

Aggies shift focus to La. Tech

By MATT MITCHELL
THE BATTALION

There are games, and then there are must-win games.

A must-win game looms large for the Texas A&M Football Team as it hosts Louisiana Tech at Kyle Field on Saturday at 4 p.m. The slumping Aggies, who have stumbled out of the gate with a 1-3 record, are looking to rebound from a disappointing loss to Colorado last week.

The pressure is on A&M as many fans and supporters are saying another loss to an unheralded team, especially at home, might make an already disappointing

season unsalvageable.

With a noticeable dropoff in program prestige and national notoriety between Colorado and Louisiana Tech, Saturday's matchup could be a tougher obstacle for the Aggies because of the perception that they have nothing to gain.

"Whatever happens against Louisiana Tech, it will probably not be enough to really impress anyone," Head Coach R.C. Slocum said. "But the fact is they're a good team and a team that our players will respect from watching the tapes."

The tapes show that Louisiana Tech had A&M's intrastate rival,

the 4-0 Baylor Bears, on the ropes before losing 24-16 earlier this season. Two weeks later, the Bulldogs whipped Mississippi State and former A&M Coach Sherrill 38-23 in a contest that was not as close as the final score indicated.

"So you have a team here that's a pretty dang good team (in Louisiana Tech)," Slocum said. "That complicates things because most of the people will watch this game and not recognize that they're as good as they really are."

Louisiana Tech's last outing was against a foe whose name probably still lingers in the minds of most Aggie fans. The Bulldogs lost a close game to rival Southwestern Louisiana.

Slocum said it helps to have an analogy between playing Southwestern Louisiana — because of the surprising outcome of their game with the Ragin' Cajuns — and playing a similarly underestimated team in Louisiana Tech.

"I think it helps us a bunch that we had a real good ballgame with Southwestern Louisiana," Slocum said. "I think our respect level for Louisiana Tech will be much higher after having lost to USL."

A&M's Wrecking Crew defense will have its hands full with a Louisiana Tech team that boasts one of the top passing attacks in

the country. The young A&M secondary will be tested by Bulldog quarterback Jason Martin, who holds virtually every career passing record at Louisiana Tech and looks to set another for pass attempts against the Aggies.

Martin's main targets will be wideout Chad Mackey, the Bulldogs' all-time career receptions leader, and tight end Josh Bradley, both of whom are among the best in the country. Running back Lee Ragsdale heads a

Bulldog running game that averages over 117 yards per game. Tech's weakness lies in its young offensive line, which returns only one starter from a year ago. The youth and inexperience of the line could play a key in A&M's success at putting pressure on Martin and stalling the Bulldog offense.

"The big plays are going to come," A&M inside linebacker Larry Walker II said. "I have no doubt about that. The opportunities just haven't been there yet."

On the other side of the ball, the Aggies' high-powered offense looks to continue its success of moving the football. While the running game stalled somewhat against Colorado last week, junior quarterback Brannon Stewart and senior wide receiver Albert

Connell posted record-setting performances.

With the re-emergence of a ground game to complement its potent passing attack, Slocum said the A&M offense is capable of more things.

"The thing I feel good about is that our quarterback is going to be a good player and give us a chance to do some things that we haven't been able to do (in the past)," Slocum said. "With the success of our receivers, I think we are breaking out of the mold of people thinking we don't throw the ball."

Stewart said maintaining the team's focus and concentration will be essential. The Aggies' recent play execution, most notably on offense, has been a key culprit for its early season woes.

"We've played well in the previous games," Stewart said. "We know we can move the ball and play well on defense. The mistakes should be easy to eliminate, but they've been recurring for us."

"I've tried to stress to the players not to worry so much about the opponent as much as worrying about us," Slocum said. "Worry more about what we're doing in terms of execution. Then, if the opponent's real good, we'll have a chance. And if they're not real good, we'll beat them by a pretty good margin."

A win by any margin would certainly be satisfactory for most Aggie fans, who are probably growing weary of these must-win games.

New video documents A&M football

For diehard Aggie football fans who have seen the video *Hullabaloo, Caneck!* there is now a fitting sequel to watch — *Domination in College Station!*

The video, produced by Victory Productions in conjunction with Prime Time Sports under contract with the A&M Athletic Department, gives a summary and highlights of each season from 1972 through 1994. Narrated by Dave South with background medleys from the Aggie Band, the number of highlights per year increases up to 1990, with some of the earliest years having more clips than later years.

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Tom Day
Senior journalism major



Sophomore strong safety Rich Coady brings down Colorado running back Herchell Troutman behind the line of scrimmage.

Dave House, THE BATTALION

Lady Aggie Home Stand

A&M hosts Big 12 foes Baylor and Texas Tech this weekend

By ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

This weekend, the 15th-ranked Texas A&M Volleyball Team will play two matches in three whirlwind days. The Lady Aggies face Baylor University tonight in G. Rollie White Coliseum at 7 p.m., and on Sunday at 1 p.m., Texas Tech University blows in from Lubbock with a No. 24 ranking.

Although the Lady Aggies' schedule might seem physically demanding, sophomore outside hitter Stacy Sykora said the matches are a welcome sight after going nearly a week with intense workouts and weightlifting.

"This week has been real tough," Sykora said. "We've been going hard at every aspect of volleyball and working out hard in the weight room. It's going to make the matches easier."

The Lady Bears carry a 13-4 record and are 2-1 in the Big 12 Conference after losing to the University of Texas in three games Wednesday. Head Coach Laurie Corbelli said she expects a familiar offense from Baylor.

"They're real similar to us in style of play," Corbelli said. "They will try to run a quick multiple offense and will run their right side a lot."

The Lady Bears feature freshman outside hitter Elisha Polk, who averaged 4.38 kills and 2.40 digs per game going into the Texas match.

The Red Raiders (15-0, 2-0 in Big 12 play) visit G. Rollie on Sun-

day after playing the University of Texas tonight. Senior middle blocker Jill Burness leads the team with 4.33 kills and 1.87 blocks per game.

Corbelli said Texas Tech relies on the strength of its middle blockers.

"[Texas Tech] is one of the top teams in blocking, so we will need to handle the ball well to the setter," Corbelli said. "They have a lot of returning starters who are comfortable in G. Rollie, and we expect them to be hot."

The Lady Aggies have won seven consecutive matches following wins over the University of Oklahoma and Texas last week. Sykora said those wins and its No. 15 ranking motivates teams like Baylor and Texas Tech to play harder.

"We are the team to beat," Sykora said. "We have everything to lose, and the others have everything to gain (by defeating A&M)."

The Lady Aggies have continued to increase the dispersment of the ball on the court to the middle and the right side. The team has received added production from the middle in recent matches, and Corbelli said she wants the role of the right side to increase as well.

"We continue to work the right side with more movement for a more deceptive attack," Corbelli said. "We want to get more production out of them."

Junior setter Farah Mensik said she is preparing to involve the



Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

Sophomore outside hitter Stacy Sykora goes for the kill against Texas Sept. 25.

right side more by improving on her backward sets, also called D's.

"I'm working on my D's," Mensik said. "The right side has really worked hard and they're starting to show up more in our offense."

Corbelli said the team began working with weights more during the week to build endurance.

"We've increased the workload in the weight room because we need to build our strength now for the rest of the season," Corbelli said.

A&M soccer resumes five-game road trip

By NICKI SMITH
THE BATTALION

For its last road trip of the season, the Texas A&M Soccer Team is thinking big — Big 12, that is.

This weekend, the Aggies will embark on a four-day road trip, playing three new rivals from the Big 12 Conference.

The Aggies traveled to Boulder to take on the University of Colorado today at 3 p.m. and will travel to Oklahoma on Sunday to play Oklahoma State University at 1 p.m. and then the University of Oklahoma on Monday at 4 p.m.

Although the road trip is the longest of the season for the Aggies, Head Coach G. Guerrieri said it will give the team time to learn more about each other.

"Road trips do a pretty good job of bringing the team together," Guerrieri said. "It is one thing to be a team at practice every day, but it is another to live together full-time and be with each other all day. We don't prefer [long trips], but we don't let being away affect our level of play."

Sophomore midfielder Sharon Pickering said the team can regain some momentum this weekend after suffering its first loss of the season last Sunday against Big 12 nemesis Nebraska.

"We look at one game and then the next," Pickering said. "Our one



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Freshman forward Becky Peterson shoots past a Missouri defender in a Sept. 15 game.

loss should not devastate us for the rest of the season. A few changes were made, but our game plan stayed the same, which will help us get things going."

The Aggies are ranked seventh in Soccer America's Top 20 poll and have an overall record of 9-1 and a Big 12 record of 3-1.

Colorado owns a record of 3-3-1, 1-2 in the Big 12, and is considered by Guerrieri to be the toughest opponent the Aggies will face all weekend.

"Our first game is the toughest," Guerrieri said. "Colorado beat OSU 2-1, and OSU beat Oklahoma 5-1, so obviously Colorado is the better team. If we win the first (match), then the second and third wins will become easier."

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The Battalion's 1996 Staff Picks

The Match-Ups	Tom Day	Kristina Buffin	Jaime Burch	Sara Duesing	Jeremy Furtick	Colby Gaines	Ross Hecox	Matt Mitchell	Dennis Ramirez	Nicki Smith	Consensus
Louisiana Tech at A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M: This game isn't in Louisiana
#7 Nebraska at #16 Kansas State	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska: Undefeated Wildcats humbled
#6 Michigan at #22 Northwestern	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan: Wildcat Cinderella story over
#4 Penn State at #3 Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Penn State	Ohio State: Buckeyes make statement
Oklahoma State at #23 Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas: Horns gouge Cowboys
Baylor at Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Baylor	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Baylor	Tech: Bears lose to first real opponent
Missouri at SMU	SMU	SMU	SMU	SMU	Missouri	SMU	Missouri	Missouri	SMU	Missouri	Missouri: Don't miss this one, fans
Kansas at Oklahoma	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Oklahoma	Kansas	Kansas: Sooners continue winless skid
Houston at USL	USL	USL	Houston	USL	USL	Houston	USL	USL	Houston	USL	USL: Cajuns rage against Cougars
Oilers at Cincinnati	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Cincinnati	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers: Big Daddy can't stop this team
Indianapolis at Buffalo	Buffalo	Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Buffalo	Buffalo	Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Buffalo	Indianapolis: Colts run wild over Bills
Pittsburgh at Kansas City	Kansas City	Kansas City	Kansas City	Kansas City	Kansas City	Kansas City	Pittsburgh	Kansas City	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	Kansas City: Chiefs aren't the Oilers
Last Week	5-7	4-8	6-6	6-6	7-5	6-6	6-6	5-7	7-5	5-7	57-63 Worst week in Battalion history
Cumulative	34-14	28-20	25-23	31-17	28-20	26-22	27-21	26-22	29-19	27-21	281-199 Vegas here we come!!