

SPORTS

Friday, April 2, 1993

The Battalion

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A&M assistant knows secrets to Final Four

Next Monday night the supreme team in college basketball will be crowned king in the New Orleans Superdome.

The fabulous foursome of Michigan, Kentucky, North Carolina and Kentucky will battle to sit in Duke's departed throne.

While Cinderella is not dancing at this year's annual ball, she was eight years ago.

The Villanova Wildcats stormed into the Final Four as an underdog. Not only did they have to deal with the heavily-favored Georgetown Hoyas, but also with the media.

A&M assistant basketball coach Mitch Buonaguro was there for the crush.

"It was a time when you have to zero in on preparation," Buonaguro said Thursday. "It is hard to deal with fanfare, but we were used to it because we played in the Big East."

"Rollie (Massimino) did a good job of keeping our minds focused. That is difficult to do."

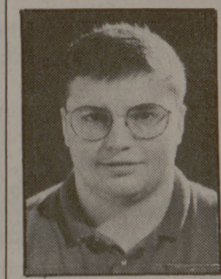
Buonaguro was an assistant for Massimino in 1985, and after the Wildcats beat Memphis State in the national semifinals, they had to prepare for a team that had already beaten them twice in the regular season.

"After we beat the Tigers, everything intensified," Buonaguro said. "But Rollie kept us focused on Georgetown, and he had us extremely prepared to beat Georgetown." Which Villanova did by a score of 66-64. The Wildcats' victory was considered the greatest upset in the history of the NCAA tournament.

"I had some anxious moments during that game, especially at the end," Buonaguro said. "We were up by two at the end and Gary (McClain) fell down. I thought they would call traveling, but they didn't."

"I looked up at Rollie and saw we were going to win and be national champions."

Most experts say a team needs to enter the NCAA's on a hot streak to claim a national championship. But Villanova disproved that theory.



MICHAEL PLUMER
Assistant Sports Editor

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A&M secondary using spring to fill holes

By MICHAEL PLUMER

The Battalion

Two has been a synonymous number with the Texas A&M secondary.

Two years ago A&M lost two players, cornerback Kevin Smith and strong safety Chris Crooms. This season, the Aggies will also have to replace two players in free safety Patrick Bates and cornerback Derrick Frazier.

A&M, though, has the youthful numbers to replace the departed stars.

"We have talented players, but they don't have a lot of experience," A&M secondary coach Trent Walters said. "This spring, we are in the process of developing talent."

Leading the charge from the secondary will be senior cornerback Aaron Glenn. After transferring from Navarro Junior College, Glenn made an immediate splash.

He had six interceptions last season, including a 95-yard touchdown return against the University of Texas that

sealed A&M's 31-14 victory.

Glenn said he knows that the pressure is on him to provide leadership.

"I am trying to take a leadership role because I have had some experience," Glenn said. "But some of the other guys have had experience, so I am not the only one."

One of the "other guys" is sophomore cornerback Ray Mickens, who is involved in a battle at the right cornerback spot with senior Billy Mitchell. But Mickens said the pressure is something he expected when he decided to attend A&M.

"The competition will always be there because there are no sorry athletes here," Mickens said. "I knew there would be a lot of pressure coming in."

"There are two kinds of pressure. One is a pressure to fail, and the other is pres-

sure to step your game up. I want to step it up."

Walters said the struggle between Mickens and Mitchell will go down to the wire.

"Ray and Billy are having a fierce competition, which is good," Walters said. "It is a fierce competition that is pretty close. It is a long way from being decided."

Mickens has the perfect chance to showcase his skills, as do the rest of his teammates, in spring practice. Due to the youthfulness of the defensive backfield, this time in pads is an opportunity to learn the system.

"Our goal this spring was to learn enough so we can play as well next fall as we did last year," Walters said. "It is exciting to work this group of guys because they are striving to get better."

That should be bad news to the rest of the Southwest Conference because, with the exception of Glenn, most of the present players will be together for a couple of years.

Mickens said that that fact excites him. "This spring things have been going

good," Mickens said. "We are trying to get our communication lines down while learning the basics. We have only one senior, so we will be with each other for awhile."

"That gives us a chance to build a foundation."

Building a strong basis provides the opportunity for a great future. Walters pointed out some players preparing to perform on Kyle Field today and tomorrow.

"I think (junior) strong safety Michael Hendricks is doing well," Walters said. "Also, (junior free safety) Junior White is playing excellent. He has had a solid spring so far."

Glenn also praised White's efforts along with the rest of his teammates.

"He has been doing a good job getting keys and reads," Glenn said. "He has stepped up his play. Everybody seems to be playing on a high level, and I don't think we will have much confusion because of that."

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Johnson aims for 400th career win against LCU

Granger, Moore each looking for eighth victory in weekend series at Olsen Field



KYLE BURNETT/The Battalion

A&M's Stephen Claybrook lays down a bunt in a game earlier this season. Claybrook, whose recent hot streak has raised his average to .270, will help lead the Aggies into their series this weekend against Lubbock Christian

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

After reaching the 30-victory milestone earlier this week against Mary Hardin-Baylor, the Texas A&M baseball team has another chance to make some history.

A sweep this weekend of the Lubbock Christian Chaparrals would give coach Mark Johnson the 400th victory of his career. He would reach that plateau earlier in his career than the current winningest active head coach in the nation, Cliff Gustafson of the University of Texas.

Friday's game starts at 7 p.m. with Saturday's doubleheader starting at 2 p.m.

Lubbock Christian brings a four-game winning streak to College Station and is currently 21-16 on the season. Earlier this season, the Chaparrals split a pair of games with Texas, taking home a 9-7 victory. The last time these two teams met was in 1988, with A&M leading the series 13-1.

Jeff Granger (7-1) will pitch Friday's game, followed Saturday by Trey Moore (7-0) and Kelly Wunsch (4-0). Moore continues performing double duty for the Aggies, starring as designated hitter and pitcher. He is currently batting .324, and had an 11-game hitting streak. Opposing batters are also having trouble against him, Moore opened the season with 27 straight innings without allowing an earned run before Maine touched him for

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