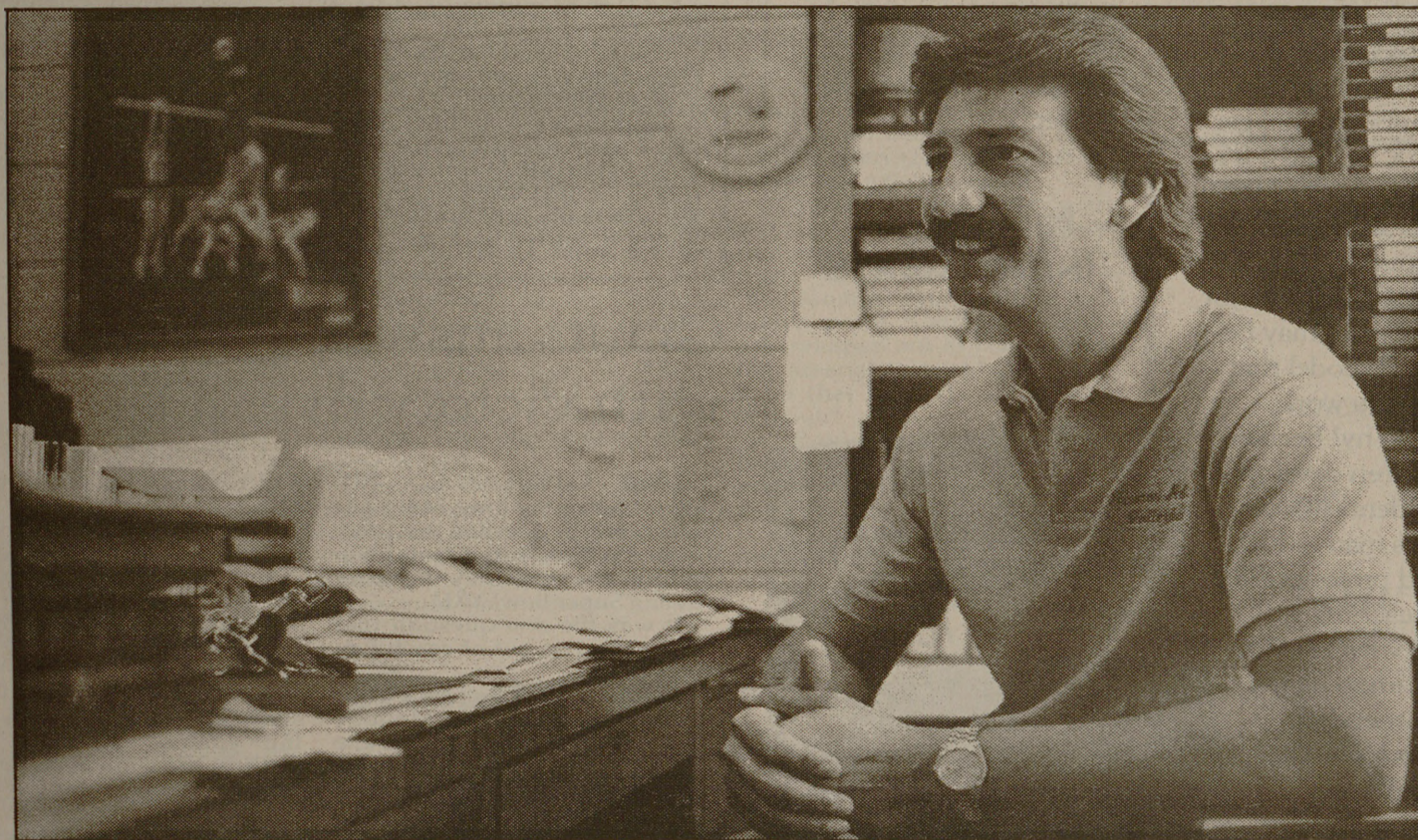


Bringing class to the court

Givens hopes Lady Aggies will learn from past experiences

by Scott Wudel
The Battalion



KARL STOLLEIS/The Battalion

The Texas A&M volleyball team already has begun to learn from its mistakes, just three games into the 1991 season.

After a disappointing third place finish in the Texas A&M/Holiday Inn Invitational this past weekend, the Lady Aggies are ready to start the season all over again.

Texas A&M volleyball coach Al Givens believes his young team had the talent to easily win the tournament, as did his players. But it didn't happen that way. Now they must find out what went wrong and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Givens and most of his team have been down this road before. Last season the Aggies hung onto long matches against nationally ranked opponents only to finally give in. But the coach knew his team was learning from that experience too.

Now the Lady Aggies, one win and two losses into the season, must take some of those lessons to the court.

Most of Givens' team returns from last year. But he said that doesn't necessarily guarantee success on the court.

"We do have experience coming back, but we have to be realistic," Givens said. "We graduated a four-year starter and a

A&M volleyball coach Al Givens has high expectations for the Lady Aggies in the 1991 season. A&M hopes to bounce back from a

disappointing 1-2 start last weekend. They face Lamar tonight and North Texas tomorrow night at G. Rollie White Coliseum at 7 p.m.

three-year starter. I think its going to take a few matches for people to step in and fill those positions.

"But as far as talent and general athleticism, this team has a lot to offer the program."

Givens lost one of his best outside attackers, Amy Cummings, and his four-year setter, Krista Hierholzer, to graduation. Now he must ask some of his younger players to step in.

But Givens is not without experience in his lineup. Seniors Alysia McMath and Sheri Hermesmeyer return, as does pre-season all-Southwest Conference selection Elizabeth Edmiston. The tri-captains will be expected to lead a young bunch of Lady Aggies onto the court every gamenight.

The coach is also expecting sophomores Amy Kisling and Kim Mitchell to find their full potential and add it to the

A&M effort every match.

Givens said he needs his two seniors to stay consistent while Edmiston must stay healthy to lead the team through a 17-match September and a tough conference race in October.

"One of the reasons we scheduled 17 matches in September was because we knew we were going to need that many to help give us the chance to mature a little bit and also to help us prepare for the

SWC race," he explained.

The Lady Aggies finished fourth in the conference last year, and are expected to do the same again this season. But Givens and his team have higher conference hopes this time around.

"We feel we're capable of moving up if not two notches, at least one," he said. "Our goals are to finish in the top three."

Givens' team must battle a consistently ranked Texas team as well as Houston and Texas Tech in order to move up. But the Lady Aggies want to extend this season into the playoffs.

Givens said this season's schedule won't be as demanding as the one last year, which handed A&M an 18-19 record. The team will still face its share

"If we get as good on the court as we are in the classroom, we're going to be awesome - and I've told our players that."

Al Givens
A&M volleyball coach

of nationally ranked teams, but the coach is confident in the Lady Aggies' chances for greater success.

"One thing I feel real good about is that our players never quit, they never give up," he said enthusiastically. "They work extremely hard."

"If we get as good on the court as we are in the classroom, we're going to be awesome - And I've told our players that."

The Lady Aggies will get their chance to bounce back from last weekend's disappointment tonight against Lamar at G. Rollie White Coliseum at 7 p.m.

"We have the offensive power to be real successful," Givens said. "If we can get the chemistry correct, if we can get consistent, and if we can minimize our unforced errors, we'll be successful."

"They are more determined than ever to be real successful Wednesday night."

McMath rotates volleyball, school and marriage during A&M career

Senior learns from several of life's experiences

by Michelle Bergeron
The Battalion

Alysia McMath loves challenge both on and off the volleyball court.

The senior tri-captain for the Lady Aggie Volleyball team has many responsibilities this fall, yet, one sets her apart from the rest of the girls on the team. Not only is she an athlete and a student, but also a wife.

The newlywed admits that this fall is definitely more difficult than any of her previous years here at A&M.

McMath said the key to her success is time management.

"I really have to focus in a lot more on the court because I have more responsibility being a wife, student, and an athlete," she said. "What's important is determining my time schedule and really getting my studying in, and in addition, making my husband happy."

Her husband is working in Baytown, so the newlyweds will be apart this fall. She said this makes her responsibilities here a little easier, yet, it's really hard on the young couple.

"It's tough, but it's a challenge we've set before us, and I know we'll see it through," she said.

Alysia says she sets her private life aside when she is on the court and is totally focused on volleyball.

"Sometimes it's really difficult to do that, but you need to because everyone is fighting for a position on the court," McMath said. "And the one who wants it most is going to be out there."

This aggressive attitude is a great characteristic to possess in

her role as a team leader. As she embarks in her fourth year on the Aggie court she realizes she will carry a heavier load of responsibility. But she said everyone, including the incoming players, have their own responsibilities.

"I have to show leadership, along with Elizabeth, Sheri and Ray," she said. "We have a lot

plined.

Along with setting a good example McMath said it is also very important to encourage the underclassmen.

"We all stick together as a team and we help them because we've all been freshman and we know where they are coming from," she said.

McMath's experience is very helpful to the underclassmen though she admits she has several areas in her game that need improvement.

"I don't think of any part of my game as a strong point, so I really want to improve on everything I do, just because I see a lot of niches that can be fined out," she said.

One of these niches she wants to focus on is defense, which she admits she loves to play.

"I'm really aggressive and it's such a challenge to try to figure out where they are going to hit the ball," McMath said. "It's like Coach (Al Givens) always says, defense is an attitude."

Coach Givens also has some high expectations for McMath.

"What I would like for her is to have a consistent year—consistently hit for high percentage and consistently lend leadership as one of the Tri-Captains," he said.

McMath wants all this too, along with the winning the Southwest Conference.

"Even though we have a pretty young team, we seem to have a fire going in each of us," she said.

"Sometimes we might get a little bit scrappy, but it's these times we need to pull together as a team and remind ourselves that we are Texas A&M and no one is going to beat us."

It's this attitude that keeps Alysia McMath a challenge to all life's other competitors.



KARL STOLLEIS/The Battalion

Lady Aggie Alysia McMath faces many challenges while at A&M including school, volleyball, and marriage. McMath is a senior outside attacker and tri-captain for the A&M team.

more responsibility on this team because we've been here longer and we know the rules. We need to strive to be successful in those rules and show a lot of discipline."

This comes fairly easy to McMath, she said, because she grew up in a home that was very disci-

Edmiston important part of Aggie puzzle

Junior remains focused on team concept

by Chris Whitley
The Battalion

For all of the preseason accolades bestowed upon Texas A&M volleyball player Elizabeth Edmiston, she manages to take everything in stride.

"I'm not so concerned with my own personal (honors)," Edmiston said.

"I'm more interested in where the team is going."

As a new year dawns for the Lady Aggies, Edmiston, recently named to the preseason All-Southwest Conference squad as a junior, will play a large role in A & M's chances for success this season.

"She somehow finds a way to win," said head volleyball coach Al Givens. "She's a true competitor. She wants to win in the worst way."

Last year, Edmiston showed off her talents by racking up 1007 attempts which not only led the team, but also was the tenth-best season attempt total in Lady Aggie history. She was second on the team in kills, and played in all but one game out of 37 despite having back problems.

Considering all this took place as a sophomore, it is easy to see why Edmiston is so highly regarded.

Yet despite her many awards and her publicity, she never fails to stay focused on her primary objective - being part of a team.

"We're just one big family," Edmiston said. "We all care about each other. It's not just a 'for 3 hours in the gym, we have to be friends' type situation. We do a lot together on the court, as well as off."

One thing can definitely be said about Elizabeth, she is not a flash in the pan. She has been a force to be reckoned with on the volleyball court since her seventh

grade year in Kingwood, Texas.

In high school, she was picked Texas' "Miss Volleyball", placed on All-State teams twice, selected MVP in her district twice, received state academic honors, and made the "Fabulous 50" in Volleyball Monthly magazine.

And even with all of her credits, she nearly gave it up to pursue her first love, swimming.

"I planned on swimming in college, but it got to the point where I burnt myself out on it," she explained. "I was tired of being in the pool.

Despite being a volleyball and a scholastic success, she refuses to let that put any pressure on her.

"When I step on the court, that's the furthest thing from my mind," she said. "There could be pressure, but I'm not concerned with that."

Elizabeth has a clear, unwavering focus, not just on volleyball, but on life, in general. Its with this intensity she hopes will put the Lady Aggies on top of the SWC.

"I've always had real high standards for myself academically," she said. "In high school, B's weren't acceptable. I'd set myself with that standard, and I know what it takes

to get there."

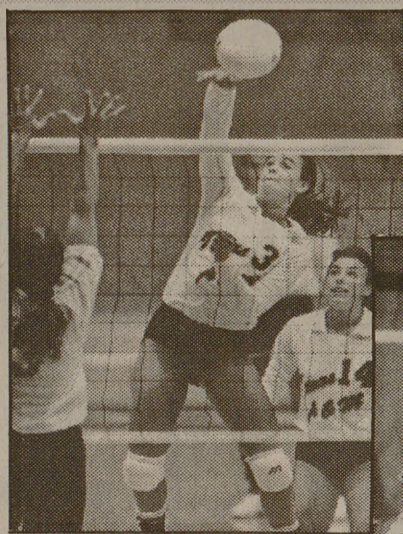
Elizabeth has her priorities in line, though. She is an honor student at A&M with a major in kinesiology-exercise technology. In high school she had a 97.4 grade average.

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Elizabeth Edmiston was named to the preseason All-SWC team for her all-round play on the court.

photos by Karl Stolleis