

Texas Tech fails while Houston sails

This was supposed to be the year that Texas Tech would finally rise from the ashes and actually have a chance to play in Dallas on New Year's Day.

With the most talented quarterback in the Southwest Conference, an All-American safety poised to eclipse Kevin Smith's career interception record, and a homespun head coach with as much charisma as football savvy, the Red Raiders were expected to join the John Mackovic-led Texas Longhorns in challenging Texas A&M and bringing credibility back to the SWC.

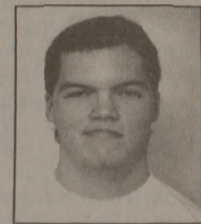
Three games later, the same people who read those sunny forecasts are left scratching their heads, wondering if there is another Texas Tech out there that they do not know about.

Tech has stumbled off to a 1-2 record, with both losses coming on television, just to make sure that everyone gets to see the conference's new kids on the block get knocked off the curb.

The folks at ESPN might have been more than a little perplexed with their inaugural Thursday night game back on Sept. 3, when they carried the Tech-Oklahoma game from Lubbock. They promoted it as a meeting between promising up-and-comers and a team trying to learn a new offense.

As it turned out, Tech head coach Spike Dykes had his head on a swivel as OU quarterback Cale Gundy burned the Raider defense with a pass-

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DON NORWOOD
Sports Writer

Abolishing the stereotype

A&M junior Mitchell proves athletics, academics can mix

By DON NORWOOD

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

For many people, the term "student-athlete" is a major contradiction.

The ratio of stories about Proposition 48 casualties and junior college flunkouts to those of All-Academic team members is more than two-to-one. Sadly, that is a sign of the times.

Or is it? In the case of Texas A&M volleyball player Kim Mitchell, the student-athlete label is taken literally.

Attending A&M on an academic scholarship, Mitchell, a middle blocker for the Lady Aggies, possesses enough awards from on and off the court to fill up several trophy cases. The most recent of these came last weekend, when Mitchell earned her second All-Tournament team appearance of the season after the A&M/Holiday Inn Invitational.

When added to her ever-growing accumulation of academic honors, it is not hard to see that Mitchell is truly enjoying the best of both worlds.

"I take pride in both of them," Mitchell said of her endeavors in the classroom and in the gym. "They're both very rewarding."

Rewarding indeed. Mitchell has picked up at A&M where she left off at Marshall High School, where she was valedictorian of her graduating class. Her near-perfect grade-point ratio of 3.98 is the highest of any female athlete, she received the GTE Academic Excellence Award for 1990 and 1991, and earned a spot on the 1991 GTE/Southwest Conference Volleyball Academic Honor Team.

But that's not all. Mitchell was as versatile as they come at Marshall, participating in volleyball, basketball and track. After winning the Class AAAAA state championship in the triple jump, she received substantial playing time as a true freshman two years ago, with a .284 hit-

ting percentage that was good enough for fourth in the conference.

Last year, she ended up seventh in the SWC in block average, and nudged her way into A&M top ten career rankings in total blocks and block assists.

After taking in that exhausting list, many might think that Mitchell has things pretty well in hand. But that is not the case.

"(Success in) volleyball is not too easy," Mitchell said. "I've really had to work for it."

Perhaps the biggest challenge for Mitchell was shifting her focus from three sports to just one, a transition that she said has turned into a beneficial one.

"It's really much better," Mitchell said about playing volleyball exclusively. "I can focus myself on one thing. And I don't have to worry about hurting myself and missing other sports."

"She had no club experience coming in," A&M head coach Al Givens said. "She played three different sports in high school. Even her first year here she played volleyball and ran track."

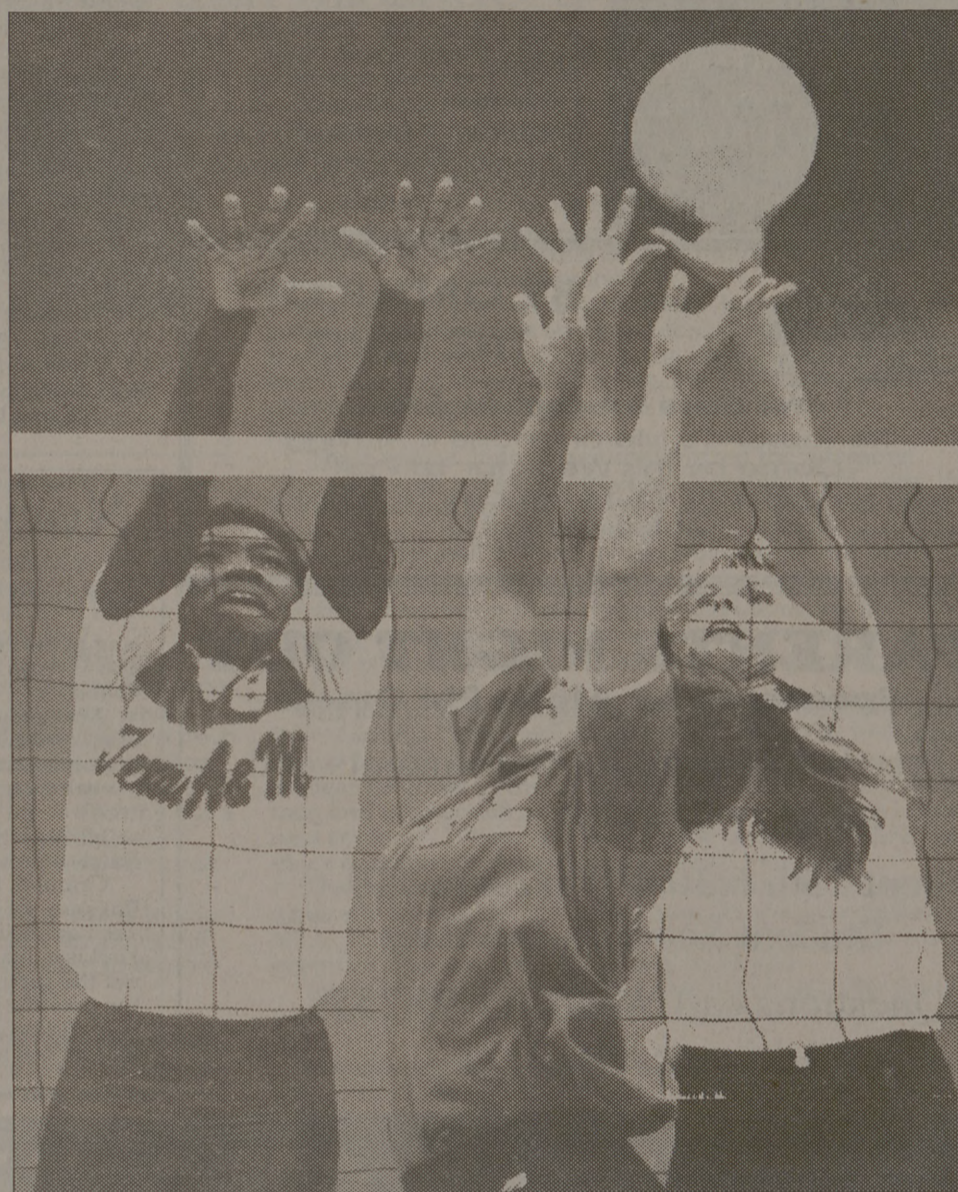
"She's made some good strides because she's bright."

Her brightness has forced Mitchell into some tough decisions, though. Her academic responsibilities, including a membership in the Beta Gamma Sigma honor society, demands almost as much time as volleyball does, making for occasional conflicts of interest in her schedule. Especially because although she is a true junior athletics-wise, she is classified as a senior academically and is quickly approaching graduation.

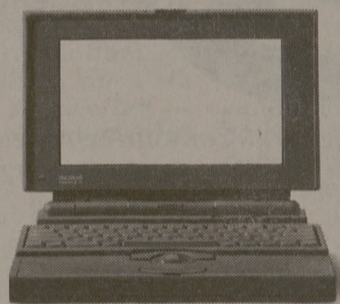
"I want to be in both places, but I can't," Mitchell said. "I'm close to graduating, and it's decision time job-wise. But Coach (Givens) has been good about it and totally supportive of it."

"You just have to find a way to deal

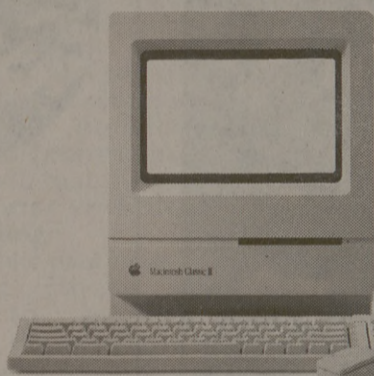
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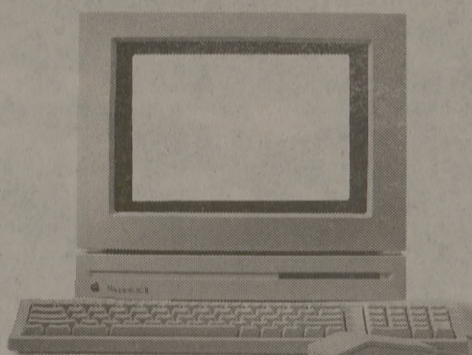
A&M junior Kim Mitchell (left) goes for a block with teammate Karen Richards during a win over Sam Houston in 1991. Richards is an accounting major who is attending A&M on an academic scholarship, and proudly carries an overall 3.98 grade-point ratio.



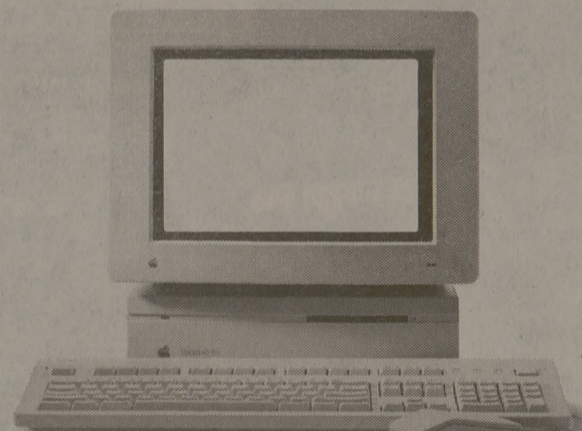
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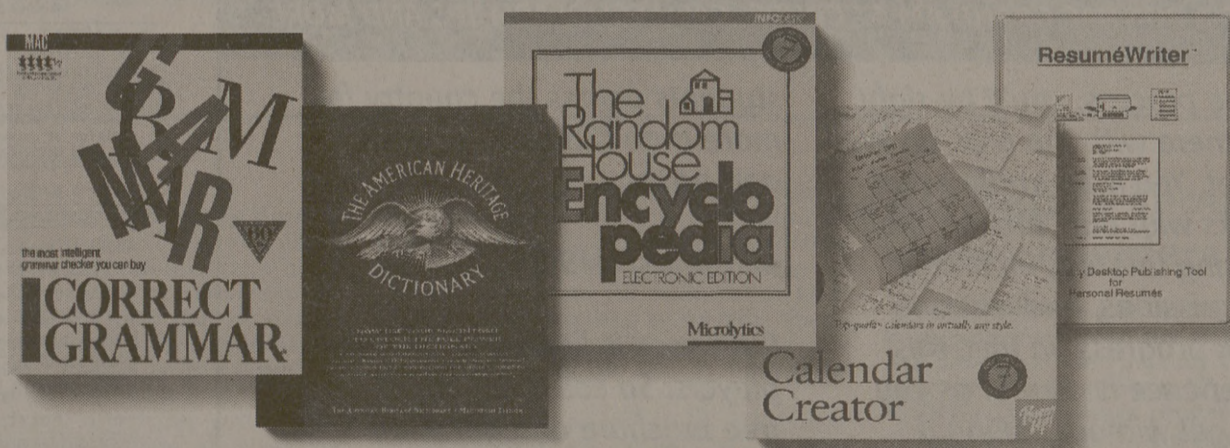


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