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## Baseball kicks off for Aggies

BY MICHAEL TAGLIANTI  
 The Battalion

Today, grown men and women will call in sick to work, students will skip class and the parking area known as "Aggie Alley" will see its first inhabitants in seven months. Today is Opening Day.

The No. 11 Texas A&M Baseball Team will play the UT-Pan American Broncos at 3 p.m. at Olsen Field. The Aggies will complete the three-game series with the Broncos (2-1) with a doubleheader starting at 1 p.m. Saturday. A&M won all three of their games against UT-Pan Am when the teams met last year in their opening series of the season.

Junior centerfielder Steve Truitt said the team has some holes to fill if they want to repeat as Big 12 champions.

"Any time you lose key players like you did last year, you have big shoes to fill," Truitt said. "It is up to some of the guys who have been here, and some of the new guys to step up and take their place."

Coach Mark Johnson said although many people have ranked the Aggies highly in the preseason, there are still a lot of questions that need to be answered.

"In all honesty, we have been



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

Baseball returns to Olsen Field Friday when the 11th-ranked Texas A&M Baseball Team starts the 1999 season against the University of Texas-Pan American Broncos at 3 p.m.

picked pretty good, but there is not another (Jason) Tyner out there," Johnson said. "He broke the career stolen-base record here. (Craig) Kuzmic broke the home-run record. We had a guy hit 25 home runs, and he is leaving."

"For me, one of the best defensive catchers I ever had was Scott Sandusky. No one notices him. I thought he was outstanding. Eric French really solidified our bullpen. To make the assumption that these guys can be replaced is a little bit erroneous."

Johnson said Casey Fossum will start the season opener tomorrow. Chance Caple will start the first game of the doubleheader Saturday, and Matt Ward will start the second game.

Other changes in the Aggie lineup include Chris Russ moving into the closer's role. Shawn Shu-

macher will try to fill Sandusky's shoes at catcher, and Dell Lindsey will take over for Kuzmic at third base.

Senior first baseman and team captain John Scheschuk said he thinks the new players will be able to help the team.

"We have some new guys in here who I think are going to help out a lot," Scheschuk said. "Time will tell if they are going to put it together, but we all think they are going to help out a lot."

Johnson said that despite all the changes from last year's club, he likes the way this team is shaping up.

"I like our ball club. I think we carry over from last year the chemistry we had," Johnson said. "There are enough leaders from that team that know what it takes to be successful."

## Track teams head to Houston meet

BY TOM KENNEDY  
 The Battalion

Showdowns — They are the individual match-ups that add intensity and excitement to what is already considered a great event.

Even in track and field, these rivalries exist, and there will be plenty to go around this weekend as the Texas A&M Men's and Women's Track and Field teams travel to the University of Houston for the Cougar Invitational Feb. 6.

The men's meet will be headlined by the University of Texas, ranked eighth by Trackwire Online, 19th-ranked Texas Christian University and 25th-ranked Houston.



NELSON

A&M sophomore hurdler Kris Allen will look to continue a successful season against the rival Texas hurdlers.

"There's sort of a grudge match between the [Texas] hurdlers and Kris," Track and Field coach Ted Nelson said. "Because he beat them one week and they beat him one week, so [this race makes] a two out of three thing."

The meet should be a battleground for the traditional sprint match-ups Texas schools have historically emphasized, Nelson said.

"Texas and TCU are very strong in the sprints, and that has been our strength in the past," he said.

In men's field events, Nelson said senior Mike Lowrance is ready to make a move in the shot put.

"We expect him to pick up the pace, because we've brought him along a little slower this year," Nel-

son said. "He was the Big 12 Indoor Champion last year."

The women's meet will host the same schools as the men's except for Texas. Nelson said the meet's top athletes will be challenged by Aggie sophomore Christina Ohaeri in the hurdles and junior Chimika Carter in the long jump.

"Chimika Carter is getting ready to step up and run against the best, and Ohaeri is consistently improving," he said. "[Competing against Adams] really helps us prepare, because she's better than our competition in the Big 12."

Sophomore Meshell Trotter is expected to perform well after breaking her own school record last week in the weight throw.

The meet will begin in the Bill Yeoman Fieldhouse with field events at 9:30 a.m. Running events will begin at noon with the women's 5,000-meter race.

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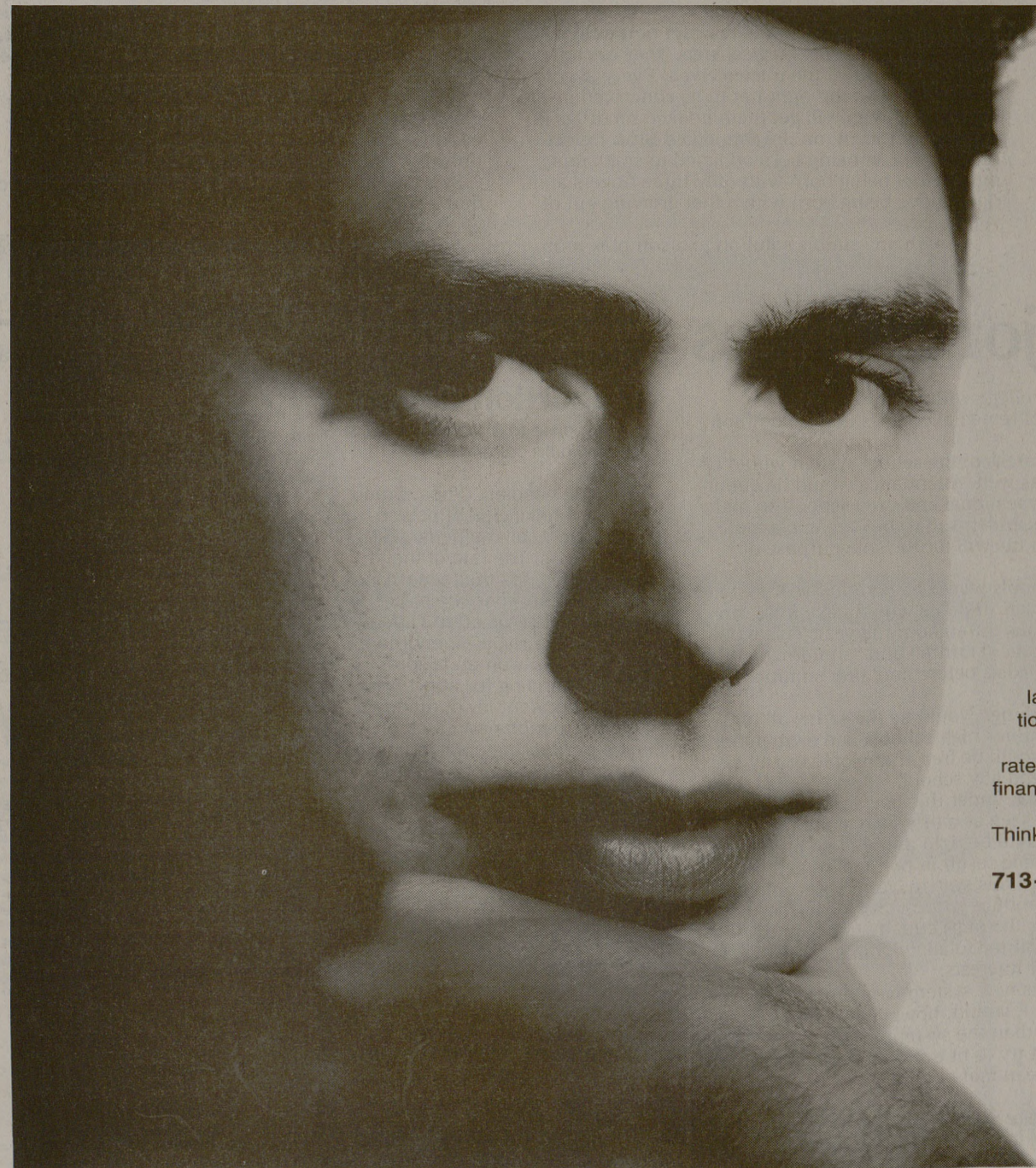
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## Swimmers dual schedule at Rec Center

BY JASON LINDSEY  
 The Battalion

The Texas A&M Teams will compete in College Station for a dual-meet schedule for the first time.

The action begins Saturday at the Natatorium as both teams face off against Texas Christian University's Horned Frogs. Saturday the men will face off against Southern Methodist University's 18th-ranked Mustangs.

With the finals of Conference meet on the way, the 14th-ranked will ride their win over ranked Arizona last week as a final showing of the before getting ready for the conference meet.

"SMU is a traditional house and will be out of the weekend," the swimming coach Mark Johnson said. "Across the board, we've been really strong, a lot of depth. It's helping us a lot."

The No. 24 team will use their win over TCU as a final reminder they have to do to win the Big 12 Conference. Johnson said he expects to show his last time for this season's fastest-growing nation's fastest-growing.

"Coming off such a competition in Austin, this provide us with some competition before the conference meet," Johnson said.

The women, who dual-meet competition are coming off losses to ranked Arizona and Texas. Despite having compete with the best in the country, the Aggies depth that other squads lack.

## BAYLOR

*Continued from page 8*  
 the defensive side of the ball, Baylor ranks last in the most offensive categories. The average points per game (62.9), team field goals (.386) and three-point shooting (.287) and average assists (10.5).

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