

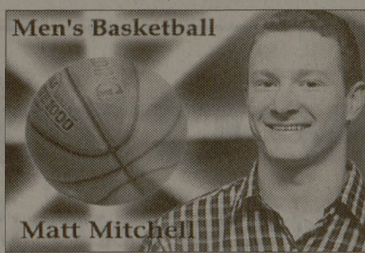
A&M continues close loss trend

After their recent foray north to Oklahoma and Colorado, the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team returns to the friendly confines of G. Rollie White Coliseum this week to play Texas Tech University and Oklahoma State.

The Aggies' stay at home will be short-lived, however, when they again take to the road to visit Oklahoma State University in the second game of a home-and-home series. Take a gander at this glut of topics and assorted ramblings of a self-professed hoops guru.

Déjà Vu All Over Again ...
Those who followed the Aggies for the last two years may have noticed a certain trend—close losses in the final seconds of the game, especially away from home.

One may recall last year's team lost seven of its last 11 games in the final 30 seconds.



Matt Mitchell

Eight of those games were decided by five points or less and another was lost in overtime. The team finished 0-7 in league road games.

This year's edition is 0-5 away from the Holler House against Big 12 competition and is again just a few fortuitous bounces of the ball away from at least a .500 record.

The Aggies lost close games to Baylor (three points), Nebraska (two points), Texas (overtime), and Oklahoma (overtime).

Against Colorado, the Aggies were down by just three late in the second half before a questionable call turned the momen-

tum of the game.

"We've been so close in all these games," senior center Dario Quesada said. "Even when the final score is 13 points or whatever, we were still pretty close at the end. It's just a matter of putting it together in the last minute and then we'll be okay."

One big reason for the crunch-time futility is A&M's move from the either really good or really bad teams of the Southwest Conference to the consistent talent and experience of the Big 12 basketball programs.

"Last year, we were playing lower-level Southwest Conference teams," Quesada said. "I mean, how many ranked teams have we played this year? Iowa State, Clemson, Texas, Kansas, Colorado. Now we're playing Big 12 teams and we're still close."

Fans would think after so many close losses, the Aggies would have it down by now, but

they remain a few well-executed plays away from winning the games that more experienced teams are able to win.

Player of the Week

I've got to agree with Whataburger this week, because the stats speak for themselves. Senior guard Tracey Anderson was on fire against Oklahoma and Colorado, averaging 20 points per game, shooting 50 percent from three-point land, and 100 percent from the charity stripe.

Anderson shooting exceptionally well from painted lines is nothing new, as anyone who has seen him knock down 15 of 20 treys in practice can attest.

Combine that shooting prowess with a developing pull up 15-20 foot jumper and a heart the size of Allen Iverson's ego, and you've got the makings of a pro prospect. As usual, consistency is the key.

SOFTBALL

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The Lady Sooners have eight seniors including pitcher and Big 12 Co-Player of the Year Jill Most, while Nebraska has been to the NCAA tournament for the last two years.

Evans said the Lady Aggies have key players who will help them compete against national powerhouse teams like OU and Nebraska.

"We are planning on using Mya as our clean-up hitter because she returns with the highest batting average and she can get RBIs by hitting long balls," Evans said. "We also have senior Gina Perez, who is a consistent hitter, an aggressive player in the outfield and a silent leader by virtue of her ability. With everything we have, we should be competitive every game we play."

Perez said the Lady Aggies are concentrating overall on one game at a time.

"Nothing is different this year, we still have high expectations for ourselves," Perez said. "Talent is talent, all we need is to get the right chemistry going to win the right games at the right time. We each need to take care of our

own pieces of the puzzle and no one team for granted."

A&M begins season with doubleheader

By NICKI SMITH
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Softball Team begins its 1997 season today with a double-header against Southern Texas State University in San Marcos.

The first game is slated to start at 5:00 p.m. with a second game immediately following.

Head Coach Jo Evans said the Lady Aggies are excited to play SWT.

"We have been practicing for months straight, so we are anxious to get our season underway," Evans said. "Although it's been fun to get to know each other and come together as a team, we are ready to test our skills and see what our strengths and weaknesses are. Hopefully, our game against SWT will help things start the right foot."

A&M went 3-1 against Southern Texas last year, winning all three home games.

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