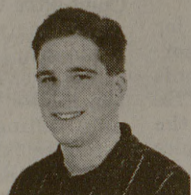


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A&M needs to play real teams for a change

TOM DAY

Sports Writer



For the past three seasons, the Texas A&M football team has been considered a national championship contender. The Aggies have recently been ranked as high as number four in 1992, and number five last season.

However, even with all the exciting touchdowns, thrilling victories, and numerous Southwest Conference titles, the football program has failed to garner the national respect it deserves. Several factors, including "weak" conference opponents and failure to win the "big game," have kept national pollsters from recognizing A&M.

Unfortunately, the team can't control the quality of its conference brethren. The players and coaches have done their part on the field by winning a record 22 consecutive conference games.

The real problem lies in A&M's non-conference scheduling. Games against well-known, ranked opponents grab the attention of voters. Games against teams such as Tulsa, Missouri, and this week's opponent, Southern Mississippi, don't.

Take the 1992 season for instance. The Aggies rose in the polls to number four with big wins in their first two games over Stanford and rival Louisiana State. However, with followup victories over meager Tulsa and Missouri squads, and of course, the same SWC foes, the team remained floundering in that position.

Adding insult to injury, the Aggies were even outperformed in the polls by Stronger non-conference scheduling can only help A&M when you think about it. The team might not

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Smedsrud steps up for Lady Ags

Freshman a future franchise player

By Jason Holstead
THE BATTALION

After losing four starters from arguably one of the best teams they have ever fielded, the Texas A&M volleyball team was looking for a player to step up and produce as they began their Southwest Conference schedule against the University of Texas last week.

The surprise came when freshman outside hitter Kristie Smedsrud rose to the challenge, leading the Lady Aggies to a near-upset of the nationally ranked Lady Longhorns.

"It was just something standing out there with that crowd behind you," Smedsrud said. "It is something I will never forget."

One of the most highly recruited high school volleyball players in the nation, Smedsrud enjoyed a outstanding career at Grossmont High School in La Mesa, California where her team's four year record was 96-37. She was also a two-time all-CIF first team selection where she registered over 1,000 kills in her final three seasons as the team's outside hitter.

"I wanted (to attend) a school with a lot of tradition within a college town, and you can't get a better combination anywhere than Texas A&M," Smedsrud said. "I loved the coaches, the school, and

the players. It was a perfect fit for me and I'm so happy I decided to come here."

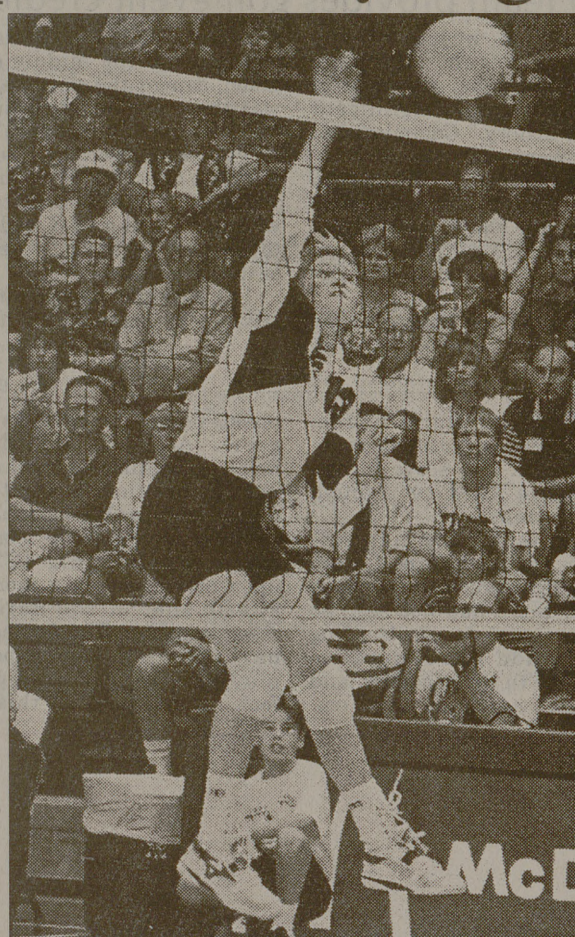
Smedsrud was also a four-year member of the San Diego Volleyball Club that won the national championship at the University of California at Davis Festival in '92 and the Southern California Regional Championship tournament in both '92 and '93.

Head coach Laurie Corbelli said she likes the depth Smedsrud adds to her outside hitter's rotation.

"I feel like we have three outside hitters who we really use within are system and Kristie is definitely in our rotation," Corbelli said. "If Kristie can get off to a good start (in a match), she is very dependable and is going to be ready for the game."

Corbelli said that Smedsrud has learned the A&M system quickly.

"She (Kristie) plays a key role in are passing game and is one of our best serve-receivers, which is one area the team has always been weak in," Corbelli said. "As she gains confidence and experience within the game, she will be the franchise (player) for this team."



Kristie Smedsrud, freshman outside hitter, spikes the ball

Robyn Calloway/THE BATTALION

Gerulaitis had known success

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. (AP) — Vitas Gerulaitis, a free-spirited tennis professional who won the 1977 Australian Open and later became a broadcaster, was found dead at a friend's home.

An autopsy on the 40-year-old was scheduled for today. Police said there was no indication of suspicious circumstances when they found Gerulaitis' body Sunday afternoon at a friend's home.

Gerulaitis played tennis last Wednesday in Seattle on the Champions Tour, a circuit for men's players 35 and over. He withdrew from the event the next day because of a bad back.

An excellent shot-maker who played tennis and partied at Manhattan's nightclubs with equal flair, Gerulaitis reached the No. 3 ranking in 1977 and made the finals of the U.S. Open and French Open in 1979 and 1980.

He acknowledged using cocaine during the late 1970s and 1980s and said his drug use and late nights undercut his ability as a player. He was treated for substance abuse and was implicated, though never charged, in a cocaine-dealing conspiracy in 1983.

But for all his excesses, Gerulaitis remained a durable and imposing player, outlasting many opponents not only with deft volleys or drop shots, but with strength and perseverance.

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Detroit upsets Cowboys in overtime 20-17

IRVING (AP) — Emmitt Smith rallied Dallas from a 10-point deficit as the Cowboys clawed back and forced overtime with a 17-17 tie Monday night against the Barry Sanders-led Detroit Lions.

Jason Hanson's 57-yard field goal try as the fourth quarter ended was swatted by Dallas' Leon Lett. Hanson also pushed a 52-yard try wide left earlier in the period.

Smith forced the tie on a 7-yard touchdown run with less than five minutes left in the fourth quarter.

Smith, who sprained an ankle just

before halftime, also helped set up the 19-yard field goal by Chris Boniol that got Dallas within 17-10 in the last minute of the third. Smith ran for 36 of the Cowboys' 58 yards on that drive.

Sanders was dazzling early as he helped Detroit to a 10-7 halftime lead.

He ran for 25 of the 44 yards on the drive that set up Hanson's 32-yard field goal.

Then Sanders pulled off two of his nicest runs of the night during the 94-yard drive that ended with a 25-yard touchdown pass from Scott Mitchell to Brett Perriman.

In the third quarter, Mitchell made the clutch plays as he put the Lions ahead 17-7 with a 9-yard touchdown pass to Herman Moore.

The Cowboys' lone first-half touchdown came on its first possession of the game when Tory Aikman lofted a 17-yard pass to Alvin Harper in the end zone.

Harper's catch ended a 13-play, 80-yard drive that took 5:49 on the Cowboys' first possession.

The Cowboys entered the game leading the regular-season series 7-5. Dallas was 22-19 on Monday nights compared to Detroit's 7-9-1 record.

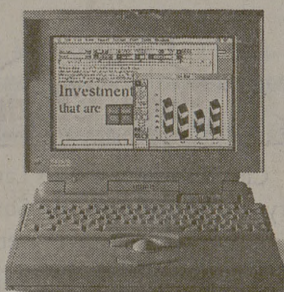
This Week In Aggie Football...

September 20, 1975: Freshman fullback George Woodard makes an impressive debut as the Aggies blast LSU at Tiger Stadium, 39-8. Woodard gains 106 on just six carries.

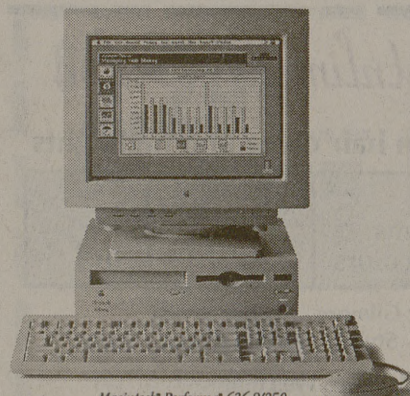
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