

Friday • October 31, 1997

Coaches, players need fan support

Last Monday, in the pre-dawn haze here on campus, as I was attempting to blow past the inevitable slowpokes who hog every sidewalk, I was privy to some pretty disturbing comments and revelations about our football program.



LEN CALLAWAY
staff writer

"We suck—our guys don't give a crap. I saw some of them at the Barracuda Bar and Coupe De Ville's half an hour after their plane hit the ground at Easterwood."

"R.C. sucks. He can't motivate and the guys don't want to play for him. He says we'll pass more, but we don't have the talent to pass the ball. Our program needs a change, Slocum has got to go."

All right, you weaking simps.

You've upset me, and now I'm ready to rock. Most, not all, but most of you who sit and criticize are idiots who probably should not even be allowed to watch football because you lack the mental prowess to truly understand the game. You sit in the stands bitching and moaning, or you don't even care enough to attend the games. You pretend to be outraged by two questionable performances in an otherwise solid beginning, yet when the Ags perform and kick a little tail, you say things like "They got lucky, Slocum still has to go." Do you fools realize Slocum was a winning head coach when we were all still pooping our little dummies?

The last time I checked, the football team was made up of humans, young humans who sometimes make mistakes. Here's a revelation for you: They may even repeat the same mistake a time or two. The process is called learning, aging, maturing and even seasoning. Football is a team sport, and both coaches and players make up the team. Coaches and players must share responsibility for the team's successes and defeats.

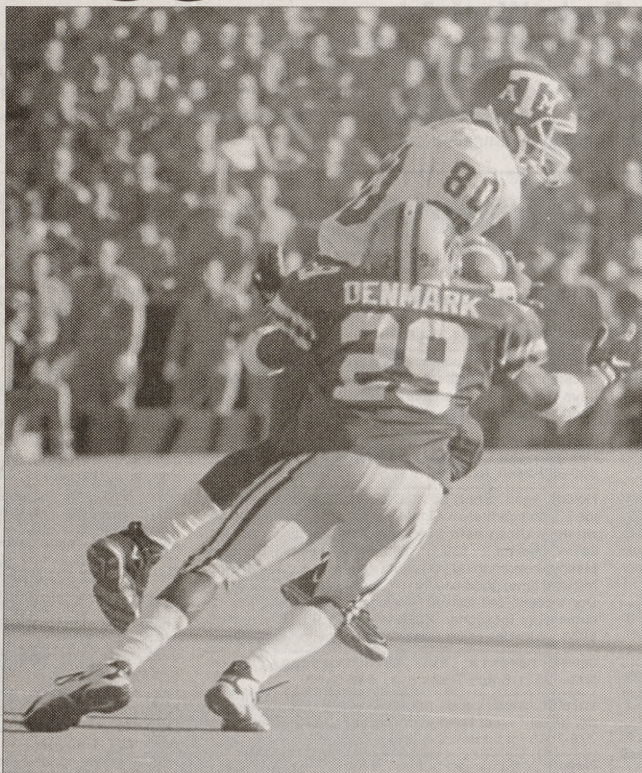
There are reasons A&M has not been able to compete consistently with programs like Nebraska, Notre Dame and Penn State. Recently, the No. 1 reason has been the fact a few years back our program was viciously sabotaged by an alumni in Dallas and a couple of our own players. The reasons were greed and total disregard for the traditions and values for which A&M stands. Everything was going along just fine, we were succeeding and having good solid seasons. All of a sudden, the NCAA dropped the hammer. We lost scholarships, TV privileges and the right to play in bowl games. The next season we won the Southwest Conference but were stripped of the title due to the probation. The scholarship issue kept us from signing all of the talent needed to have an adequate amount of senior leadership now, and the TV sanctions played hell with recruiting. Slocum didn't do this. His coaches didn't do this. Some of our players and an alumni took it upon themselves to violate the rules and they got caught.

Getting caught is the important part. Everyone realizes indiscretions and backroom antics take place in college athletics, the key is not to get caught. Now that we have been caught and punished, it will take a few more years until our young players are seasoned veterans and are capable of leading the rest of the team. Building a strong football program takes a minimum of five years (one full eligibility cycle) and a lot of luck and patience.

Some point to our academic requirements and say we ask too much of our students, and we can't always attract the top names because they are concerned about success in the classroom. What a bunch of crap. If an athlete is too concerned about not being able to make the grades, then they probably shouldn't even be playing for A&M in the first place.

PLEASE SEE CALLAWAY ON PAGE 4.

Aggies look to rise again in South



DAVE HOUSE/THE BATTALION

Sophomore receiver **Chris Cole** makes a catch against KSU.

By **JEFF SCHMIDT**
Staff writer

The Oklahoma State Cowboys may very well be the Cinderella story of the college football season. Too bad the clock struck midnight last Saturday afternoon. The Cowboys hit a bump in the Big 12 road by losing to Missouri in a double-overtime barn-burner.

OSU comes to Kyle Field Saturday with a share of the Big 12 South lead. There is a lot at stake for the Aggies. The Ags need a victory over the 19th ranked Cowboys to climb back in the Big 12 race. The Cowboys, under Head Coach Bob Simmons, have been ranked in the Top 25 four straight weeks after not appearing in a national poll since the final rankings nine years ago.

Last season, the Aggies had a difficult time in Stillwater. OSU led 13-10 at halftime before the Aggies took advantage of three turnovers to escape with a 38-19 win. Tiki Harde-man scored three touchdowns in the victory.

Oklahoma State features a superb run defense which is ranked sixth in the country. The defensive coordinator for the run is Rob

Ryan, son of Buddy Ryan. The bell-cow on defense is free safety RW McQuarters. McQuarters also plays cornerback, leads the conference in punt returns and has two receptions on offense.

Cornerback Kevin Williams, the conference leader in interceptions, also is having a great season, as is linebacker Kenyatta Wright, the "quarterback" of the defense.

The offense is high-powered, as evidenced by the 50 points they scored last weekend. Like A&M, Oklahoma State uses a two-quarterback system. Quarterbacks Tony Lindsay and Chris Chaloupka both will play, with Lindsay seeing more time.

The Cowboys also have two outstanding running backs: Jamaal Fobbs and Nathan Simmons. Fobbs set a school freshman rushing record with 217 yards against Southwestern Louisiana, but it has been Simmons who has been turning heads of late. He now leads OSU in yards-per-game and will start tomorrow.

Their best offensive weapon, tight end Alonzo Mayes, will miss this weekend's game with a shoulder sprain. Mayes is easily the best

tight end in America and is considered by many NFL scouts to be the best prospect at his position. Against Missouri, Mayes had eight catches for 126 yards and two touchdowns. With him out of the lineup, OSU may struggle with the forward pass.

But the big question for the A&M is which Aggies will show up tomorrow. The Ags manhandled weaker teams but have lost two straight to better competition. More importantly, they have lost two straight conference games. The OSU game comes at a bad time, with the Aggies at a crossroads.

Despite the losses, the players remain positive, especially junior Brannon Stewart, who will resume the starting quarterback role.

"It's always nice to come back and play at your place. It seems the fans are a little more juiced up (for night games)," Stewart said.

Head Coach R.C. Slocum said the in-fighting and finger pointing that comes with losing has not set in.

"I sense a renewed commitment," Slocum said. "I'm pleased with the attitude of the team. It's very important they believe in each other."

Soccer set to close out regular season

By **STEPHEN BOUDREAU**
Staff writer

The sixth-ranked Texas A&M Soccer Team (15-2) will conclude its regular season tonight in Ft. Worth when they battle the Horned Frogs of Texas Christian University.

"It's real important we maintain the momentum the girls have created over the last two weeks," Head Coach G. Guerrieri said. "We want to maintain that going into the conference tournament and keep ourselves moving forward. I hope that we've learned from past experience that you can't look past anybody. Right now, the biggest game of the season is the game on Friday in Ft. Worth."

The Aggies outscored the Horned Frogs 3-1 the last time they met, in 1995 when the now-defunct Southwest Conference was still in existence. A&M has never lost to TCU, leading the series 4-0.

"The thing about TCU is that they are a team that's been around for a long time, but only been giving out scholarships in the last couple of years," Guerrieri said. "We haven't played them since they've had scholarship play. They are a much, much improved team. They play a really

attractive, high-possession, ball control kind of game. A lot of teams we've played in the past were just a rock'em sock'em kind of style. So this will be a new and difficult challenge facing us."

A&M has won three consecutive games, including a 5-0 drubbing of Colorado last Sunday, which gave the Aggies the Big 12 title.

"We take the season one game at a time, so I don't see us overlooking the TCU game at all," senior Diana Rowe said. "They're the kind of team that if we don't come out and play well, they have the ability to beat us. We are still aiming for the big one, and we're going to keep working hard."

For seniors Rowe, Bryn Blalack, Jessica Mouske and Sonia Ibanez this game will mark the last regular-season game of their careers.

"Everything is a little bit more special this last year, because it could be the last time you're doing certain things with the team," Blalack said. "I just want the season to last as long as possible, because that's more time I get to spend with these guys. We have a blast. It's definitely been special and hopefully we'll continue to do well."

PLEASE SEE SOCCER ON PAGE 4.

A&M runners go for Big 12 title

By **JEFF WEBB**
Staff writer

The Texas A&M Cross Country Teams are gearing up to travel to Stillwater, Ok. for the Big 12 Championships this weekend. The Aggies had one of their best meets of the year two weeks ago at the Aggie Invitational in College Station. Since then, the teams' practice schedules have changed this last week.

"We've been taking it easy this week," junior Scott Legefelf said. "Tuesday and Thursday are our hard workouts. This is my favorite time of the year. Everything is cut back and I'm not running as much mileage, although the workouts are faster."

The Big 12 Championships are a good way for the team to

tune up for the one that really counts, the regional meet. With the number of ranked programs in the Big 12 this year, the stiff competition should provide a good test for the Aggies.

"It's a conference meet, and we always want to do well in a conference meet," Coach Greg Hinze said. "Colorado puts 12 scholarships into their cross country program, and they get to train at 6,300 feet up, so if they don't win the championships, there is something wrong there. The focus of our program has shifted more towards the NCAA regional because that's how we qualify for the NCAA's."

The women's side showed great improvement in the Aggie Invitational. The gap between the first and sixth place

finisher for the women was only two minutes.

"That was inspiring because we felt we were running as a team," sophomore Sandie Ramsey said. "If we can do that here, we can do that in big meets. For us seeing the big competition, we realize it's okay to run fast sometimes. If you're prepared, you're not afraid of it."

"The Big 12 is tough on us and the teams are highly ranked," Legefelf said. "We're cutting back a little bit, but not as much as other teams. We're really concentrating on the regional meet to get to the NCAA's. The Big 12 meet is just to put a ring on somebody's finger."

With their best showing of the year on Saturday, those rings could belong to the Aggies.

Swimmers ready to take on Kansas

By **JASON WHITCOMB**
Staff writer

The Texas A&M Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Teams will open their season tomorrow at 1 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center. The Aggies will compete against the Kansas Jayhawks in what will surely be an interconference dogfight.

"We are really excited to open

the season against such a strong team," Men's Assistant Coach Jay Holmes said. "It's the kind of meet where we are expecting our top guys to be on their game and they are expecting their top guys to do the same."

Both the men and women are coming off strong performances in the Big 12 Invitational last weekend, where they both managed to finish third in

the team relays.

The men will be led by junior Jerrod Kappler, who is coming off a spring where he finished eighth in the country in the 50-meter freestyle.

"Jerrod is coming on real strong," Holmes said. "He has a great desire to be the best, and when he is out there, the other team knows exactly who he is."

PLEASE SEE KANSAS ON PAGE 4.

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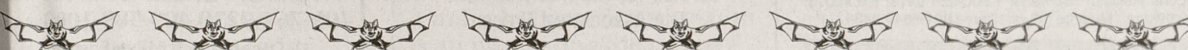


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