

## RIPKEN: The shortstop has not missed a game since 1982

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hurt, he played through it," teammate Rafael Palmeiro said.

Through it all, Ripken showed up ready to play. And play he did, game after game after game.

"It's untouchable. I don't think there's anyone who has the gall to approach a record like this," Baltimore outfielder Jeffrey Hammonds said. "This is Cal Ripken's record, and it will always be Cal Ripken's record."

Haven't we heard this before? That's what they were saying in 1939, when Gehrig pulled himself from the New York Yankees' lineup after a stretch of ineffective performances at the plate.

Gehrig held the record for 56 years. Then along came Ripken, who figured as long as he was coming to the ballpark, he might as well play. He's carried that philosophy with him for 2,131 games, and now he's the proud owner of one heck of a streak.

"It will never be broken," California outfielder Tim Salmon said. "I still can't believe that's Ripken out there every day, because there are so many things that can happen in the course of a season."

Baltimore rookie Mark Smith missed a few games last week after he got his finger cut in a hotel air conditioner. A few days before that, Orioles outfielder Curtis Goodwin split open his finger trying to lay down a bunt.

Anything can happen. Ripken has had his share of aches and pains, but nothing has

been severe enough to cause him to approach his manager and ask for a day off.

"To play with Cal and know him, you can see that he is not of the norm. He's not a normal person, physically and mentally," Rene Gonzales, a former teammate who now plays with the Angels. "He does everything he's supposed to, every single day."

Gehrig will still always be known as the Iron Horse. Ripken has no nickname, but his name has become synonymous with persistence, integrity and consistency.

"Tonight I stand here overwhelmed, as my name is linked with the great and courageous Lou Gehrig," Ripken said during the post-game celebration. "I'm truly humbled to have our names spoken in the same breath."

"Some may think our strongest connection is because we have played many consecutive games. Yet I believe in my heart that our true link is a common motivation — a love of the game of baseball, a passion for our team and a desire to compete on the very highest level."

It is that philosophy that has endeared him to his peers. "The record which has been broken today speaks volumes about a man who never unduly focused on this achievement, but accomplished it through years of energy, incredible inner resources and an unflinching passion for the sport," teammate Brady Anderson told the crowd.

## A&M dominates in '95 opener

### The volleyball team takes three straight games from Utah State.

By Tom Day  
THE BATTALION

In its season-opening match Wednesday night at G. Rollie White Coliseum, the Texas A&M volleyball team proved there is room for only one team of Aggies in Texas. The Lady Aggie netters showed no mercy in dispatching the Utah State Aggies in three games, 15-7, 15-8 and 15-3.

A&M Volleyball Head Coach Laurie Corbelli was pleased with her team's effort.

"For a season-opening match, it was OK for us," Corbelli said. "I was really proud of the way we kept our momentum. We only had one downslide and that was really pleasing to see."

Capitalizing on the powerful serve of Kristie Smedsrud, the Lady Aggies blazed to an early lead in the first game. The senior outside hitter recorded three consecutive aces and four in the game.

"We've been working a lot on serving in the last week," Smedsrud said. "I was a little nervous about it, so I kind of fed off momentum and adrenaline."

After a small lapse that saw USU tie the game up at 7-7, the Lady Aggies exploded for eight straight points to close out the game.

Corbelli said her team did a good job overcoming typical early-season miscues.

"Individually on defense, we're feeling good with the court and ball-control, but as a team, we had a few people out of position,"

Corbelli said. "We also made a few hitting errors, but that will happen early in the season on any team."

After taking the second game, Corbelli emptied her bench in the final frame. Freshmen outside hitters Kim Tipton and Stacy Sykora helped fuel a furious A&M attack that put the match away. Sykora recorded three kills and a service ace in her Lady Aggie debut.

"I was kind of scared to make a mistake, but I was pretty comfortable out there," Sykora said. "I love playing in front of crowds."

Junior middle blocker Page White paced the Lady Aggie attack with eight kills and four service aces while senior setter Suzy Wente recorded 21 assists.

"It was great to get back in the noise," Wente said. "I love playing in G. Rollie White, and we had a lot of people here."

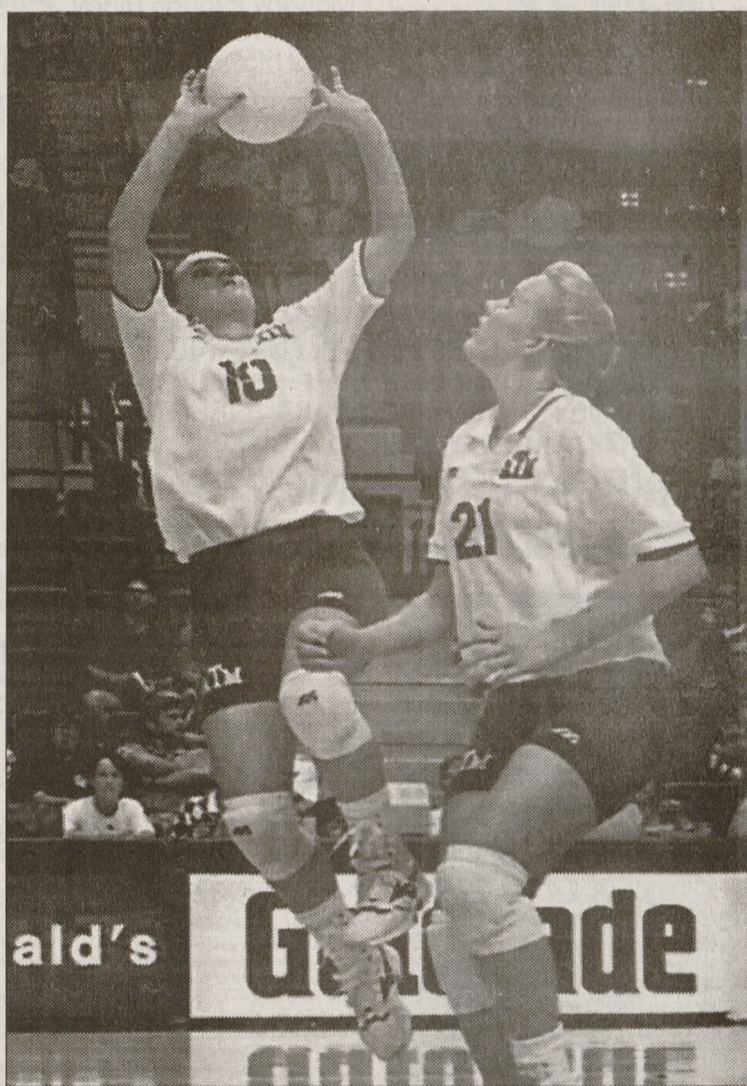
With their first match behind them, Corbelli said the Lady Aggies can look forward to playing their next contest without too much nervousness.

"We had some players that were still a little bit tight," Corbelli said. "Getting back into competition and meeting expectations is going to help their game a lot."

"Overall, I was happy I got to see almost everybody on the court. It was a great match for us to evaluate areas that we need to immediately work on."

This weekend, the Lady Aggies head to Chicago, Ill. to play in the Mizuno USA Cup.

On Friday, the team faces the daunting task of taking on Stanford University, the defending national champions and current top-ranked team in the country.



Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

Texas A&M senior setter Suzy Wente sets the ball as sophomore middle blocker Cindy VanderWoude watches during Wednesday night's game.

## Goalie McConnell Aggies' last line of defense



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Sophomore goalie Sunny McConnell kicks the ball upfield during Sunday's game vs. Marquette.

### The sophomore compiled an 11-2 record during the 1994 season.

By Tom Day  
THE BATTALION

Preparation, teamwork, leadership: It sounds like the beginning of a U.S. Army television commercial. Although Sunny McConnell is not enlisted in the Armed Forces, she incorporates these elements into her style of play. As the starting goalkeeper for the Texas A&M soccer team, her success is dependent upon them.

"The team counts on her consistency and leadership and the example that she sets in training," A&M head coach G. Guerrieri said. "As far as concentration and intensity, she's probably our most complete player."

Last season, McConnell tallied an impressive 11-2-1 record while allowing just 11 goals for a 1.01 goals-against average. She posted a career-high 78 saves while playing the most minutes on the team.

McConnell said preparation is the key to her success.

"I try to prepare myself mentally before the game," McConnell said. "I visualize different types of shots and see myself making those saves in my mind. It makes things easier in the game."

Ranked fifth among South Region goalkeepers last year, McConnell credited solid team defense as her avenue to success.

"The play of the defense is vital," McConnell said. "If the defense isn't playing well, it makes my job a lot harder. When we all click together, things run very smoothly."

Guerrieri said McConnell's leadership at goalie is as crucial to the team as her solid play in the goal box.

"It's a give-and-take system," Guerrieri said. "(The defense) is dependent on her to lead and communicate to them what they need to do, and she's dependent on them to do what's asked of them. One doesn't carry the other; she's just one-quarter of the defense."

Playing one of the toughest positions in soccer, McConnell said there is little room for error.

"There's a lot of pressure," McConnell said. "Generally, if you make a mistake, a lot of the time it results in a goal. Whereas if you make a mistake or give the ball away in the middle of the field, it doesn't directly result in a goal."

"We try not to put pressure on our keepers," Guerrieri said. "We're not in a position where we have to de-

pend on them to win games because so much of our game is based on scoring and attack. We depend on Sunny to keep us in games and make the saves that are within her abilities."

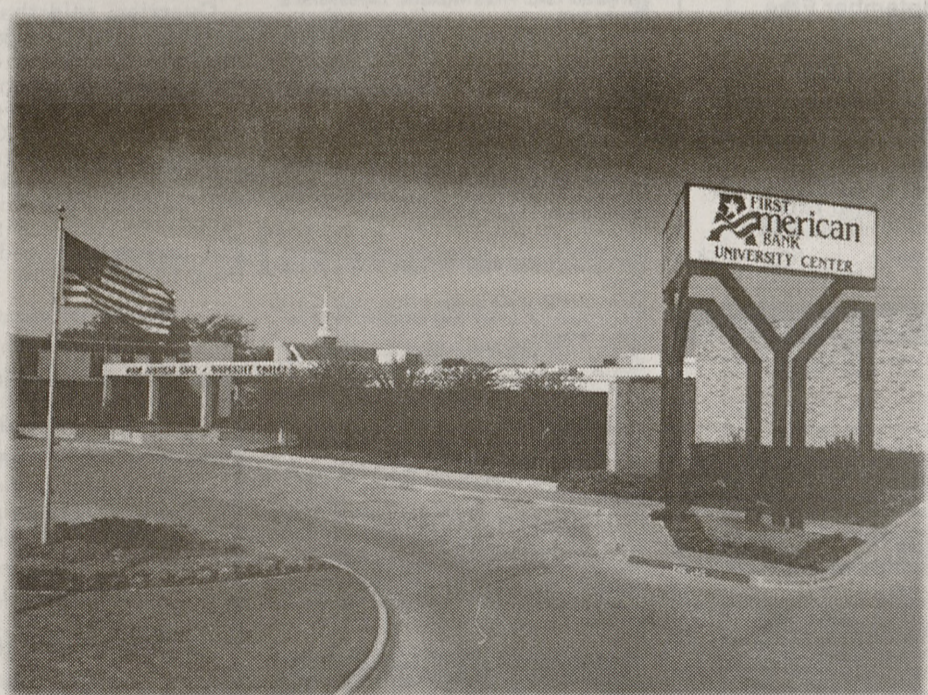
As a two-time GTE Academic Achievement Award recipient, McConnell works just as hard in the classroom as one the field.

Guerrieri said that effort is expected from all of his players, and that the desire to excel is a main reason for the team's success.

"Our system is based on 100-percent effort," Guerrieri said. "With Sunny, we always get that effort. She's a great student that works well with the team."

"She's worked hard to get to the level she's at now."

Preparation, teamwork and leadership: Like the commercial says, McConnell is definitely all she can be.



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