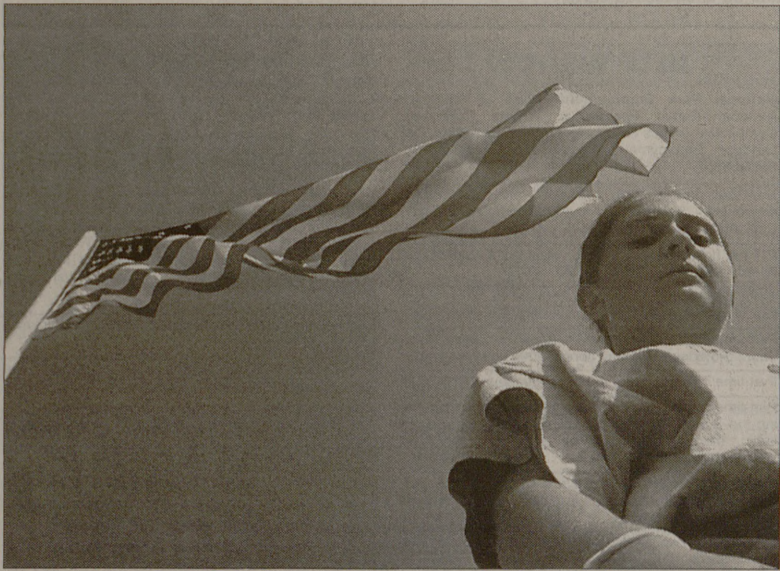


Sports

Hittin' the big time

Nicky Thrasher left high school early for A&M

BY AARON COHAN
The Battalion



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore midfielder **Nicky Thrasher** dreams of playing for the United States Olympic Soccer Team. She has scored four goals this season.

overwhelmed with the radical change in the environment," Guerrieri said. "She went from a West Texas superstar to a team full of superstars from all over the place."

Thrasher was always the player who had to score, dish out assists and defend in high school.

Her surrounding players now help out in those areas so Thrasher's game can develop.

"There are great players in the Big 12 Conference who just score, assist or defend, but she is all of those put into one," Guerrieri said.

Thrasher works hard on her game both on and off the field to achieve her all-around game.

"I work hard in practice because I know just how much harder the games are," Thrasher said.

Her hard work has shown this year as she already leads the Aggies

in points this season.

"Nicky is different than most soccer players," Guerrieri said. "You have players that have basic athletic ability, and then you have players like Nicky who have a mentality to train their hardest even when it's not soccer time, and she does it all the time."

Thrasher's teammates said she adds much to the team when she is on the field.

"Nicky is a very dangerous person to defend," junior midfielder Michelle Remington said. "Since she is always goal hungry, it's easy for her to beat the best."

Even though Thrasher's goal of playing Division I soccer has been reached, she is still in search of her ultimate goal — playing for the Olympic and National Soccer squads.

Women's golf team starts season

BY GRANT HAWKINS
The Battalion

In 1997, the Texas A&M Women's Golf Team started fall competition ranked 15th in the preseason polls. The Aggies opened their season with an 8th-place finish at the NCAA Rolex Preview in Madison, Wisc.

This year, the Aggies enter the season as defending Big 12 champions and hope to improve this weekend on their opening performance from a year ago.

The 12th-ranked Aggies get their season underway on Thursday in Albuquerque, N. M. at the University of New Mexico-Dick McGuire Invitational. To improve from last year A&M coach Jeanne Sutherland said she knows coming together as a team is paramount to the team's success.

"In the first tournament, we really want to find our team chemistry and set our team expectations," Sutherland said. "That way we know what to expect (in future tournaments)."

A&M returns to Albuquerque after placing sixth in last year's tournament. The Aggies are a part of a strong field that will be an early measure of their success.

"This is a really competitive field," Sutherland said. "There are 10 teams ranked in the top 25."

Marta Ostos will lead the charge for the Aggies. The sophomore from Mexico City won the A&M tournament qualifying by nine strokes. Ostos will be accompanied by junior Anna Becker and sophomore Mimi Epps.

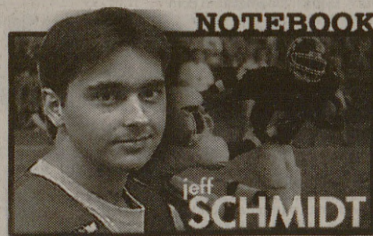
A 1997 All-Big 12 performer, Becker will try to bounce back from back injuries that slowed her late last spring. After qualifying for the U.S. Women's Amateur over the summer, Epps will try to carry that hot streak into fall competition. Stephenville, Texas, native Jennifer Karnes will make the trip to Albuquerque trying to boost the effort of the Aggies with her senior leadership.

Two true freshmen — Anna Jonsson and McKenzie Dyslin — will round out the Aggies' roster in Albuquerque.

Jonsson will join Ostos, Becker, Epps and Karnes in the team competition. Dyslin will compete as an individual. The Aggies' next tournament will be Oct. 3-4 when they compete in the Big 12 Preview at Circle C Golf Club in Austin.

True freshman replaces Hardeman

The Texas A&M Football Team overcame a slow start and defeated the Southern Mississippi Eagles 24-6 on Saturday.



NOTEBOOK
JEFF SCHMIDT

over Louisiana Tech. Hardeman, seventh on A&M's career touchdown list, was suspended before the win over Southern Miss. If he regains his eligibility, he can apply to the NCAA for a redshirt year and return next season.

How do you spell relief?
T-O-O-M-B-S

True freshman Ja'Mar Toombs made the first start of his career at fullback in place of Hardeman. The only true freshman to play this season, Toombs spurned Florida State to play for the Aggies. He rushed for over 2,500 yards his last two years at Kilgore High School. He is also the reigning 4A champion in the shot put. Toombs had better be ready because his backup will be former walk-on Will Simpson.

Connections

First-year A&M offensive coordinator

Steve Kragthorpe served as offensive coordinator at the University of North Texas from 1994-95 and considered going back there last season to become coach.

Instead of Kragthorpe, UNT hired another coach with A&M ties. Darrell Dickey began his career at A&M as a graduate assistant under Jackie Sherrill. In addition to Dickey, UNT defensive backs coach Gary DeLoach spent three seasons (1980-82) as A&M's defensive backs coach.

The Little "O"

To put it nicely, A&M is not exactly tearing it up on offense. As a matter of fact, they are ranked 108th in total offense out of 112 Division IA teams. Their once proud ground game is 84th in the country, and the Aggies will play without their best back, Hardeman.

SEE FOOTBALL ON PAGE 8.

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