

## What's a sportswriter to believe in?

STEWART DOREEN

Sportswriter



The other day I read that Jerry Jones, the owner of the Dallas Cowboys, wants to add 40,000 seats and a retractable roof to Texas Stadium by 1999. Oh well, I guess that some things that are still all right in the world, or are they?

I won't even mention that big pile of wood on the polo fields.

Rice University, a team that proved me wrong last week by staying close to the Aggies, has the inside track to go the Cotton Bowl. Yes, they do, so stop laughing. Is this the same Rice team that gave Tulane its only victory of the season? (Random thought: I still don't think Rice will get there, but how many of you are going to watch the Cotton Bowl with Rice in it?)

The University of Nebraska is hosting Colorado this weekend. The game will mark the 200th straight sell out by A&M's future Big 12 opponent, a streak that goes back to November 3, 1962. What could possibly be bad about this? Think about that incredibly long sell-out streak A&M has at home. A&M can start a new streak against TCU on November 13th.

Life is not good for Texas soccer coach Dang Pibulvech. Next year, the five schools in the conference with women's soccer teams will get together to play for the inaugural and final SWC soccer title thanks to the teams splitting up in 1996. He has his own reasons, but when you have three teams ranked in the latest South Region poll, you just have to say "Dang."

The NCAA has struck again! Their latest blunder came when they denied the Liberty Bowl the chance of bringing Steve "Air" McNair and his Alcorn State team to the Liberty Bowl. It would have been the perfect opportunity to see how the Heisman hopeful would have done against Division One opponents. The game would have also guaranteed the Memphis bowl game a huge crowd which they desperately need to stay in business. The NCAA said Alcorn State will not have beaten the minimum numbers of Division One opponents to qualify for the bowl game. This might mean the death of the Liberty Bowl.

Dallas' point guard Jason Kidd is facing another lawsuit. It seems that Donald J. Peck, the owner of the car Kidd sideswiped on May 22, has filed a lawsuit for an unspecified amount for medical and punitive damages. This is the third lawsuit Kidd has faced in the last year. Isn't it great that when a man signs a \$54 million contract so many people suddenly remember the bad things he has done in the past.

Lastly, there are still five more days before the Texas A&M soccer team, in their second year at the varsity level, takes on national power SMU. Wednesday's 3 p.m. battle at the Aggie Soccer Complex will not only test the Aggies' perfect career home record, but should also send the winning team to the NCAA playoffs.

Maybe next week will be better.

### This day in Aggie Football

October 28, 1978: The Aggies hit a 57-yard scoring pass on their first play and roll to a 38-21 win over Rice at Kyle Field in Tom Wilson's debut as headcoach.

## 'Perfect game' must for Ponies

By Drew Diener  
THE BATTALION

Struggling Southern Methodist University, fatigued by the strength of their schedule and plagued by injuries, hobbles into San Antonio Saturday to take on seventh-ranked Texas A&M. The Aggies are the fifth Top 25 team to play the 1-7 Mustangs this season.

SMU head coach Tom Rossley said his team must function on all cylinders to come away with a victory this weekend.

"We've got to go down there and play error-free," Rossley said. "We've had a tough schedule without an off-date, and it has taken its toll."

The Mustangs are winless against the four Top 25 opponents they have faced this season, most recently losing to 19th-ranked Texas last weekend, 42-20.

SMU quarterback Ramon Flanigan, who is suffering from a strained left hamstring, heads up the list of injured Mustangs. However, Rossley said his condition continues to improve daily.

"He still can't sprint at full speed," Rossley said. "He can do short, little things but it (the hamstring) affects him if he really has to push and make a 20 to 30 yard sprint. "When he can sprint full speed at the end of practice, we'll know he's 100 percent."

According to Rossley, Flanigan is playing at about 70 percent of his mo-

bility. A healthy Flanigan is a dangerous Flanigan, as his 1993 numbers attest. Last season, the sophomore from Wichita Falls rushed the ball 114 times for 462 yards while this year, a hampered Flanigan has only managed 279 yards on 115 carries.

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-Tom Rossley,  
SMU head coach

Rossley said a healthy Flanigan is necessary for the Mustangs to consistently compete.

"When he hits the gap (when healthy), he can take it 60 yards," Rossley said. "We need that out of him (to be a successful team)."

With Flanigan's scrambling ability hampered, the Mustangs will have to rely on him to pass the ball effectively.

"If they take our passing game totally away from us, we'll have a tough time winning," SMU wide receiver James Whitmore said. "We realize that they are going to blitz a lot, so we have

to get our reads down and come off the ball quick."

Through eight games this season, the Mustangs have passed for 1715 yards and seven touchdowns, while managing 1054 yards and 13 touchdowns on the ground.

Defensively, Rossley said the Mustangs must play better than they have all season.

"Looking at their (A&M) talent and overall play, I think this is the best team we have played," Rossley said. "Our defense has got to step up. We haven't played the type of defense that we need to play to win (all season)."

The Mustangs' defensive unit is led by sophomore linebacker Chris Bordano. His 12 tackles against UCLA September 10. In addition to that performance, Bordano racked up a career-high 14 tackles against North Carolina October 1.

As a whole, the defense has allowed an average of 435 yards per game this season, while yielding an average of 33.8 points.

Rossley said despite the fact his team has endured a murderous schedule and is out of the conference race, they are ready to play.

"We're getting ready and we're excited about the ball game," Rossley said. "It's (the Alamo Dome) going to be a great environment, and our players are looking forward to playing in front of a big crowd."

## Aggie swim team dives into SWC relays

By Kristina Buffin  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M's men's and women's swimming and diving teams will begin the 1994-95 season this weekend when the teams travel to Dallas to compete at the Southwest Conference Relays hosted by Southern Methodist University. The diving portion will be hosted by Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

"The SWC Relays are a good early season meet to help us see where we are in the middle of hard training," head swimming coach Mel Nash said. "It's a fun meet because of the relay format."

Last year at the Southwest Conference Relays were hosted by the University of Houston, both the men's and women's swim teams finished fourth, and both squads had first-place finishes in the 100-meter freestyle relay. The men's team also won the 200-meter medley relay.

The men's team is led by sophomore Robb Pantano. Pantano, who earned honorable mention All-American honors, feels that the team has

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## Mathews matures into Aggies' top receiver

By Drew Diener  
THE BATTALION

As Texas A&M's leading receiver, Ryan Mathews is having the best season of his collegiate career. Tops on the team with 21 catches for 321 yards, the senior from Houston Lamar remains humble, continuing to employ the same simple philosophy that has led to his current success.

"Like all receivers, I like to catch the rock," Mathews said. "Stats don't mean anything to me. I just want to win the game."

Mathews said his biggest game this season came against Southern Mississippi, September 24, when he caught two passes for 97 yards and one touchdown, helping the Aggies to a 42-14 victory.

"On one of those catches, I was cheated out of my second touchdown (of the game)," Mathews said. "They spotted the ball on the one-yard line. (Nevertheless), the game was pretty fun."

Texas A&M wide receivers coach Les Koenning describes Mathews as a gamer, the kind of guy who loves to go out and play.

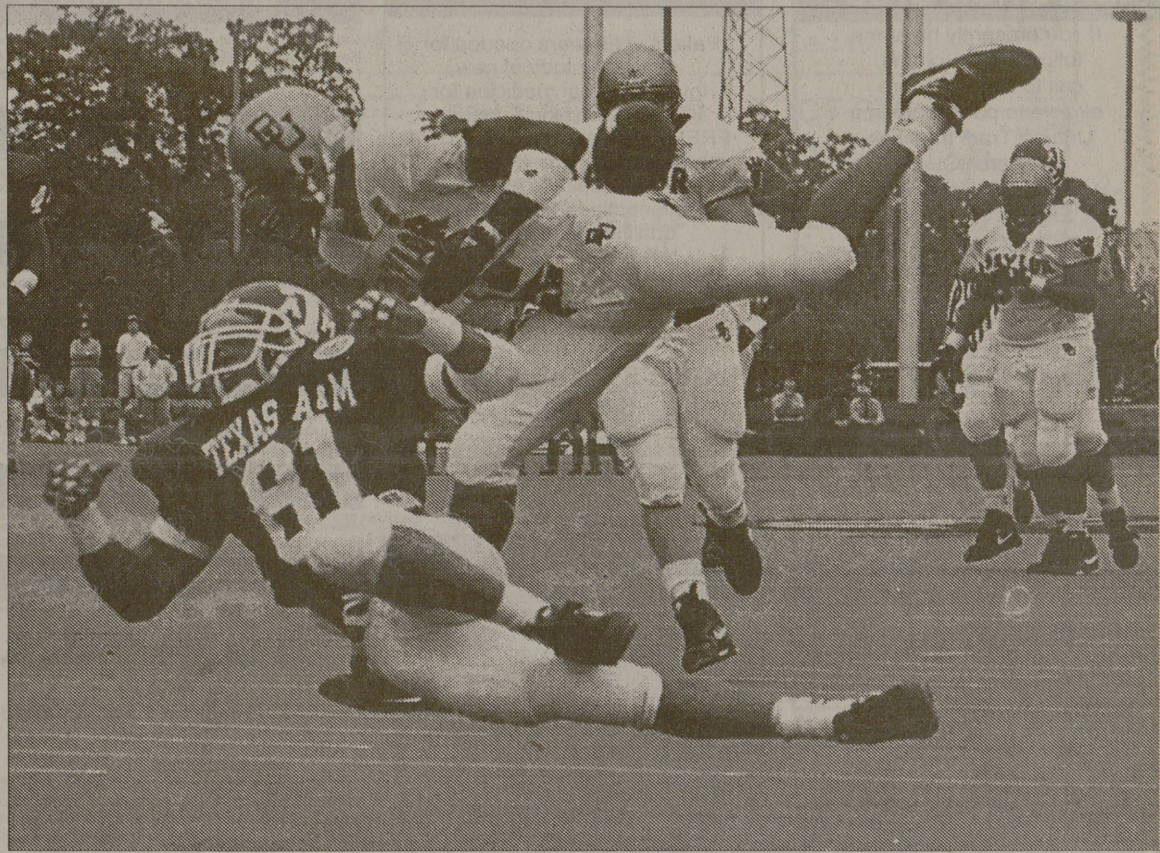
"He wants the football," Koenning said. "You want a receiver that wants the football. If you're a receiver coach, you don't want to coach a kid who doesn't want the football."

Koenning said Mathews' ability to haul in the big catch is not the only dimension to his game. His knowledge of various routes and his ability to react to the ball make him a respected possession receiver as well.

"I think Ryan fits the mold of both (a big play and possession receiver)," Koenning said. "He's very deceptive, runs great routes, gets in and out of a cut extremely well and has great hands."

One of the only strikes against Mathews is his lack of speed. However, Koenning said Mathews' desire to make plays over-rides that weakness.

"You look at his productivity and see how much he does and it's hard to beat that," Koenning said. "If you're going to go out and invest your money in something, you want to go out and in-



Stew Milne/The Battalion

See Mathews/Page 8 Wide receiver Ryan Mathews, No. 81, attempts to reel in a pass during the game against Baylor.

## Lady Aggie netters look to extend winning streak

By Kristina Buffin  
THE BATTALION

This weekend presents a special opportunity for the Texas A&M women's volleyball team. The Lady Aggies have a chance to extend their winning streak to six when they play back-to-back matches tonight and Saturday at G. Rollie White Coliseum against 19th ranked University of Georgia (17-5) and the Aggies face the University of Tennessee (8-14) respectively. Both games have a 7 p.m. start time.

The Lady Aggies are looking for revenge after losing to Georgia, 3-0, in Athens last year.

"I'm excited because of what happened last year," outside hitter Jennifer Bronner said. "We went there and we got drilled big-time. We want to come out and play really well."

The Lady Bulldogs will present a defensive challenge for the Lady Aggies. Georgia outside hitter Priscilla Pacheco is ranked third in the nation with 5.49 kills per game.

"She is very difficult (to contain)," head coach Laurie Corbelli said. "She is a senior and ready to close off her season. She is very effective."

Middle Nikki Nicholson represents a second defensive challenge for the Lady Aggies. Nicholson leads the team with a .357 season hitting percentage.

"Nicholson is very quick and jumps extremely high," Corbelli said.

The Tennessee Lady Vols are led by senior outside hitter Sonja Thomas and freshman middle blocker Jenny Meeks. Thomas is averaging 4.3 kills per game, and Meeks leads the team with a .216 hitting percentage.

"I think that it's going to be a great match-up," Corbelli said. I imagine they are about as strong as we are. It'll be a match that could go either way."

In the last five games, the Lady Aggies have kept the same five starters, and the combination has propelled them to four consecutive wins.

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## Aggie cross country teams aim for strong season finale

By Stewart Doreen  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M cross country teams head to Lubbock this weekend to stake their claims at the Southwest Conference Cross Country Championships.

"They are starting to reap the benefits of the hard work they've put in," head coach Greg Hinze said. "We definitely have a shot, but things are going to have to go well for us for that to happen. All it takes is one person on one of those (favored) teams to slip up."

The men's team, ranked fifth in the District VI poll, are going into the meet chasing the favored Texas and Baylor teams. The Aggie men are coming off a second-place finish at the Texas A&M Invitational and two first-place finishes in the preceding meets.

The men are led by Matt Priest who has two first-place finishes to his name. Priest feels the team is peaking at the right time and knows they must be ready to

run on Saturday. "We're coming around at the right time," Priest said. "The whole team has to be in the thick of things."

The women's team, ranked seventh in the District VI poll, is a young team led by Shannon Etchberger and Cecille Sangalang. The Aggies will be chasing the conference favorites, Southern Methodist University and Rice University, and Hinze is looking for the team to run their ways with the conference elites.

Neither team should be hard-pressed to improve on last year's performances at the championships. The men finished last among the eight teams, with only junior Albert Hernandez finishing among the top 25 competitors. The women performed only slightly better, finishing sixth in the competition.

"If everybody runs the way they are capable, they could have an upper division finish," Hinze said. "The (conference) coaches picked them to finish sixth, so anything above that is something we're shooting for."

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