

Sports

Aggies try to forget distractions, take out frustrations on Eagles

BY JEFF SCHMIDT
The Battalion

Texas A&M offensive coordinator Steve Kragthorpe probably wishes he had taken the head football coaching position at the university of North Texas.

After all, A&M is ranked 108th out of 120 Division IA teams in total offense and, due to a suspension, will not have senior running back D'Andre "Tiki" Hardeman. Instead, Kragthorpe will be coaching against North Texas Saturday, as the No. 10 Aggies host UNT.

Kragthorpe, who was North Texas' offensive coordinator from 1994-95, was offered the UNT job last season but said he turned it down out of loyalty to coach R.C. Slocum. "I just felt that at this point of time it was best for me to stay at A&M," Kragthorpe said. "I really like the situation where I can help in. I think R. C. made a leap of faith by jumping out there and naming me co-coordinator. I felt loyalty to him. I think a lot of people in the building probably wish he had taken the job."

Kragthorpe will not have the services of Hardeman this season, recently suspended for the season because he did not meet CAA satisfactory progress requirements.

Hardeman was allowed to play against Florida State and Louisiana Tech due to a clerical error in the posting of grades at the registrar's office.

As a result of playing an ineligible player, A&M forfeited the win over Louisiana Tech.

Slocum said he does not think the suspension will have an effect on his team.

"I don't think it's going to be a bad distraction at all," Slocum said. "Players don't read newspapers very much, so other than that it's not going to be a big deal."

"I think he's proven that he's a good back. You lose a considerable amount of experience. With [fullback] Jason Bragg being hurt we really don't have any experience to lose at that position."

The A&M offense can not afford a drop in production. The Aggies are averaging



GREG McREYNOLDS/THE BATTALION

Junior wide receiver **Chris Cole** catches a pass against Southern Mississippi Saturday. Cole has 12 catches for 162 yards, leading the Aggies' 108th-ranked offense.

ing only 111 rushing yards a game.

Hardeman, averaging 52 yards a game, also scored four of A&M's six touchdowns this season.

A&M will turn to junior running back Dante Hall to pick up the ground game with Hardeman sidelined.

Hall rushed for 76 yards on nine carries and two touchdowns against Southern Mississippi.

Despite the loss, Slocum said he does not consider losing one player a problem.

"One of the foundations of building a team is trying to get everyone to understand that it's not about one guy," Slocum said.

"It's about the overall group. Whatever the situation, you have 100 guys out there. You try not to let the loss of one player be that big of a distraction."

The Aggies had better not look past the Mean Green or they could see a sequel to last season's game.

UNT took a 10-10 tie into halftime against A&M, before A&M scored 26 unanswered points for the win.

Hardeman scored two of the Aggies' four touchdowns against UNT.

"Last year, North Texas was coming off a win over Texas Tech and we struggled with them for a good while," Slocum said.

"Our players remember playing this team just a year ago. They know it's going to be a challenge for us."

Soccer team prepares for SMU

BY AARON COHAN
The Battalion

On paper, it looks like a lopsided game as the favored Texas A&M Soccer Team prepares to host the Southern Methodist University Mustangs. The game will begin at 7 p.m. at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

The offensive struggles that SMU has faced this year, after losing four top players, have made them dig deep to find that talent core that has traditionally been there.

Yet earlier games this year are forgotten in the players' minds for this grudge match. Both Texas rivals look forward to facing each other every year.

"It's the same thing every year,"

sophomore defender Claire Elliott said. "The match is very physical and demands full concentration on both offense and defense."

The Mustangs bring a speedy front, both in forwards and midfielders that can easily wreak havoc on the A&M defense.

Junior defender Ashley Fendley said Jamie Campanaro, a senior midfielder and leading scorer for SMU, is a top priority for the A&M defenders.

"She, like the rest of their front, are great offensive threats that are very quick," Fendley said. "We cannot allow them to cross midfield a lot."

The defense is the main aspect the Aggies have worked on this week just in case the SMU offense resurfaces.

A&M coach G. Currier said not to overlook SMU.



ELLIOTT

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A&M begins conference play at Tech

BY ROBERT HOLLIER
The Battalion

The No. 17 Texas A&M Volleyball Team (7-1) concluded its preseason matches with a dominating win over Houston.

In that game, junior middle blocker Amber Woolsey had the best game of her career with a career-high in kills with 18 and a hitting percentage of .654.

The Aggies have a five-match winning streak, but they have not played since their home-opener against Houston Sept. 15.

The Aggies will try to increase their winning streak to six when they travel to Lubbock to face No. 25 Texas Tech (10-2) Friday at 7 p.m.

A&M is 9-7 all-time in its conference openers, but is 2-5 when they open on

the road.

The Aggies are 2-1 as they open their Big 12 conference schedule against the Red Raiders.

Coach Laurie Corbelli said every win counts when competing in one of the toughest conferences in the country.

"Given our youth and inexperience, a big goal for this group is to finish in the top four in the (Big 12) conference and battle for that top notch," Corbelli said. "In a conference like this, a lot of the teams have the same goal, and it would be very satisfying for us to achieve that mark."

After the Aggies play Tech, they return home to host Baylor (6-5) on Sunday at 3 p.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

In the all-time series, the Aggies are 39-5 against

Baylor and the Aggies defeated the Bears both times last year.

Despite the Aggies' recent dominance over the Bears, Corbelli said the team cannot get overconfident with so many tough conference matches still ahead.

"The Big 12 is going to be incredibly tough," Corbelli said. "I think eight or nine teams could battle for the top four spots. Every outcome of every match will be a mystery. The championship is going to be up for grabs."

"I am confident that the quality of our game will continue to improve, and depending on how quickly our athletes respond to the system and the competition, I do believe that things could turn out very much in our favor many times throughout the season."

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