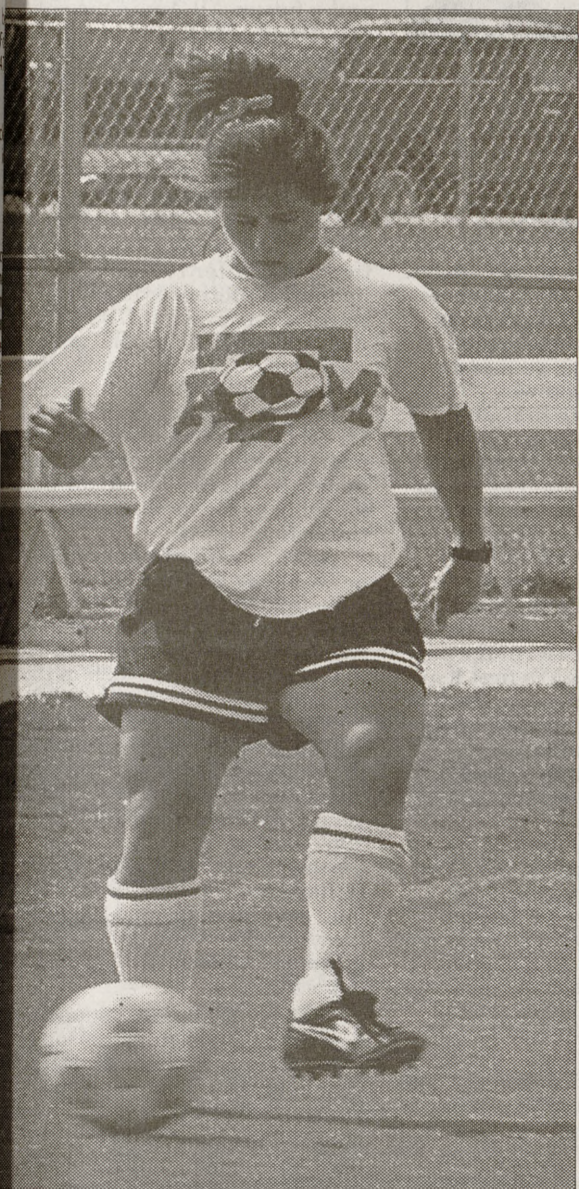


A&M Soccer '95: Taking it to the next level



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

□ **Team captain Kristen Koop is preparing to lead her team on a run to the NCAA playoffs.**

By David Winder
THE BATTALION

In 1993, Kristen Koop walked on the Texas A&M soccer team just to see if she could make it. In 1995, Koop will walk onto the Aggie Soccer Complex as the captain of the team.

"Coming from a walk-on (to a captain), I learned that hard work will get you anywhere you want to go," said Koop, a senior zoology major. "It's very humbling because it's easy to say that 'I deserve it, or I'm here because I did it,' but I could never think that."

Soccer Head Coach G. Guerrieri, however, disagrees with his star junior forward.

"There were three reasons that Kristen was chosen captain," Guerrieri said. "Number one was academics, she's always on the honor roll and sets a solid example for the other players."

"Reason number two is social, because off the field she's a positive role model. Number three is athletic ability. Last year she was our offensive MVP, and she always leads by example."

From the time Guerrieri spotted her dominating try-out games, to last year's match against perennial power Southern Methodist, Koop has inspired her teammates with her play.

"We were leading 2-0 at the half against SMU," Guerrieri said. "Then they scored two quick goals to tie it, which really shocked our players. Nobody had a feeling of what was going to happen."

"Then Kristen and a SMU player went after a 50-50 ball (a ball that is an equal distance between two players). She (Koop) punched it up a gear, then punched it up another and beat the other player by five yards. Then she used her left to kick it to the far corner of the goal."

The Aggies went on to beat the Lady Mustangs 5-2 and finished with a 15-2-2 record. But for the

See KOOP, Page 13

□ **Sophomore scoring machine Bryn Blalack pins success on an injury-free 1995.**

By Lisa Nance
THE BATTALION

No matter what the sport, it is usually tough for a freshman athlete to crack the starting line-up of an establish team.

A year ago, Bryn Blalack joined the Texas A&M women's soccer team from Carrollton's Newman Smith High where she earned four letters and led the team to four consecutive playoff appearances. She holds school records in six categories, including goals and assists in a career despite missing the majority of her junior and senior seasons due to knee surgery. She was named to the 1994 All-American team.

After missing the first two games of her freshman season at A&M while recovering from the third knee surgery of her career, she came back to finish the season as the team's leader in shots, goals and points scored, netting a team high 11 goals.

"She's a great one-on-one player," A&M Head Soccer Coach G. Guerrieri said. "She is a great scoring threat any time she's around the ball. She is terrific with both feet, if you try to contain her one way she'll score the other way. She's a major league goal-scoring threat."

Last year she was such a threat that she scored 28 points to tie for 20th in the final South Region individual statistics for scoring. She also became the second player in A&M history to post three multiple-goal matches.

Blalack started the season as a midfielder and was moved to the forward position halfway through the season. She made her debut as a forward at the Texas Tech game.

She admits that she was a little leery about the move to forward, even though she played the forward position in high school.

"I was excited about being in a more attacking position in high school."

See BLALACK, Page 13



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Sophomore forward Bryn Blalack uses her head during an Aggie Soccer practice.



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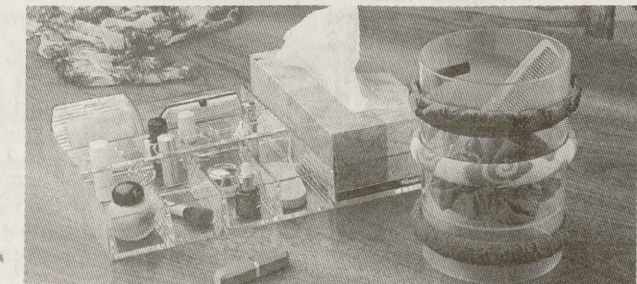
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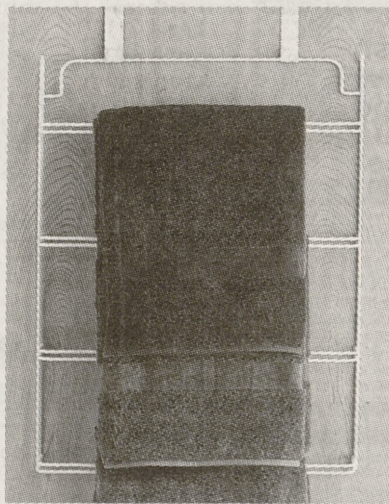


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