NBA team.

Tarpley was arrested Nov. 15 on a north Dallas freeway and charged with driving while intoxicated and resisting arrest. His trial was to start Monday in Dallas.

Charges of resisting arrest were dropped after Tarpley's guilty plea to the DWI charge, Dallas County Criminal Court Judge Mike Schwillie's court coordinator said.

Mavericks spokesman Kevin Sullivan said the probation would have no impact on Tarpley's status with the team, because Tarpley has already served a 33-game suspension following his arrest.

Tarpley was suspended in 1987 again in 1989 for drug use. He has undergone treatment and has since tested negative for drug or alcohol use.

Tarpley returned to the team Jan. 22, was suspended again for two games in April after missing practice.

He averaged 16.8 points and 13.1 rebounds in 45 games last season.

Aggie Spotlight: Sheila Morgan

THE WAITING G...A...M...E



Photo by J. Janner

Sheila Morgan has been impressing Coach Al Givens so far this season.

Lady Ag Morgan getting chance to shine in 1990

By SCOTT WUDEL
Of The Battalion Staff

The waiting is the hardest part. Sheila Morgan has been playing the waiting game for almost two years. Until last weekend's match in Hawaii against the second-ranked Rainbow Wahines, she hadn't competed in a single volleyball match as a Lady Aggie.

Morgan was forced to sit out her freshman year to recover from a knee injury suffered when playing basketball in high school. She spent last year rehabilitating and waiting to make her collegiate debut in an Aggie uniform.

Coach Al Givens didn't hesitate to put

Morgan in the starting rotation in the first match of the season.

"Physically, Sheila is fine," Givens said. "In fact, her left knee that was injured last year is tested stronger than her right knee, and she's becoming a little more confident competing each day."

Morgan said her first match was an interesting experience.

"I went out on the court at Hawaii and said... whoa!," Morgan said.

She eased into the two matches and was glad to be on the court again after spending day after day last year watching the rest of the team practice.

"At first I thought it (not competing) was a relief. See Morgan/Page 9

Friday, 8
PENN STATE FROM THE BIG 11
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