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Aggies open door to fans

'Basketball Mania' to showcase men's, women's teams

By JASON WHITCOMB
Staff writer

Tonight, the Texas A&M basketball program will jump start the season with "Midnight Madness" at G. Rollie White Coliseum. The event will start at 9 p.m. with free admission and will feature both the men's and women's teams. The festivities will include player introductions, the Aggie Band, Reveille and the yell leaders, contests, and a slam dunk competition.

"It was a great event last year that was well organized and a lot of students came out and had a good time," men's coach Tony Barone said. "It was real fun last year and we are really looking forward to doing it again. We think it's a plus from the standpoint of getting students out to see the players and get to see a slam dunk contest."

The event was originally planned for last Saturday but Barone changed the date because he felt the team needed more practice.

"Sometimes 'Midnight Madness' can get in the way of practicing," Barone said. "It was said that we didn't have the event because the band was not able to be there, but that was not the case at all. We felt that at that particular time it was more important to have practice that night. 'Midnight Madness' tends to become a two-day event for us because we have to actually recover from it the next day. The band is a very intricate part of what we are doing but our choice not to have the event last week was because we felt we needed to practice."

As for the upcoming season, the Aggies are looking to improve on a team that showed signs of becoming a contender in the Big 12 last season.

They consistently played games that were very close and competitive, but could not quite find a way to win in the end.

"Some people say that losing those close games hurts our confidence, but I think that those experiences will have the opposite affect," Barone said. "Knowing that we played good teams close shows us that we can be competitive. We lost those games because we just couldn't find a way to win, not because we expected to lose or lacked the ability."

This season, one of the team's main goals was to be in excellent physical condition and have a great work ethic. So far, Barone is pleased with the personal initiative that each player took to stay in top physical condition in the off-season.

"We are thrilled with the physical condition of this team," said Barone. "Getting in great shape was key issue for us in the preseason and these guys really made a tremendous commitment to work hard in both the post-season and preseason. The reality of it all is that you can't practice the way you want to practice if you are not in great shape. You can't raise your production and have greater success without being in top physical condition."

After another good recruiting class this past off-season, the Aggies are taking full advantage of the perks that come with being in the Big 12 and having Reed Arena finished in '98. These advantages could help push A&M basketball to a higher level.

"Being in the Big 12 and having Reed Arena to show off has alleviated a lot of recruiting problems," Barone said. "It was always hard to recruit

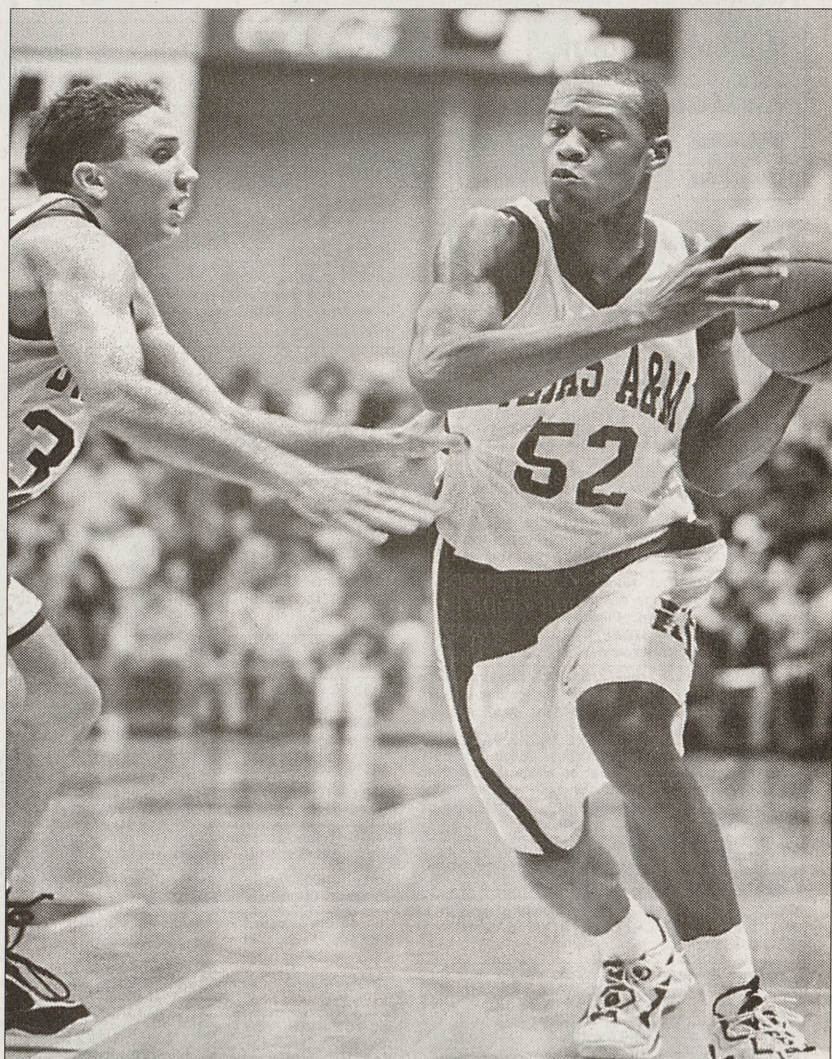
players to G. Rollie, but now, with Reed Arena, we have the ability to show that we are committed to becoming a top basketball program."

The Aggies will be led once again by junior forwards Calvin Davis and Shanne Jones, senior center Dario Quesada, and sophomore guard Jerald Brown. Important contributions are also expected out of junior center Chris Richards, a transfer from TCU, and sophomore forward Aaron Jack, a transfer from Penn State. Also added to the mix is freshman guard Michael Schmidt, who was regarded as the best high school basketball player in Canada. Schmidt, along with Davis and Brown, heads a group of young talent that could push the Aggies to the top of the conference for the next few years, and, possibly even farther into the future.

"Michael is a phenomenal athlete and he is starting to adjust to basketball in the states," Barone said. "Michael is going to have to adjust to the quickness and the physicalness of American college basketball. What Michael could do in making a one-handed pass or grabbing a rebound in Canada, he cannot do here without getting knocked to the ground, and he has adjusted to all of that in practice. We are just waiting to see what he can do in game situations."

The Aggies are looking to what has been called "The Basketball Yell Practice" to give them the spark needed to tip-off the season. The team hopes that this could be the year that the Aggies break through.

"Last year the ball just hit the upright and went the other way," said Barone. "Maybe this year the ball will start to hit the upright and come back our way."



Sophomore **Jerald Brown** drives the ball last season against Iowa State. Brown and the Aggies will be on hand tonight at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Soccer set for tournament after clinching title

The team's incredible consistency is among the best in the nation.

A&M is currently ranked No. 6 by Soccer News, No. 7 by the NSCAA/Umbro, No. 7 by Soccer Buzz and No. 8 by Soccer America.

Big 12 Tournament

Texas A&M will be the top seed in the Big 12 Tournament in San Antonio, Nov. 6-9. The Aggies receive a first round bye and will play the winner of the first round Baylor vs. Texas game.

Earlier this season A&M defeated Texas 4-1 in Austin, but fell to Baylor 2-1 in a controversial overtime loss.

Last season the Aggies reached the championship game of the tournament, but came up short in overtime against Nebraska 1-0.

The end of the road

When the post-season comes to a close, the Texas

A&M Soccer Team must bid farewell to three of its all-time greatest players.

Sonia Ibanez, Diana Rowe and Bryn Blalack will conclude their careers with the conclusion of the NCAA National Championship Tournament.

Ibanez has scored 8

goals and 20 assists in her four years of play. She ranks 10th in goals scored, ninth in points accumulated and sixth in assist made on the A&M career-leaders lists.

In addition, Ibanez is fifth in shots taken with 115.

As a sophomore, Ibanez

received the Aggie 12th Man Award, recognizing the player who makes the largest con-

tribution to the team's success even though not among the starting lineup in every game.

Diana Rowe has accumulated 51 points from 14 goals and 23 assists. She ranks fourth, sixth and third in those categories, respectively. Rowe's 90 shots rank eighth among Aggie career leaders. For her efforts, Rowe was named a third-team All-American last season. She was also on the National Soccer Coaches Association of America/Umbro All-Central Region Team, the All-Big 12 Conference Team and the All-Big 12 Conference Tournament team.

Last, but in no way least, is Bryn Blalack. Blalack has led the team in scoring in each of her four seasons of play. She scored 11 goals as a freshman, 23 as a sophomore, and 28 as a junior. This season she has 14 goals for a career total of 76, which leads the career goals list. Blalack also leads the career points list with 183 and the career shots list with 353. Her 33 assists rank her third. Blalack is the first first-team All American for Texas A&M and was a finalist for the Hermann Trophy, which goes to the nation's top player. She has scored seven hat tricks in her four years as an Aggie and a finalist for this year's Missouri Athletic Club Sports Foundation Collegiate Player of the Year.

Stephen Boudreau is a sophomore business major

TT's Rogers earns honor after kick

DALLAS (AP) — Missouri quarterback Corby Jones, Iowa State nose guard Greg Schoon and Texas Tech kicker Tony Rogers are the Big 12 players of the week.

Jones earned top offensive honors for tying a school record with four touchdowns while running for two more — including the game-winner from 15 yards — as Missouri upended then-No. 12 Oklahoma State 51-50 in double overtime.

Jones was 13-of-25 passing for a career-best 231 yards and ran 12 times for 85 yards. With 316 yards of total offense, he upped his season average to a conference-leading 227.9 yards per game.

Schoon had a career-best 13 tackles, including six solo, in the Cyclones' 24-17 victory over Baylor. He also had three sacks for minus-27 yards while helping Iowa State rack up its highest sack total (seven) since 1987.

Rogers, who was beaten out last September by Jaret Greaser but got the job back after Greaser broke his leg against Nebraska, hit field goals of 40, 19 and 47 yards, the last one giving Tech a 16-13 victory over then-No. 20 Texas A&M. The victory gave the Red Raiders a tie for the Big 12 South lead.



NOTEBOOK



STEPHEN BOUDREAU
staff writer

Added one more trophy to the case. Attending a University that boasts such prowess in athletics, it's good to see that Texas A&M has finally regained championship status.

With the Big 12 Championship on their resume, the Aggies now have the national championship in their sights. For many teams, such a goal would be unrealistic, but the Aggies have the talent and momentum to carry them all the way to the top.

Success is nothing new.

Since the inception of NCAA Division I soccer at Texas A&M, coach G. Guerrieri's teams have compiled an outstanding 82-17-3 overall record and a 17-2 Big 12 record.



ACE IN THE HOLE

Cox has chance to become one of A&M's all-time best

By JASON WHITCOMB
Staff writer

Although Texas A&M golfer Ty Cox is only a junior, he's already had the opportunity to experience a lifetime of memories for a golfer. It all started when he picked up a golf club at the bright age of three. With years of grooming under his belt, Cox then packed his bags and came to Aggieland, where he soon experienced three of the greatest moments of his life.

In 1995, as a freshman, Cox had the opportunity to partner up with Tiger Woods at the Windon Memorial Classic in Chicago. Being able to play with someone who would eventually win The Masters was a tremendous learning experience and a major confidence booster.

"Tiger is a real nice guy," Cox said. "At first, he was real locked into his game, but then we started to exchange some words and it was pretty cool. It was a great experience playing with him. And, then, here I was playing here as a sophomore and he was out winning The Masters. I thought it was neat to look back and know that I competed with him."

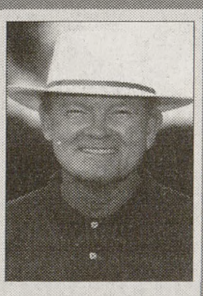
This past summer, Cox qualified for the 1997 U.S. Amateur. He managed to advance to a second day of competition and lost in a playoff to advance to match play. His ability to compete with the best amateur players in the country served as another indicator of his mental and physical ability.

"I learned a lot about pressure in that situation," said Cox. "It was real nerve-racking playing in front of thousands of people and being around 22 of the best golfers in the country. I told Coach Ellis afterward that it might have been the greatest experience of my life. I really got a lot out of it and I think it gave me a lot of confidence going into this year."

Today, Cox and the other golfers will

"As good as Ty is, he has the opportunity to be one of the best players I've ever had."

BOB ELLIS
A&M GOLF COACH



have the opportunity to meet and play with PGA golfer, and former Aggie, Jeff Maggert. Cox feels that Maggert's mere presence on the course and his personal contact with the players will have a very positive impact on the entire team.

"We've never really had a chance to be able to sit down with him and ask him questions," Cox said. "With him being in the Ryder Cup this year, it's kind of neat that we will get to talk with him and learn from his experiences. I consider him a leg-

end in golf."

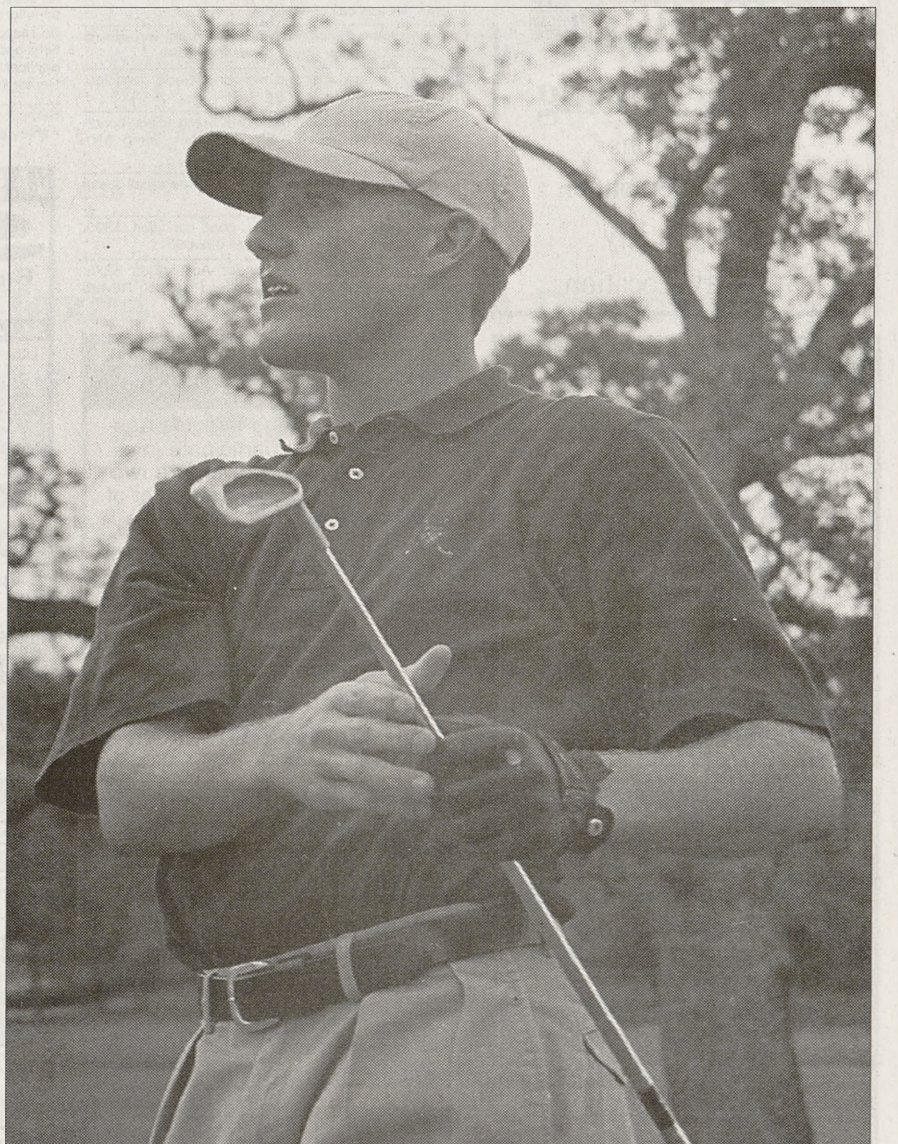
The combination of experience and natural ability has boosted Cox to the top of the collegiate golf world. This fall, Cox's biggest accomplishment was when he finished in fourth place at the Missouri Bluffs Intercollegiate among a very strong field of players.

"Ty is an outstanding player," coach Bob Ellis said. "As good as Ty is, he has the opportunity to be one of the best players I have ever coached. It's totally up to him on how far he will go."

Despite his personal accomplishments and dreams of becoming a PGA golfer, Cox's priority at the moment is with his team, who he also calls his best friends. He feels that his ability to exhibit a great deal of cockiness in his game rubs off on the other players and allows them to have more confidence with their game.

"In college athletics, there can be no singling out," Cox said. "I think that this year's team is special in that we are all good friends and hang out with each other. We are all real supportive and ready to offer a helping hand to each other. I think we are a real good team that will contend in the spring."

With the spring competition around the corner, Cox and the rest of the Aggies will no doubt be licking their chops to go out and show the golfing world that they are a force to contend with. He came to A&M for the traditions and, hopefully for him and the rest of the team, the tradition of golf excellence will continue in Aggieland.



Junior **Ty Cox** watches his shot during practice at Pebble Creek Country Club.