

Round One

A&M volleyball goes toe-to-toe with Arkansas-Little Rock

BY ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

rest of tournament, junior outside hitter Kristie Smedsrud said.

Batters swing two bats in warm-up before they step up to the plate. Runners strap weights to their ankles so when its time for the real race, their legs feel lighter.

After bumping up against No. 5 Nebraska (a three-game loss) to end its regu-

lar season Saturday, the 15th-ranked Texas A&M Volleyball Team will face a lighter substance in the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in first-round action of the NCAA Tournament. The Lady Aggies play the unranked Trojans tonight at 6 p.m. in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Senior middle blocker Page White said in addition to the Huskers, the grinding 10-match tour of the Big 12 Conference this season prepared A&M for the post-season.

"I don't think there is anything else we can go through," White said. "We've been through the highs and the lows. We've experienced a lot of things and a lot of good teams."

With a 24-7 record and a third place finish in the Big 12 Conference with a 15-5 mark, the Lady Aggies were disappointed not to be one of the 16 teams in the tournament receiving a first-round bye. Now A&M hopes to use tonight's match to gain some momentum for the

team averages 14 kills and 2.4 blocks per game while hitting for a .258 percentage. A&M is hitting .237 as a team with 16.64 kills and 2.9 blocks a game.

A&M Head Coach Laurie Corbelli said she is not concerned about adjusting her game plan for the Trojans. She said she wants her players to regain their poise after the loss to Nebraska.

"We're not going to change a lot in our game because it's really effective," Corbelli said. "It will be more about building their confidence."

If the Lady Aggies defeat UALR, they will play at No. 7 Michigan State University this weekend. White said A&M's prospects for the tournament are good.

"I think we can compete with anyone in the nation physically, except we might not be as tall," White said. "But we are very well-rounded. We just need to get some more confidence."

"We can get a match under our belt and get some momentum."

Kristie Smedsrud
Outside hitter



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

Ability to adapt keeps Lake from going dry

BY SARA DUESING
THE BATTALION

she can really hurt them."

In her sophomore year at A&M, Lake finished the season with a 84.6 free-throw percentage and was fourth on the team with 54 assists. Previously, Lake attended Southwest Texas State University for a semester before transferring to Weatherford College where she averaged 11 points a game.

"Christy has excellent one-on-one skills,"

Lange said. "She is a very unselfish player and works to get other people involved. Sometimes, though, she is too unselfish and misses some open shots."

With the Lady Aggies considered the underdog in the new Big 12 Conference, the senior from Duncanville has made it her personal goal to give 100 percent for every game.

"A lot of people aren't expecting us to do well," Lake said. "I want this to be a good season, so we really need to do the best we can in order to prove them wrong."

Before competing, Lake studies the scouting reports of her opponent and visualizes what she needs to do to be effective. She relaxes by listening to music and focusing on the task before her.

As for the future, Lake said basketball is not likely to be a major factor.

"I'm majoring in sports management but I don't really know what I want to do," Lake said. "I think, though, that I would like to manage a health club or something."

For now, however, Lake concentrates on enjoying the sport and the teammates and friends she has made by participating.

"One thing Christy has taught us is to realize that basketball is fun and it is just a game," Tucker said. "She keeps it light on the court and, with jokes, keeps everyone in a good mood."

It seems too obvious to even say that experience is a valuable key to success. Whether it is sports, academics or life in general, those who have experience are usually better off than those who do not. Guard Christy Lake is a huge asset to the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team because she has experience.

In her third collegiate program, Lake has adjusted to different teams, coaches and systems, and has gained the knowledge and skills that have led her to success.

"Christy adapts pretty well," Assistant Coach Tracy Stewart Lange said. "She is an experienced athlete who understands the system and uses that to help others on the team, especially the youth."

Lake began playing basketball when she was just 8 years old, after her father, who also played basketball, sparked her interest.

"I didn't get competitive in basketball, though, until about junior high," Lake said. "That was when I knew it was something I wanted to work hard for."

Lake's father not only introduced the sport to her but inspired her to continue throughout school as well.

"My dad has just always been a big influence," Lake said. "I like doing it (basketball) and enjoy its competitiveness."

Described as a deceptive player by senior captain Lana Tucker, Lake is known for her smooth ball-handling and passing.

"Christy sometimes isn't seen as a threat because the stats don't show that," Tucker said. "Yet she knows the floor so well and makes everyone around her play better that if the other teams don't stop her penetration,



Women's basketball aims to beat SMU

BY JAMIE BURCH
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team (1-1) will try to turn things around and climb back into the win column when it battles former Southwest Conference foe Southern Methodist University (1-2), at G. Rollie White Coliseum after the conclusion of the NCAA first-round volleyball game.

The game will start 30 minutes after the A&M-University of Arkansas at Little Rock match. The anticipated start time for the basketball game is 8:30 p.m.

Coming off a 96-76 loss to the University of Arizona Nov. 25, A&M will face a tough squad in the Lady Mustangs. SMU is led by 5-foot-11-inch senior forward Kim Brandl. Brandl scored 23 points along with six rebounds against the University of Colorado (Nov. 30), and 19 points and six assists against the University of Louisville (Nov. 29). Brandl's 19.8 points per game leads the team.

A&M Head Coach Candi Har-

vey said the Lady Aggies will have to contain the prolific scorer — so prolific, in fact, that Harvey has a nickname for Brandl.

"Doctor Brandl is still there," Harvey said. "She's a post player and a perimeter player. It will be a challenge for us to handle her."

The Lady Aggies will also have to defend against senior point guard Shawna Ford. Ford's 10-of-21 three-point percentage leads the squad and is second to Brandl with 15 points a game.

Harvey said Ford's shooting ability is an asset to the team.

"Shawna Ford is back at the point guard position," Harvey said. "She gives them leadership and good outside shooting."

Harvey said she realizes the Lady Aggies will have to play their best possible game to defeat

the Mustangs. "On paper, they're a better basketball team," she said. "I'm hoping the home court will help out. And I'm hoping that we will play over our heads, because that's what we need to do."

"On paper, they're a better basketball team. I'm hoping the home court will help out."

Candi Harvey
A&M head coach

Correction:

In the Dec. 3 sailing story, Julie Dalton was misidentified as the team captain. Scott Sharples is the captain and Dalton is the public relations chair.

► NFL Suspension

Lett to sit out one year

YORK (AP) — Dallas Cowboys defensive tackle Leon Lett was suspended a minimum of one year — effective immediately — by the NFL on Tuesday for violating the league's drug policy.

Lett was suspended for four games in 1995. At the time, he was informed that any further violation would result in a minimum one-year suspension without pay.

Lett is Dallas' best defensive lineman and a former Pro Bowl starter. The defending Super Bowl champion Cowboys (8-5) are tied for first place in the NFC East, and his loss creates a huge hole in their defense.

The 28-year-old Lett is the second high-profile Cowboy to receive a drug-related suspension this season. All-Pro wide receiver Michael Irvin was suspended for the first five games of the season after pleading no contest to drug charges stemming from an arrest.

Lett was recently informed that he had violated the policy, NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said. Lett appealed the penalty to NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue, who denied the appeal.

Lett was not immediately available for comment. His

agent, Jim Steiner, was traveling and not in his office, his secretary in St. Louis told The Associated Press.

Lett has been tested up to 10 times per month since the NFL suspended him last season.

According to the NFL's substance policy, a suspended player may not participate with his team in any way during the time he is out. A player suspended for one year may apply for re-instatement no sooner than 60 days prior to the one-year anniversary date of his suspension.

In addition to his drug history, Lett may be best known for two gaffes during games.

With the Cowboys leading comfortably in the 1993 Super Bowl, Lett recovered a fumble, and holding it in one hand, returned it 64 yards only to have Buffalo wide receiver Don Beebe catch him from behind at the goal line and strip the ball before Lett could score.

In a 1993 Thanksgiving Day game played in the snow, Lett bungled an attempted fumble recovery in the closing seconds, giving the Miami Dolphins a second chance to kick a game-winning field goal.

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