

1993 should be Aggies' real shot at national title

In all probability, Texas A&M could finish this season 12-0, go to the Cotton Bowl, and if they win, will be one of only two or three undefeated teams in the nation.



J. DOUGLAS FOSTER
Sports Editor

Yet, in all probability, the Aggies aren't going to win the National Championship. Not this year.

But, A&M fans need to realize one thing: There is no need to get disappointed if the Aggies don't bring home the big prize in 1992. This, in all likelihood, was not even supposed to be THE year for the Aggies.

Knowing that Washington and Miami are more than likely both going to finish the season undefeated, and will not meet in a bowl since the Huskies are stuck in the Rose Bowl, they could both win their bowl game and be 12-0. Even if Alabama lost and Miami came to the Cotton Bowl and lost to the Aggies, Washington, if they won the Rose Bowl, would get the vote of the AP writers. No matter how badly the Aggies beat the Canes, the Huskies would still get the nod.

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24th-ranked Houston fights off surge by A&M

By DON NORWOOD

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

It took season-best performances from three players coming off of the bench for the Texas A&M volleyball team to scare Southwest Conference-leading University of Houston to death.

But the 24th-ranked Lady Cougars reacted to that scare like they knew their SWC title hopes depended on it, coming from behind in the fourth game to defeat A&M 15-17, 15-9, 15-8, 15-13 Wednesday in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The trio of A&M outside attackers Diane Robertson, Jennifer Bronner and Andrea Williams, all three part-timers, made up for their lack of time on the court this year in a big way against Houston. Robertson demolished her career record of nine kills in one game with a game-high 16. And though their statistics didn't show it, the latter two were on the positive end of several key sideouts, particularly in game four.

But that same game saw the Lady Aggies flame out in a hurry. After A&M sprinted out to a 12-5 lead, Houston used near-perfect blocking to pull out a win and finish off one of the most emotional matches of the year in College Station.

"I'm disappointed that we didn't take it to five (games)," A&M head coach Al Givens said. "If you have 13 points, you need to get those next two. It was sort of a deja' vu of what happened against (Texas) Tech."

A key difference between last night's match and the Oct. 21 home loss to Tech was A&M's blocking. The Lady Aggies had five on 14 attempts, with only three errors compared to Houston's five. And all of that came despite losing middle

blocker Kim Mitchell in the third game to an ankle injury.

"I really thought it was our team defense that got us in a position to win," Givens said.

"I thought our blocking was better this time. Kim was our hottest hitter, then we lost her near the end of the third game. That hurt a little bit, but Andrea Williams came in and did a good job."

Another key figure in A&M's defense was Genny Wood. The junior outside attacker led all players with 19 digs, and was particularly effective in the fourth game, one in which both teams seemed to be relying solely on instinct.

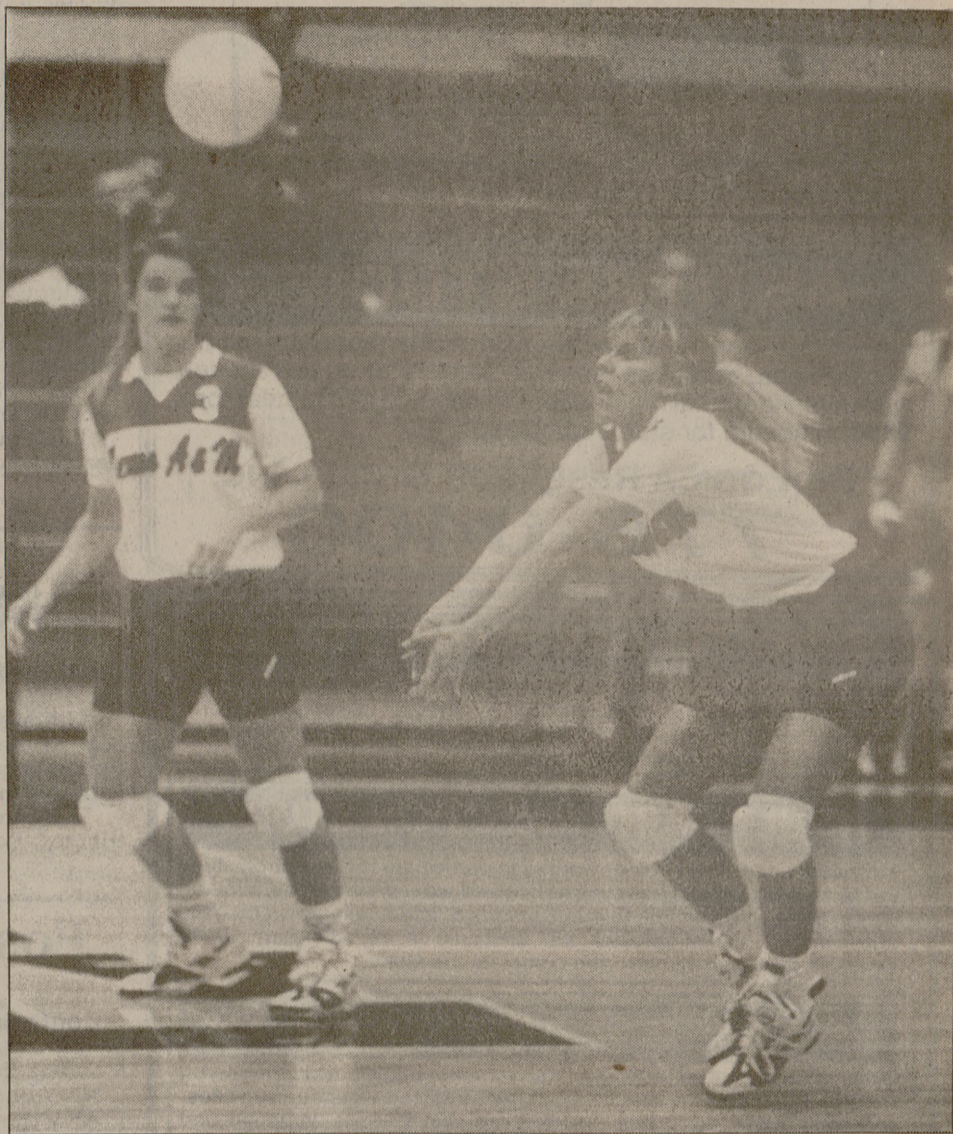
"I think our passing and defense was probably some of the best that we've played," Wood said. "In the first game, we did a good job of coming back. Just knowing that we could come back against a team like Houston helped. They just turned it on and knew what they had to do."

Houston head coach Bill Walton said that A&M's defense turned out to be the key difference this time around.

"They played great defense tonight," Walton said. "(Hitter Karina) Faber is the kills per game leader in the conference. But it seemed like they were playing pepper out there. (Hitter Janelle) Harmonson is our third best player in kills per game, and she couldn't get a kill down."

One player who had no problems with getting her kills down was Robertson. After entering the match early in the first game, the 6-1 senior performed with enough fire to play the rest of the match and tie with Houston's Ashley Mulkey for the lead in kills.

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A&M's Karen Richards returns a serve against the University of Houston as Elizabeth Edmiston looks on during the Cougars four-game victory Wednesday night. The Lady Aggies will now travel to California this weekend to compete in the Cal-Poly Classic before returning home next week to host Baylor.

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