

Success not known lately by Longhorns

DREW DIENER



After two unexpected losses in the last three weeks, a once proud and mighty college football program slipped out of the Top 25, placing dreams for a return to past glory on hold, again.

Their head coach, in the third year of a five year contract, is walking on pins and needles, and the consensus among the school's boosters is that he, like his predecessor, will be replaced before his contract expires.

In the last ten seasons, success on the gridiron for the University of Texas has been as rare as Democratic party success in Brazos County. The days of perennial SWC dominance and nationwide prowess are all but distant memories in the minds of most Longhorn football enthusiasts.

There once was a time when the Longhorns were consistently ranked among the nation's top football powerhouses. The annual border war between Texas and Oklahoma was not only for regional bragging rights, but for national supremacy. Those were the days when a coaching legend named Darrell Royal roamed the sidelines of Memorial Stadium, winning three national championships and 11 SWC crowns during his 20-year reign. Several great players proudly wore the hallowed burnt orange and white during Royal's tenure, but perhaps none greater than the "Tyler Rose," Earl Campbell.

Racking up over 4,440 rushing yards in his storied four year Longhorn career, Campbell was a consensus All-American twice, and won the Heisman Trophy in 1977, before being made the number one pick in the 1978 NFL Draft by the Houston Oilers.

Royal retired after the 1976 season, a year in which Texas suffered a rare 5-5-1 record. The poor year had a lot to do with an injury to Campbell, who was forced to miss four conference games.

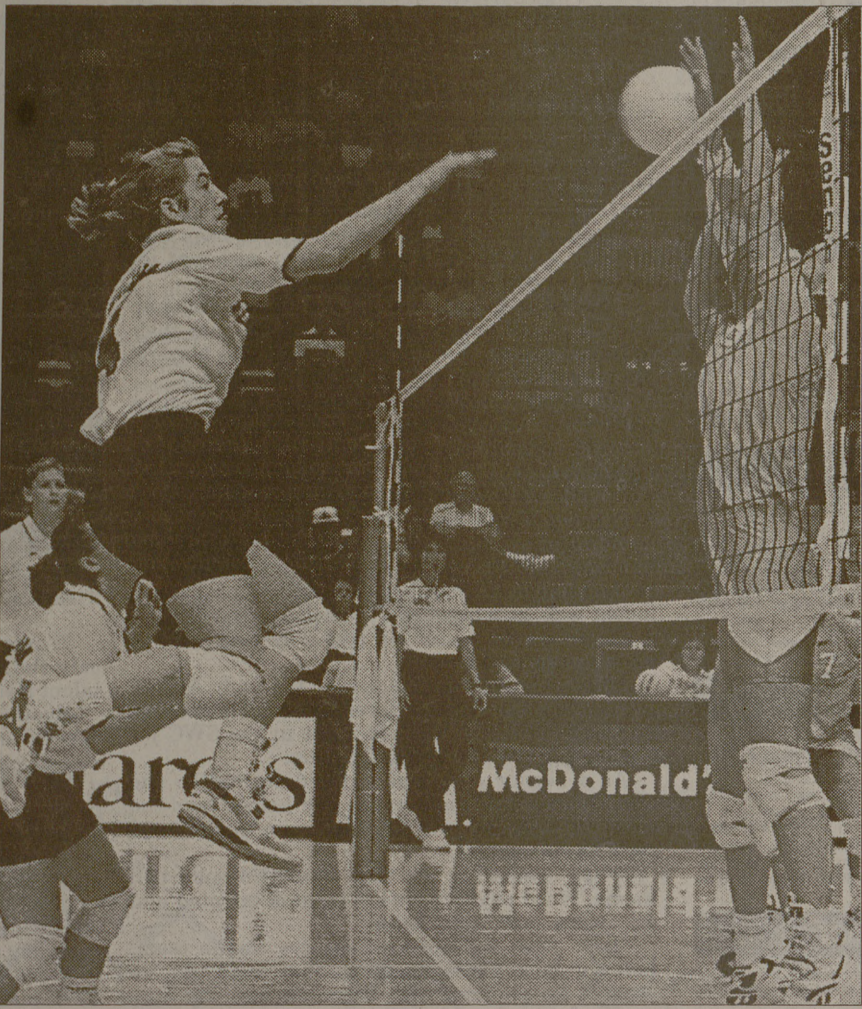
Royal's replacement, Fred Akers, fared well in his first year at the helm, going 11-1 in Campbell's Heisman season, almost adding another national championship to the UT trophy case, if not for a 38-10 loss to Notre Dame on New Year's Day in Dallas.

Akers' next three teams did not get to make the "annual" holiday season trip to Dallas, as subpar records led them to the now-defunct Sun and Bluebonnet Bowls. In 1981, Texas would make the first of three final trips to the Cotton Bowl in the last 14 years. With a 14-12 victory over Alabama, the 10-1-1 Longhorns finished second in the nation that season. No Longhorn team has finished that high since. In 1983, the Longhorns made their last New Year's Day run at number one, falling short with a 10-9 loss to Hershel Walker and the Georgia Bulldogs.

Conference supremacy and national representation took their last breaths wearing burnt orange and white during that fateful year in Austin, as the Longhorns would pass the torch 90 miles to the east.

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Volleyball team faces top-ranked Longhorns



Carrie Thompson/THE BATTALION

Sophomore Page White hits the ball against Tennessee. A&M will play Texas tonight.

Lady Aggies could move into second place tie with Texas in SWC standings

By Kristina Buffin
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's volleyball team will play a match when they face the 23rd ranked University of Texas in Austin tonight.

This match is critical for the Lady Aggies because a win could move them into a tie for second place with Texas in the SWC standings with only two conference matches remaining.

"Our next two matches are very critical," head coach Laurie Corbelli said. "But our goal is to win both of them. We have our work cut out for us. It's not an easy task, but it's possible."

The strong showing against their last seven ranked opponents gives the Lady Aggies confidence that they will have a great match against Texas.

"We did real well in the last match," junior Suzy Wente said. "I know that we will come out strong and beat the hell outta t.u."

One of the keys to an A&M win will be freshman middle blocker Cindy VanderWoude, leads A&M with a 1.35 block average and is ranked eighth in the SWC with a 0.97 average.

"Cindy has made great improvement

at the net with her block and attack and that has opened up our outside attackers a lot more," Corbelli said.

The Lady Aggies' passing and serving have improved throughout the season. Sophomore middle blocker Page White leads the league in ace average (0.45) in conference matches.

"The key for us will be to serve tough," Corbelli said. "Also, our passing has to be sharp and our outside hitters have to be on."

Defensively, the Lady Aggies will have to stop Texas' outside hitter Jenny Warmack and middle blocker Angie Breitenfeld. Warmack leads Texas with a 3.90 kill average and a 2.91 dig average. Breitenfeld leads the team with a .265 hitting percentage.

"Our blocking and defense will be key," freshman Kristie Smedsrud said. "Our blocking has improved throughout the season and if we play well, we have a good chance to win."

If the Lady Aggies are consistent in all aspects of their game, the team believes they will have a strong showing against Texas and win.

"If we can get everyone playing their best, we have a good chance to win, even though the match is in Austin," Corbelli said. "When we played Texas earlier this season, we outplayed them statistically in every area. The team knows we can beat them. We were very disappointed not to get the win. The players are definitely ready to redeem themselves."



VanderWoude

Ward comes back home to anchor quarterback protection

Senior center's new starting role strengthens line

By Tom Day
THE BATTALION

Ecstatic.

That was the feeling Aggie football player Brandon Ward felt three weeks ago when his coaches told him he would be the starting center against the Baylor Bears. As a backup for two and a half seasons, Ward has definitely paid his dues.

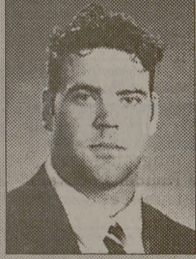
"You can't even put it into words," Ward said. "I was really excited to finally get an opportunity after all these years to go out there and show what I can do."

Offensive line coach Joe D'Alessandris said moving Ward to the starting

lineup was part of an attempt to strengthen the offensive line.

"We're trying to get the best out of our personnel," D'Alessandris said. "We felt (that) moving some players around may give us a little more strength and a more physical offensive line."

After a solid game against Baylor, Ward has held on to his new starting role the last two games.



Ward

D'Alessandris said Ward has progressed quickly.

"He's done very well," D'Alessandris said. "He had a really good game against Baylor and he's had two steady performances against Rice and SMU."

After playing his freshman year at Colorado State, Ward decided to come home to Texas and play at A&M. Besides his unhappiness with being far from home, the senior lineman had two other reasons to make the transfer.

"Academically, I wanted to work in Texas after I graduated and I figured the best opportunity to do so would be to graduate from A&M," Ward said. "Also, the traditions, the people and everything is overwhelming. You go to one game and you know it's the place to be."

Ward said his experience as a back-

up was enough to prepare himself for his current starting role.

"Basically, as a backup, you pretty much do everything the same as a starter, you just work hard and improve your technique," Ward said.

D'Alessandris said Ward's desire impresses him most.

"He's a disciplined player with intelligence and dedication," D'Alessandris said. "He comes to work everyday with a tremendous attitude to get better."

Ward said he aims to improve each week.

"I'm still kind of inexperienced at this position," Ward said. "Every week I'm learning a little bit more and trying to smooth out the rough areas."

"It's been fun, and hopefully it will just get better."

Lady Aggies challenge Mustangs for SWC soccer supremacy

By Stewart Doreen
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's soccer team is confident of becoming the unofficial Southwest Conference champion and the new power of collegiate soccer in Texas.

A victory over Southern Methodist University today at 3 p.m. at the Aggie Soccer Complex will accomplish both.

"I know we're going to take them," senior forward Anna Whitehead said. "They're going to be fired up, and we're going to be fired up. Now, we just have to make it for the record as far as being the best team in Texas."

"They are a respectable team, but I don't believe we should have any problem with them," sophomore goalkeeper Sunny McConnell said.

Despite the fact that official conference play does not start next year, a win will give the Aggies victories over

all conference teams. Head coach G. Guerrieri sees the importance of Wednesday going far beyond the state level. An A&M win should have ramifications of national proportions.

"To establish this team as a national power, we have to knock off a national power," Guerrieri said. "It adds a little that we're undefeated against Southwest Conference teams."

An invitation to the NCAA tournament might also be on the line, as the two teams are both ranked in the South region's top ten. Guerrieri is confident that any arguments for the Mustangs' superiority will be defeated with a win on Thursday.

"It is unfortunate that SMU and us can't go to the playoffs, but it's looking like only the winner of this game can move on," Guerrieri said. "We come in with the better record. We come in with the better record against common opponents. We get to play on our home field. We believe this

game will be a stepping stone to move onto bigger and better things."

The Aggies, the eighth-ranked team in the South region, are 12-2-2 and are coming off a 3-1 victory over the University of Arkansas Sunday in Dallas. The victory gave the Aggies a 7-0-1 record for the month of October.

The Aggies will be looking to extend two streaks with a win in today's game. The Aggies have a 14-0 record at home in their two years as a varsity scholarship program. The Aggies are 7-0 in their inaugural year at the Aggie Soccer Complex. They have also won their last seven games, dating back to their tie with North Carolina State University on Oct. 2.

"As far as were concerned, the playoffs began the day we got back from North Carolina," Guerrieri said.

The Aggies are led by freshman forward Bryn Blalack, the team's leading goal scorer (nine) and point producer

(21). Sophomore forward Yvette Okler leads the team in assists with eight.

McConnell, who has a 0.90 goals against average, senior defender Kristi Dillinger and sophomore defender Allison Buckley will look to stop the SMU attack.

"I've got confidence in our defense that we can shut them down," McConnell said. "We always try to dominate the game and make them play us rather than reacting to another team."

The Mustangs, 10-7-1, are the fifth ranked team in the South region. Freshman forward Danielle Garrett and junior midfielder Courtney Linex are the leading goal scorers with 18 and 13 respectively and lead an attack that averages the third highest scoring offense in the South region.

McConnell, however, doesn't think the Aggies will have a problem stopping the Mustang attack, right Sunny?

"That's right, no problem."



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