

A&M: on the road

Ninth-ranked Aggies take their hot bats to Arizona for showdown with Wildcats

BY MICHAEL TAGLIANTI
The Battalion

Bats, schmats. The NCAA spent all summer making new guidelines for metal baseball bats used in college baseball.

The new guidelines required that all bats used in college play be no lighter than three ounces less than their length in inches.

The new bats were supposed to bring pitching back into the college game and cut down on the football-like scores that have turned the game into a slugfest.

Evidently the ninth-ranked Texas A&M Baseball Team did not understand the purpose of the new bats.

The Aggies scored 48 runs in a three-game sweep of UT-Pan American — and hope to continue their hot hitting Friday when they travel to Tuscon, Ariz., to take on the 21st-ranked University of Arizona Wildcats.

The Wildcats are 11-0 and are coming off a 12-11 comeback victory over UNLV.

Despite the Wildcat's impressive record, the Aggies will be their first real test of the season. Arizona's schedule has consisted of St. Mary's of Cali-

fornia, the University of Hawaii-Hilo and University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

The Wildcats are led by freshman outfielder Shelley Duncan who is batting .344 with six home runs and 10 RBIs.

Coach Mark Johnson said the Aggies hot hitting should give the team confidence headed into the season.

"It (the hitting) gives you confidence," Johnson said. "You go to the next ball game, and instead of being 0-4, you are 3-4 — you feel better about yourself."

Junior pitcher Chance Cagle said it would be tough waiting a week to play another game.

"It is kind of tough not playing a Tuesday game," Cagle said. "We are going to have to wait another week for another exciting weekend. We are looking forward to going to Arizona and we are looking forward to another good weekend."

Sophomore outfielder Daylan Holt was named the Louisville Slugger National Player of the Week. Holt had four home runs and 11 RBIs in the doubleheader against UTPA.

Holt is continuing where he left off last summer when he led the prestigious Cape Cod League in home runs.

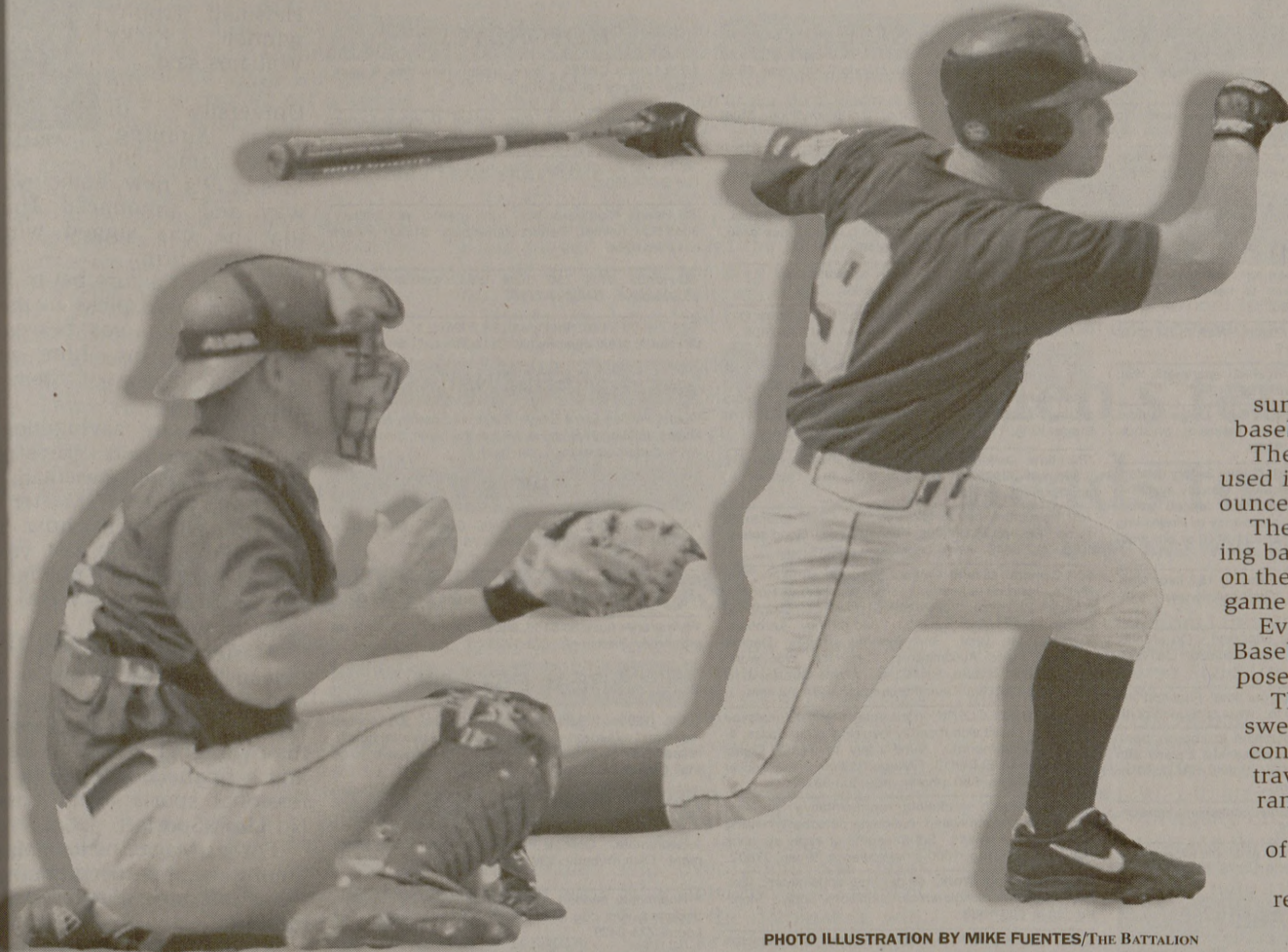


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Ags head to Norman to take on streaking Sooners

BY SANTOSH VENKATARAMAN
The Battalion

The road will not get any easier for the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team as they travel to Norman, Okla. to take on the University of Oklahoma tomorrow afternoon in a Big 12 Conference game.

The game is set for a 12:45 p.m. tip-off and will be televised live on the ESPN Plus regional network.

The Sooners (17-7, 8-3 Big 12) have won four straight conference games and are in a four-way tie for second place in the Big 12 while the Aggies (11-10, 4-7 Big 12) are coming off consecutive home wins over Baylor University and Kansas State University.

With A&M's latest win, a 79-74 decision over K-State on Wednesday, the Aggies are over the .500 mark this late in the season for the first time since the 1993-94 season.

In that same game, senior forward Shanne Jones led the Aggies with 18 points while junior guard Clifton Cook scored 17 points. Cook nailed four three-pointers in the contest while senior guard Chris Clayton sank three. Clayton's two free throws with six seconds left clinched the win for A&M.

The Aggies also held the Wildcats, the best rebounding team in the Big 12, to 26 total rebounds. A&M was bolstered by a dramatic improvement in two areas in which the team usually struggles. The Aggies committed only 11 turnovers in the game and made 19 out of 25 foul shots.

OU is coming off a 64-63 come-from-behind victory over the University of Texas on Wednesday. The Sooners trailed 63-56 with 2:47 left in the game before rallying to score the final eight points of the contest.

Oklahoma point guard Michael Johnson's 10-foot fallaway jump shot with six seconds left capped the rally and OU survived two missed tip-in attempts by UT forward Gabe Muoneke at the buzzer.

Forward Eduardo Najera led Oklahoma with 23 points, 15 coming off of five three-point shots. Najera is eighth in the Big 12 in scoring with 15.2 points per game.

Power forward Ryan Humphrey contributed 11 rebounds in the win over Texas and is averaging 7.5 rebounds per game, second on the team to Najera's 7.8 per-game average.

Guard Eric Martin, the Sooners' top three-point threat, is second in scoring for OU, averaging 12.3 points per game. Oklahoma Coach Kelvin Sampson is in his fifth year at OU and has taken the Sooners to the NCAA Tournament in each of his first four seasons.

Oklahoma has never lost to A&M, winning all ten meetings between the teams. The Sooners have won all five games against the Aggies in the teams' two year existence in the Big 12 Conference.

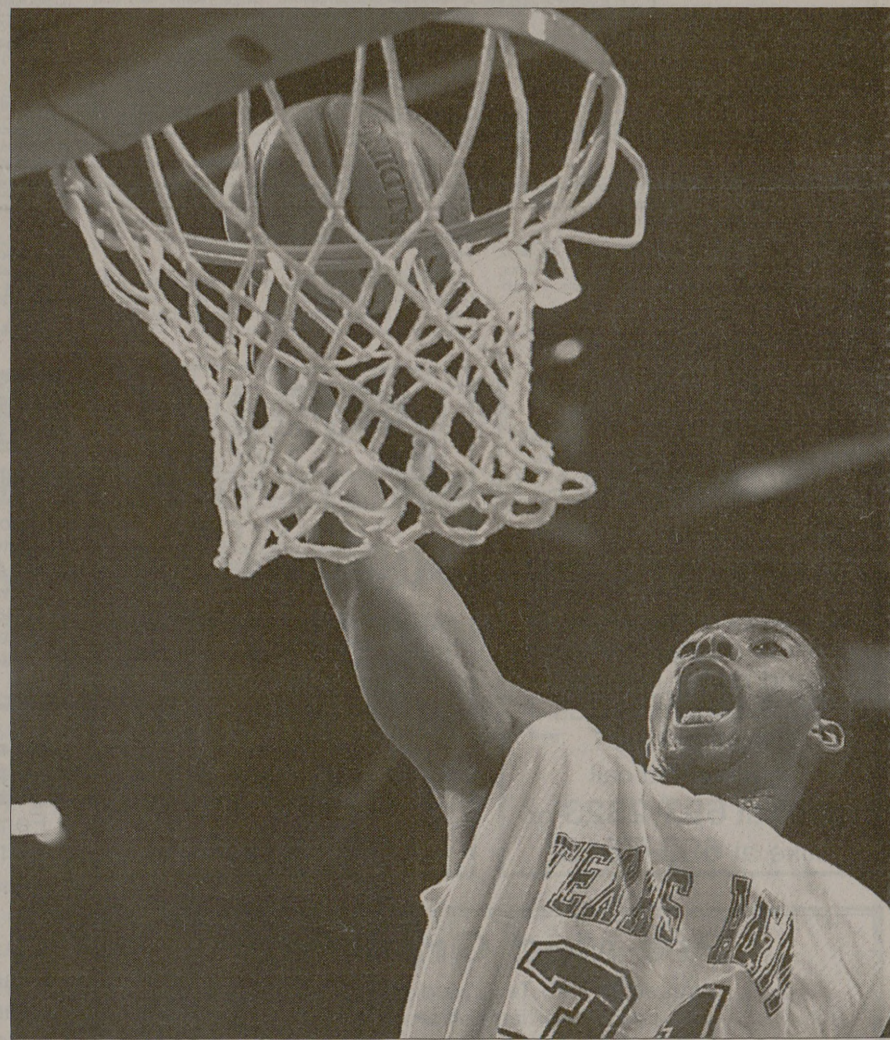
OU won both games last season, winning 76-66 in College Station and 80-71 in Norman. Jones averaged 20.5 points and 8.5 rebounds against the Sooners in the two games. His 28-point effort on Jan. 31 last season marked the most points ever scored by an A&M player against Oklahoma.

Oklahoma

Points leader:
Eduardo Najera (15.2)

Rebound leader:
Eduardo Najera (7.8)

Assists leader:
Michael Johnson (4.0)



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Senior forward **Shanne Jones** slams the ball home Wednesday night against Kansas State. The Aggies defeated the Wildcats 79-74 at Reed Arena.

Women travel to Waco looking for revenge against Bears

BY AARON COHAN
AND JEFF SCHMIDT
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team will have its hands full Saturday when it faces Baylor University in Waco.

The Bears hold a 13-10 overall record, along with a 5-6 record in Big 12 play. Although it might not look like it on paper, Baylor is one of the stronger teams the Aggies will face this season.

The Bears get it done both defensively and offensively when they post their respective wins.

Baylor's defense is ranked 4th in the Big 12 as they allow the opposition 62.8 points per game.

The leading force of Baylor's defense is their intimidating senior power forward Kacy Moffitt, who stands over 6 foot 4 and leads the Big 12 in blocked shots.

Moffitt's shot altering usually makes the opponents quickly push the ball out to the perimeter shooters.

But Baylor's tenacious guards are first in another defensive category as they hold Big 12 opponents to just 23 percent from beyond the three-point line.

If the defense doesn't deter opposing

squads, then Baylor's offense will.

Senior guards Lara Webb and Toya Ellis combine with Kacy Moffitt to form a triple

Baylor

Points leader:
Lara Webb (17.1)

Rebound leader:
Kacy Moffitt (5.7)

Assists leader:
Lara Webb (5.6)

scoring threat. Webb's sharp-shooting skills account for 17.1 points per game.

Ellis' quick dribble and ability to break-down the defense supply 13.3 points per

game. If the defense keys on the outside players, the Bears get the ball in the middle to Moffitt who's 62 percent from the field — and 14.4 points per game finish the opponent off.

The Bears profit enormously from the trio as they average more than 70 percent of Baylor's points.

This will be the Bears and Aggies second meeting of the season with Baylor defeating the Aggies 72-55 Feb. 3 at Reed Arena.

Baylor is coming off one of its most impressive wins of the season when they were able to fend off the University of Nebraska in Lincoln Thursday night.

The Bears will be looking to finish the season strong as their hopes for the NCAA tournament come into sight.

The Aggies will be looking to drop a six-game losing skid and get back on the track that coach Gillom has set for her team.

Once again, the Aggies are led by junior forward Prissy Sharpe. Sharpe's effectiveness has recently been reduced due to opponents' stifling defense.

Guards Kim Tarkington, Brandy Jones and Amy Yates need to hit from long range to open up the middle for Sharpe.

Junior forward Kera Alexander has stepped it up in conference play, raising her scoring average from 13.7 to 15.5.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Freshman guard **LaToya Rose** goes in for a layup against the University of Oklahoma Saturday at Reed Arena. The Sooners defeated the Aggies 83-71.