

Sports

Check out these digs ...

Senior Stacy Sykora shoulders Aggie volleyball hopes for 1998

GRANT HAWKINS
The Battalion

This year is a whole different scenario for Sykora and the team.

Only two starters return from 1997, Sykora and junior middle blocker Amber Woolsey, and Sykora is the only senior on the squad.

Sykora also had shoulder surgery in March to repair multi-directional instability (MDI) that was causing severe soreness in her shoulder.

Sykora was unable to compete until practice started on August 15.

With the surgery behind her, Sykora and the team can now focus on improving on last year's performance, something that would be difficult without her senior leadership.

"My role is going to change this year because, being the only senior, I should have court experience," Sykora said. "My role on this team is to pass on my court experience."

"Last year everyone had court experience. This year, [that is] what we lack."

Producing on the court is where Corbelli believes Sykora's leadership will speak the loudest.

"I expect her to play to her maximum ability and maximum intensity level," Corbelli said. "I think that is where she mostly leads the team, on the court."

On the court, Sykora has become one of the premiere players in the competitive



Senior **Stacy Sykora** and junior **Amber Woolsey** return in 1998 as the only seasoned veterans on an Aggie volleyball team that finished its season in the NCAA Sweet 16 in 1997.

Big 12 Conference and is considered one of the top defensive players in the nation. Sykora takes pride in her defensive play.

"Defense is my thing," she said. "I really love it. Offense gets more attention, but defense is just as important because without a dig

you can't have a set for the hitter. I just like to make digging part of the show people come to see."

SEE **SYKORA** ON PAGE 13.

McGwire learns to enjoy historic race

MIAMI (AP) — Mark McGwire sat at a table in the postgame news conference, wearing a satisfied smile and a sleeveless shirt, leaning on arms strong enough to break a record.

Massive muscles help to explain McGwire's prodigious power, but the question persists: How can someone hit so many home runs so far?

Skeptics keep trying to taint his achievements. The controversy over home-run supplements in his locker has faded, including false rumors that he displays a photo of the Florida Marlins pitching staff. So how about this: Maybe it has become too easy to hit home runs.

The issue came up Tuesday night after McGwire homered twice against hapless Florida to break Hack Wilson's National League record of 56 home runs in a season. Someone asked what this year's power surge says about the state of pitching.

McGwire treated the question like a hanging curveball.

"Who cares?" the St. Louis Cardinals slugger said. "This is history, right? If something great is going to happen, why do we have to critique it and say, 'Why did they do it? What's wrong with it?' instead of accepting what's happening and saying, 'Hey, this is a great thing happening in America.'"

"Just let it happen. Ride the wave. Enjoy it while it's happening. We don't know if this will ever happen again."

The man making history has developed a keen appreciation for it. Tuesday's show of force against the worst pitching staff in the NL left McGwire only four home runs behind Roger Maris' 37-year-old major-league record of 61.

With 24 games remaining, McGwire was on a 67-homer pace. But he has hit as many as 15 in September, and matching that total this month would give him 70.

The race to surpass Maris is not over, however. Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs hit his 56th homer Wednesday. Ken Griffey Jr. of the Seattle Mariners and Greg Vaughn of San Diego each had 47 entering Wednesday's games.

Two more for Mac

MIAMI (AP) — Mark McGwire hit two homers for the second consecutive night Wednesday against the Florida Marlins, giving him a career-high 59. He needs just two more to tie Roger Maris' 37-year-old major league record.

McGwire homered in the seventh inning against Brian Edmondson and again in the eighth on the first pitch from Rob Stanifer. Each was a two-run shot.

The first, which landed halfway up in the upper deck in left field, was estimated at 497 feet, making it the third-longest in the history of Pro Player Stadium. His second homer 30 minutes later was to left-center and traveled an estimated 458 feet.

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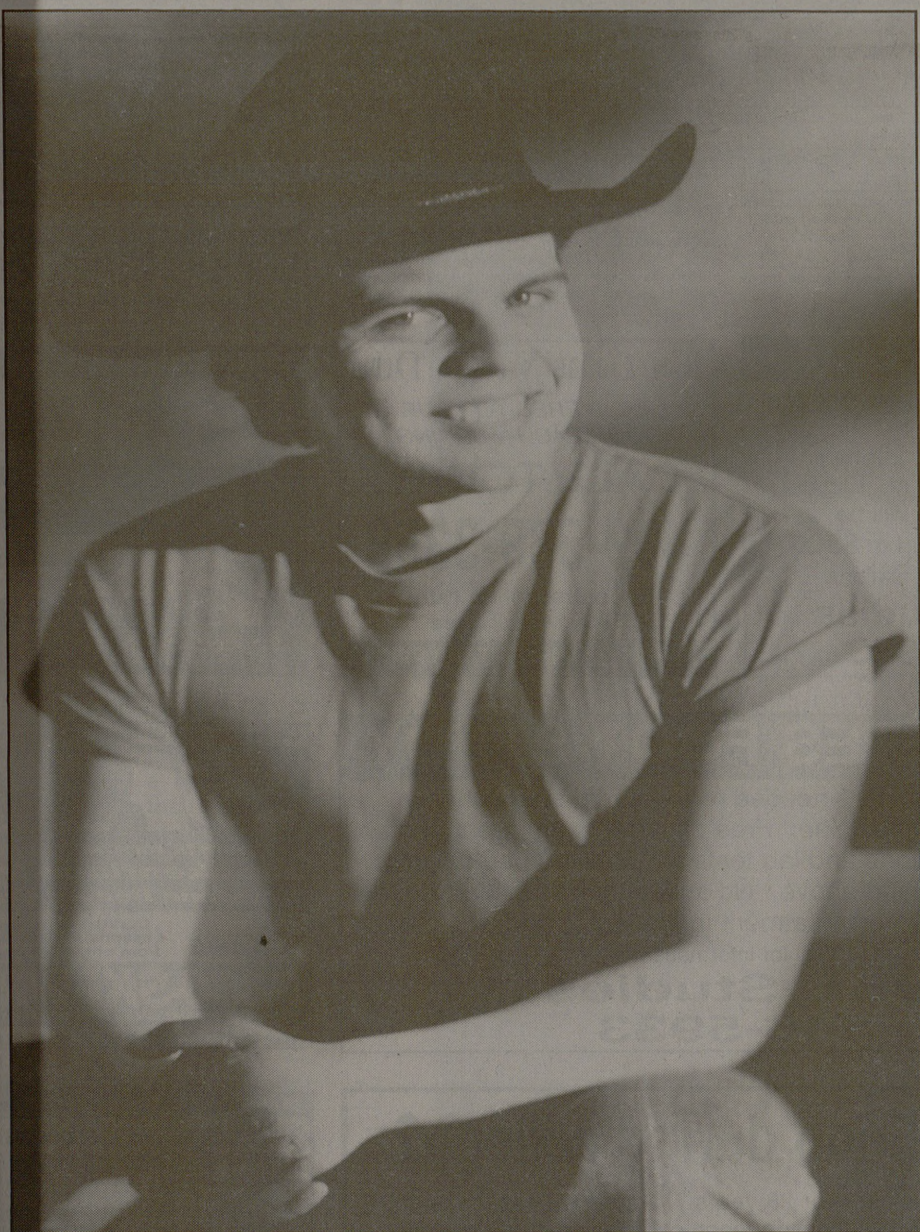
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\$1,000 CASH BIKINI

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The 50¢ Weekend

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