

Tricks of the track and field trade



TRACK AND FIELD NOTEBOOK



MICHAEL FERGUSON

The Texas A&M Track and Field Teams were off this weekend following a successful showing in Norman, Okla., at the Sooner Invitational, which kicked the indoor season. They will return to action Saturday at the Houston Invitational.

Through the Out Door

Track and field has two distinct competitive seasons in which the Aggies compete in each spring. The indoor season begins first, still in the heart of winter, provide adequate conditions for the athletes to compete in. Later on in spring the outdoor season kicks off when the weather cooperates more with the sport. There are several distinguishing differences between the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons. The outdoor season offers more dashes, relays and sprints, while the indoor is geared more toward middle-distance running.

During the outdoor season, the primary races are the 100-, 200-, 400- and 800-meter dashes. The indoor season also includes the 200, 400 and 800, but places the 100 with a combination of the 55 and 60. The 110-meter hurdles for the men and the 100 hurdles for the women, as well as the 400-meter hurdles, are present during the outdoor season. However, these are replaced by the 55- and 60-meter hurdles during the indoor season.

In distance running, both seasons contain the mile run, 3,000-, 5,000-, and 10,000-meter runs. During the outdoor season, the 1,500-meter run is added, as well as a 3,000-meter steeplechase.

The 1,600-meter relay (mile relay) is run in both seasons. The 400-meter relay is only run in the outdoor season, while the indoor season includes a distance medley relay.

There is also quite a visible difference in the field events. Both seasons include the long jump, high jump, triple jump, pole vault and shot put. However, in the outdoor season, the discus, javelin and hammer throw are added. During the indoor season, the weight throw is added to compensate for the loss of these events.

Two Roads to the NCAA Championships

In track and field, most athletes will say their goals are to run, jump or throw to the best of his or her ability and help the team win. This, of course, is true, but does not always convey the ultimate goal of their sport, which is qualifying for the NCAA Championships.

Qualification can be obtained by two methods; automatic and provisional. At the beginning of the season, benchmarks are set in each of the respective events based on previous results. If these benchmarks are beaten, then that athlete automatically qualifies for Nationals.

If the athlete reaches a mark close enough to the benchmark, he or she provisionally qualifies. But this provisional qualification may or may not be enough to reach the NCAAs. There are a certain number of spots for each event at the NCAA Championships. The automatic qualifiers are subtracted from the total number of available spots for each event, and the remaining spots open are given to the top provisional qualifiers, eliminating all of those who fall below the cutoff.

AGGIE SPORTS BRIEFS

from staff and wire reports

Ellis honored with GCAA Hall of Fame induction



Ellis

Texas A&M Men's Golf Coach Bob Ellis is being inducted into the National Golf Coaches Hall of Fame today.

The 56-year-old Ellis is being honored by The Golf Coaches Association of America for his work at Texas A&M for the past 24 seasons. Ellis' teams have finished in the top 25 13 times, including four top-10 finishes.

Ellis' team will begin the 1998 season with a trip to Hawaii to play in the Big Island Intercollegiate.

Fossum invited to play for 1998 USA National Team

Casey Fossum, a sophomore pitcher on the Texas A&M Baseball Team, was announced as one of the first nine players to be invited to training camp for the 1998 USA National Team yesterday.

Fossum joins two other players from the Big 12, sophomore catcher Blair Barbier from Texas Tech and sophomore pitcher Jason Jennings from Baylor, as the conference's three representatives.

Clemson was the only school to have two players invited, including the only freshman. With one selection from North Carolina, the ACC joins the Big 12 with three representatives. Cal St. Fullerton, UCLA and LSU sent the other three players.

A SMASHING SUCCESS

The Texas A&M Tennis Teams take aim at the rest of the Big 12

By AL LAZARUS
Staff writer

With a successful first season of Big 12 competition under their belts, the Texas A&M Men's and Women's Tennis Teams are poised to solidify their stances as two of the nation's premier tennis programs.

Leading the women's team this season will be seniors Monica Rebolledo and Vanessa Rooks.

"We're pretty confident that we are going to keep doing well," Rebolledo said. "We want to be among the top teams in the Big 12 and go to the NCAAs."

This confidence is present despite the graduation of key players Julie Beahm and Nancy Dingwall. Even with the losses, Rooks said the team has high goals.

"We want to finish No. 1 (in the Big 12), definitely No. 1 — there is no No. 2 or No. 3," Rooks said.

Coach Bobby Kleinecke shares the optimism, though a bit more cautiously.

"This is a little bit of a rebuilding year, but I feel like we have the talent and the team to win, it's just a matter of things falling into place for us," Kleinecke said.

Things certainly fell into place last season, as the women's team finished 19-6, just one win shy of tying the best overall record in the history of women's tennis at A&M. They finished tied for second place in the Big 12 and were ranked 27th in the final Rolex Collegiate Rankings. At one point, they were ranked as high as 21st, and never fell lower than 29th.

Rooks said being ranked highly had its advantages. "We could tell that some of our opponents were intimidated by just looking across the court at them," Rooks said.

Kleinecke said he agrees and feels his team is getting the respect it deserves.

"The other teams respect us," Kleinecke said. "They know that we are going to go out there and play hard, and that's something we take pride in doing every year."

At first glance, it may seem like the men's team had a rather lackluster season last year, finishing 9-14, with a 3-6 conference record. However, Coach Tim Cass said he feels overall, it went as well as could be expected.

"I think the Big 12 right now is probably the third-best conference in the country, and it's really only going to get better," Cass said. "Quite honestly, I think we did the best we could last year."

Despite having only one senior and one junior on the team this year, Cass said he refuses to lower his high expectations.

"Tennis is one of those sports where we could use that (being a young team) as an excuse, but I expect

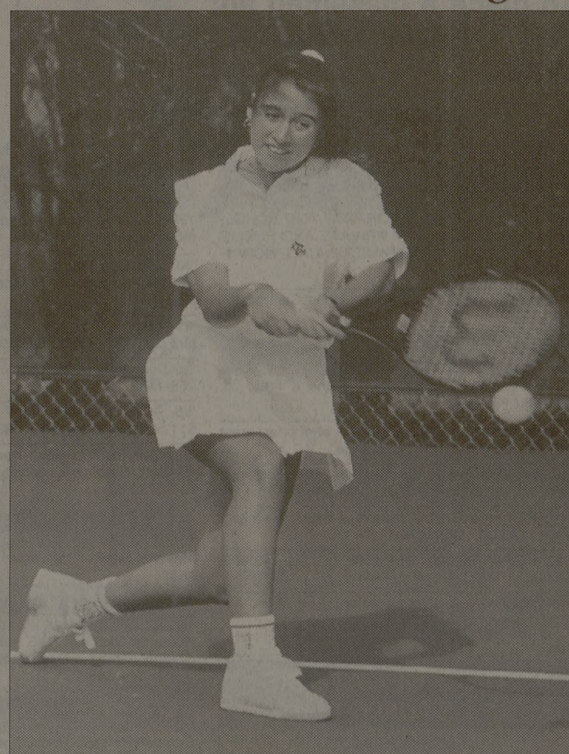


PHOTO COURTESY SPORTS INFORMATION

Senior **Monica Rebolledo** will lead the women's tennis team on the court for Texas A&M's spring season.

an awful lot out of these guys, and I think they expect a lot out of themselves," Cass said.

As the only senior on the men's team, Carlos Tori knows he will be looked at as a team leader.

"Playing college tennis is very different from anything else. I think I'll be able to help them (younger players) prepare for certain situations they might face," said Tori.

Junior Brent Horan knows he also will be looked to as a leader, but is quick to give credit to the young players.

"I think the freshmen seem mature, they already know what's going on, they just seem like they've already been here," Horan said.

Even though they may not have posted the greatest record last year, Cass said the men's team will be a force to be reckoned with. Looking ahead to two big matches against Kansas and Texas later this year, he sums up this feeling perfectly.

"Do they (Kansas and Texas) on paper have more experience? The answer's yes," Cass said. "But do they want to play Texas A&M this year? The answer's no."

ETHAN HAWKE GWYNETH PALTROW WITH ANNE BANCROFT AND ROBERT DE NIRO

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