SPORTS BRIEFS

McElroy falls to second in Heisman poll

Leeland McElroy fell out of the top spot in this week's Scripps-Howard Heisman Trophy poll.

McElroy was passed by Florida State's Warrick Dunn in votes, 33-30, although A&M's star tailback did receive the most first-place votes with four.

The poll is conducted by the Rocky Mountain News and surveys 10 Heisman voters each week, two from each geographic region of the country.

Southern Cal's Keyshawn Johnson was third in the poll, followed by a pair of quarterbacks, Florida State's Danny Kanell and Florida's Danny Wuerffel.

A&M's Arrant eliminated in Tennis Championships

Texas A&M senior tennis player Blake Arrant was defeated in the qualifying round of the National Clay Court Tennis Championships Wednesday.

Arrant lost to South Alabama's Nick Chisholm, 6-2, 6-3 at the Suburban Club of Baltimore County.

Rockets resign Chilcutt

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Rockets signed forward Pete Chilcutt to a multi-year contract Wednesday.

Terms of the deal with the reigning NBA champions were not disclosed.

The 6-11, 235-pound Chilcutt played in 68 games as a Rocket last season after signing in November 1994. He averaged 5.3 points and 4.7 rebounds and started in 17 regular season games.

"We feel that it is very important to keep the continuity with our team and the guys that led us to the championship," said Bob Weinhauer, vice president of basketball operations. "Pete was a major part of our championship run."

Lady Aggies avoid upset, beat Rice

❑ Senior setter Suzy Wente set an A&M SWC record with 76 assists in the win.

By Tom Day
THE BATTALION

It may have been nearly five years since Rice last won a Southwest Conference volleyball match, but you would not have guessed that Wednesday night at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Corbelli

The Owls gave the Lady Aggie Volleyball Team all it could handle before bowing out in four games, 15-9, 14-16, 15-6 and 15-13 in an SWC matchup.

A&M Head Volleyball Coach Laurie Corbelli said Rice did not play like a team that had just suffered its 41st consecutive loss in league play.

"I was afraid in the fourth game that we would be their first victim," Corbelli said. "They have the ability to win this year, and they're going to take a team that isn't ready by surprise."

The Lady Aggies now 10-1 and 2-0 in the SWC, did not make things easy on themselves.

Plagued by inconsistency in the early going, A&M was able to string together an onslaught of bonecrushing kills to claim the first game.

However, mental errors and indecisiveness caught up with the Lady Aggies in the second frame, giving Rice (12-5, 0-1 in the SWC) an opportunity to steal the game and tie the match.

"Our discipline was a problem," Corbelli said. "We had too many errors and were out of position, and that started a wave of uncertainty amongst each other.

"Our serve receiving was not as strong as it's been lately. That put us in a more tentative mode than we prefer to play, and it threw us off a little."

The Aggies responded with a little more fire in the third game as the Owls wilted under another furious A&M attack.

Senior outside hitter Andrea Williams took charge of the offense, setting up eight shots and knocking down 11 kills while giving setter Suzy Wente an opportunity to contribute on defense.

"Suzy is one of our best defensive players," Williams said. "Whenever she doesn't set the ball, I feel I have to get there, get my footwork down and be able to set the ball to our middle blockers and outside hitters."

The momentum appeared to have shifted back to Rice in the final game as the Owls grabbed a 13-10 lead.

But instead of settling for a fifth game, the Lady Aggies reached down and delivered five straight points to close out the match.

Sophomore outside hitter Kristie Smedsrud's 21 kills paced a balanced A&M attack. Middle blocker Cindy Vander-Woude and outside hitter Dana Santleben each tallied 19 kills while junior middle blocker

Page White added 15. Wente finished the match with 76 assists, a new Lady Aggie record for conference games and just one short of A&M's all-time mark, set by Genny Wood against the University of Texas-El Paso in 1991.

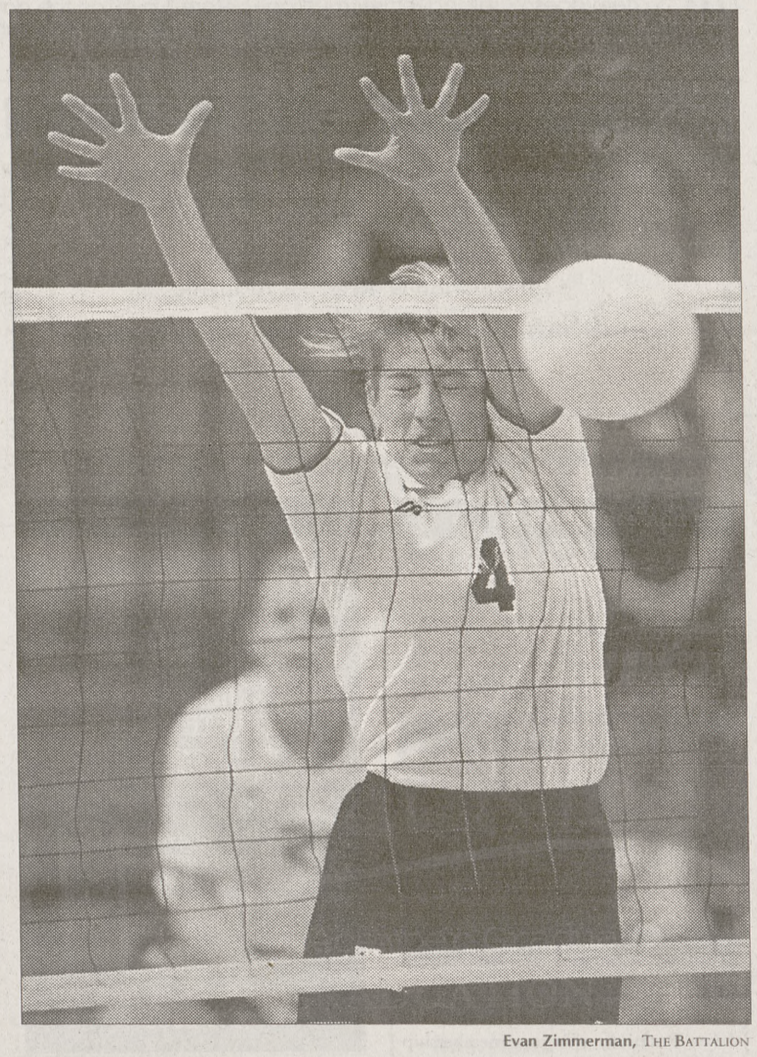
"The stat sheet looks a lot better than the match did," Corbelli said. "Some players weren't quite prepared to be fighters tonight, and that was disappointing.

"Rice scouted us well and knew what our attack would look like, but we did regroup and come back to win. They were ready to beat us."

Despite A&M's sluggish effort, Corbelli said the team can take some positives away from the victory. The Aggies' 94 kills and 94 digs were both season highs.

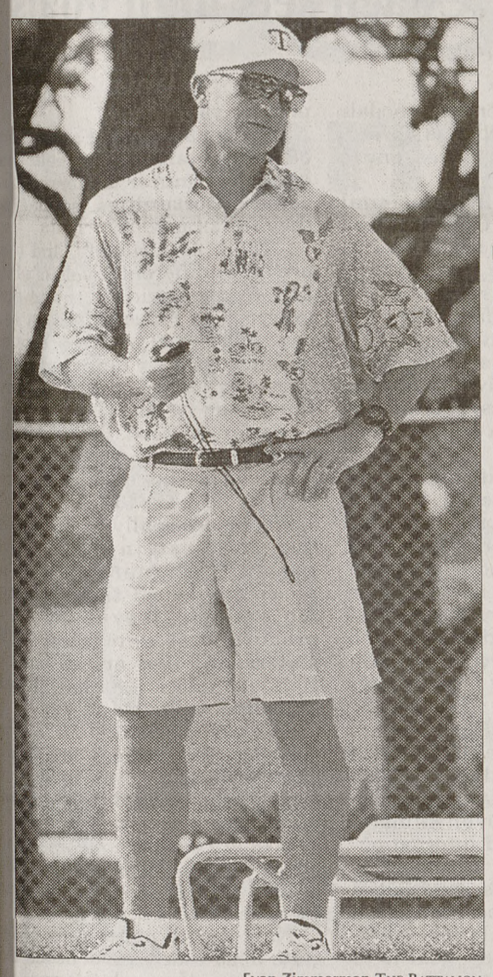
"As disappointed as we are in the way we played, I think this is the best thing that could have happened to us," Corbelli said. "Had we won easily, we may not be reflecting on things we need to work on. The girls know it and they're very serious about it and that's only going to help us get stronger.

"We got away with a win, but deep down, we know we could have done better."


Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

Sophomore middle blocker **Page White** winces after knocking the ball back over the net in A&M's four-game win over Rice.

Experienced Wagner ready to lead women's swimming


Evan Zimmerman THE BATTALION

A&M Women's Swimming Coach **Don Wagner** keeps an eye on his team during practice.

❑ The new coach hopes to be on the Olympic swimming staff in 2000.

By Kristina Buffin
THE BATTALION

As the swimmers get out of the pool, he pats them on the back and tells them, "Nice job."

The new head coach of the Texas A&M women's swimming team, Don Wagner, believes encouragement will be the feature that distinguishes him as a nationally-recognized head coach.

"I like to take the positive approach," Wagner said. "I will continue to encourage them as long as they are busting their butts every day. I like to start with the positive, and then move on to the things that we are doing wrong."

Until now, the A&M swimming program has operated under one head coach for both the men and women's team. However, this year, the Athletic Department decided that it was time to have a separate coach for each team.

"We are opening the new natatorium and realized that it was time to commit to the swim program," Senior Associate Athletic Director Lynn Hickey said. "They have been successful every year and it is pretty unfair to have one person in charge of coaching, recruiting and all the other responsibilities. We wanted to show a total commitment to the program."

"We realized that it was time to commit to the swim program."

–Lynn Hickey
Senior Associate Athletic Director

Wagner comes to A&M from the University of Southern California where he was an assistant head coach and the recruiting coordinator for three years. Wagner accepted the job at A&M because he believes this is the next step in his evolution as a coach.

"There were several reasons why I chose A&M," Wagner said. "First, they have built a new facility that shows their commitment to the program.

"Second, the new conference (the Big 12) is going to be a great one. Being an assistant at USC was great, but I'm not going to go where I can't progress."

Wagner brings both national and international experience to the Lady Aggie Team. This summer, he was the head coach of the U.S. men's team at the World University Games. The team set a University

See WAGNER, Page 16

Fans see best era of A&M football

KRISTINA BUFFIN
ASST. SPORTS ED.

Attending the A&M-Colorado game or watching it on television Saturday, it was quite apparent that the Twelfth Man spirit is alive and well. Although the Aggies lost a close game, both former and current students have nothing to be ashamed of.

Since R.C. Slocum took over the Aggie team in 1989, he has compiled a 59-12-1 record, with a 34-1-1 record at home. Aggies have been able to experience one of the best periods in Aggie football since 1939 when A&M captured the national championship under the coaching of Homer Norton.

In fact, current students are actually being spoiled by this span of success.

This type of mentality is what makes the power of the Twelfth Man so special.

Although a majority of the campus is whining over how we were outscored,

Colorado has now joined the ranks of t-sippers and anyone who goes to Notre Dame. As Aggies, we need to realize that many former students had to experience just plain horrible Aggie teams.

Many students are second or third generation Aggies.

This means that we have had to grow up with stories from our parents or grandparents, talking about the good old days.

Most of our parents attended school during the 1960s when the Aggies compiled a 30-58-3 record and had only one first place finish in the Southwest Conference and one trip to Cotton Bowl.

Compared to the successes of the 1990s, current students are lucky.

Can you imagine attending games at Kyle Field and being beaten, oh sorry, outscored?

See BUFFIN, Page 16

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