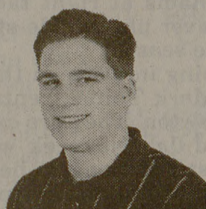


The Cowboys always find a way to win

TOM DAY

Sportswriter



With the NFL season nearing the mid-way point, the two-time defending world champion Dallas Cowboys are sending out a message to the rest of the league.

Look out, their best is yet to come. A few weeks back, it was entertaining to see the fans' discontent in Big D over the Cowboys' slow, inauspicious start to the season.

With a lackadaisical win over the Houston Oilers and a disheartening home loss to the Detroit Lions on Monday Night Football, Cowboy fans were vocal in their displeasure over what they felt to be an obvious lack of team motivation.

However, after four straight wins, things have settled down and the fans now realize the Cowboys are in the driver's seat for a run at an unprecedented third straight Super Bowl victory.

The players and coaches have assured the fans of their intention to solidify around playoff time and not to peak too early. That means early-season victories might lack the glitter and polish of a fine-tuned effort. But a win is a win, no matter how ugly it may be.

Besides, the Boys showed last season that a slow start is no hindrance as they became the first team to win a Super Bowl following an 0-2 start.

The world champions have also cast aside early doubts as to whether or not Barry Switzer could successfully guide "Jimmy Johnson's team."

Now, only one question remains. Is their anybody good enough to challenge the Cowboys?

It appears the San Francisco 49ers would be the most likely candidate. At 6-2, the Niners are only a half-game behind the Cowboys in the race for the NFC's best record and home field advantage throughout the playoffs.

However, question marks surround the 49ers, as they showed their vulnerable side in an embarrassing 40-8 thrashing administered by the Philadelphia Eagles in Candlestick Park earlier this month.

Sadly, the Eagles are the same team the Cowboys dismantled rather handily a couple weeks back in their only true "challenge" to date.

In light of this and a relatively soft schedule the rest of the way, the Cowboys' path back to the Super Bowl has few obstacles.

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VanderWoude adds depth to Lady Aggs

Jason Holstead
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Lady Aggie volleyball team's recruiting class of 1994 consisted of four freshman who were expected to compete for playing time and possibly even starting positions in their first season.

In the case of Cindy VanderWoude, the expectations have come true.

A freshman middle blocker from Escondido, California, VanderWoude is one of three freshman recruited from California to play volleyball for the Lady Aggies.

VanderWoude, who was recruited by Colorado State, the University of San Diego and the University of Wisconsin, said the choice of playing volleyball at Texas A&M was made easier because of the quality coaching staff.

"Laurie and John Corbelli are great coaches and I had heard great things about them (as coaches), and I heard what she did with her past schools," VanderWoude said. "They work really well together. I think coaching has a lot to do with a team, and that was my main focus (in choosing a team)."

VanderWoude was a three-time All-Avocado League and two-time All-CIF honoree at Escondido High School in Escondido, California. She led the team to a second place finish in league play and second in the CIF tournament in 1993. In her three seasons at Escondido, she led the team in blocks and kills.

She was also a decorated basketball player, earning All-Avocado and All-CIF first team her senior year at Escondido. She was named the league's player of the year in 1994.

As a member of the 1993 San Diego Club 17 red team, VanderWoude and future A&M teammate Kristie Smedsrud led the team to the '93 regional championship and fourth place at the UC Davis Festival.

VanderWoude said the strength of her game lies in the front-court.

"The front-row is probably my stronger part (of the game), with the back-row my weaker part which we are working on in practice," VanderWoude said. "I think having a good setter makes it a lot easier to come out stronger in the front-row, which we have (in Suzy Wente)."

In last Friday's match against the University of Texas-Arlington, VanderWoude led the team in hitting percentage (.423) and kills (17), while posting three digs. Saturday's match against Baylor University saw her post 11 kills and 10 digs for the Lady Aggies.

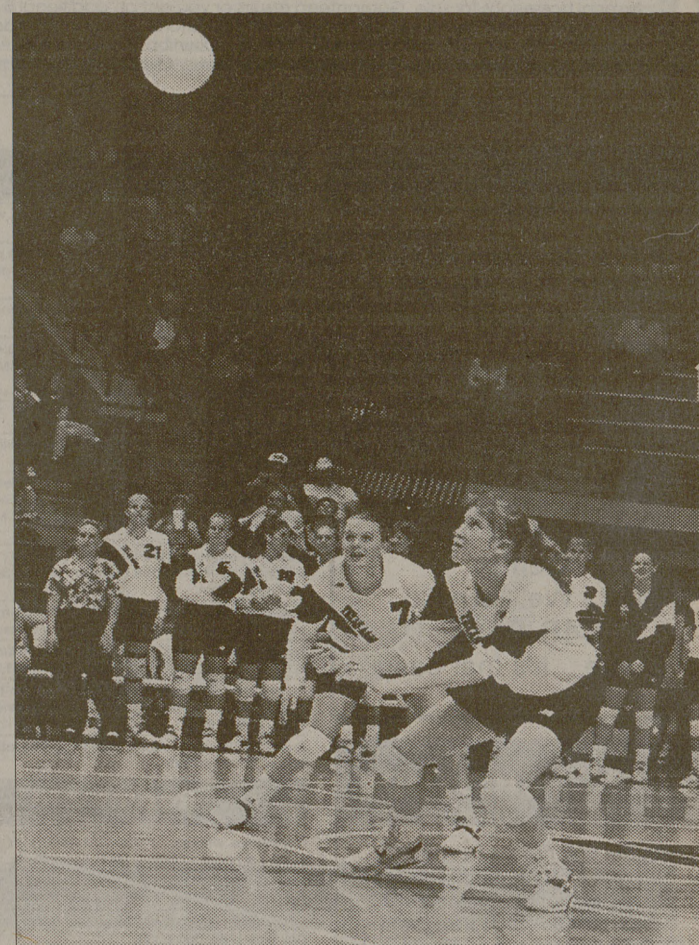
Corbelli said VanderWoude has the talent to be a great player for Texas A&M.

"She is so physical, that I knew it was just a matter of time until she learned to play the basics of the middle position," Corbelli said. "We certainly don't do a lot of tricky things with her yet, but she's so physical that she is able to do the quick-set and blocking that we have to have happen fundamentally."

"I'm just excited about her development over the spring and the summer. When Cindy comes back for her sophomore year, after gaining strength and body control, she's going to be one of the best in the conference."

"When Cindy comes back for her sophomore year, after gaining strength and body control, she's going to be one of the best in the conference."

—Laurie Corbelli,
A&M lady volleyball head coach



Carrie Thompson/THE BATTALION
Freshman middle blocker Cindy VanderWoude prepares to pass the ball.

Blalack a welcome addition to soccer team

By Stewart Doreen
THE BATTALION

Freshman forward Bryn Blalack was named the offensive Most Valuable Player at the Post Oak Mall Soccer Classic this weekend, giving one reason why she came to Texas A&M as the best of the incoming recruiting class.

"She came in as the top left-sided midfielder in the country," head coach Guerrieri said. "Since we moved Bryn up to the front line, our game has changed and the level of play has improved."

Blalack, the Aggies' leading goal scorer and point producer, has been quite busy recently since her move to forward from the left midfielders position. Since the change Blalack has helped the team's six-game winning streak by scoring eight goals including three two-goal performances.

Blalack says it is a move that took some getting used to.

"It was hard at first adjusting to how to play and where to move," Blalack said. "I feel like I help the team more. It's a great situation and opportunity."

Guerrieri believes the move to forward has not only increased her scoring but allowed her to use the playmaking skills that made her a talented halfback.

"We wanted to highlight her ability to go to the goal," Guerrieri said. "We try to get her the ball more. It makes our other forwards more dangerous."

She's very good at creating chances."

A move position is not the only obstacle that Blalack has had to overcome in her short stay at A&M. A knee surgery in late August, the third of her career, caused her to miss practice time and delayed the beginning of her season.

"As compared to the other knee surgeries this one was easier," Blalack said. "It hampered me in the fact that I missed the last part of two-a-days and the first couple of games. It was frustrating for me to miss those first couple of games and not be able to get out there with the team."

Blalack came to A&M from Carrollton's Newman Smith High School where she became one of the top recruits in the state of Texas. She joined A&M's freshman sweeper Diana Rowe on Soccer America's 1994 Region III Women's Super 11 recruit's list. She was also named to the 1994 Parade All-American team and selected as the Dallas Morning News Preseason Player of the Year for 1994. Her high school club team, the Longhorn Soccer Club, won the national title in her junior year.

"She was our top recruit," head coach G. Guerrieri said. "This says a lot considering the strength of our recruiting class."

Blalack said that the quality of the recruiting class Guerrieri had brought in was a factor on her decision to come to Aggieland.



Blake Griggs/THE BATTALION
Freshman forward Bryn Blalack named MVP in Post Oak Mall tourney.

"The recruiting class contributed to the reason I came here," Blalack said. "I knew the program was strong and had a lot of great soccer players. The

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Maddux wins third Cy Young

NEW YORK (AP) — Greg Maddux became the first pitcher to win three straight Cy Young Awards, unanimously sweeping the NL honor Monday with an overpowering year in a season dominated by hitting.

The Atlanta Braves ace was 16-6 with a 1.56 ERA, the third-lowest in 75 years. His ERA was more than 2 1/2 runs below the league average, the biggest differential in major league history.

Maddux, 28, won the Cy Young in 1992 with the Chicago Cubs. He has won it both years since signing with the Braves as a free agent.

Maddux's contract gives him a bonus of \$750,000 for winning this award. Braves general manager John Schuerholz recently said he did not think individual awards should be presented in a season that stopped Aug. 12 because of the players' strike.

Not all 28 original voters for the NL Cy Young wrote Maddux's name. Kit Stier of the Gannett Suburban Newspapers in New York submitted a blank ballot to protest this year's postseason awards. His vote was thrown out and he was replaced on the panel by another member of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

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