

Aggies prepare for season finales

A&M men travel to Lincoln to face University of Nebraska

BY SANTOSH VENKATARAMAN
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team travels to Lincoln, Neb. for the season finale tomorrow afternoon against the University of Nebraska. The game is set for a 12:45 p.m. tip-off and will be televised live by ESPN Plus.

The Aggies (12-13, 5-10 Big 12) are coming off a home win over the University of Oklahoma while Nebraska (17-11, 9-6 Big 12) has dropped three straight conference games.

Both teams are preparing for the upcoming Big 12 Tournament in Kansas City, Mo. A&M could finish ninth, 10th, or 11th, while the Cornhuskers will likely finish as the fifth or sixth seed.

Nebraska will be playing its final home game of the season at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The Huskers are led by senior forward Venson Hamilton, a candidate for Big 12 Player of the Year. The 6-foot-10 Hamilton is in the top 10 in the Big 12 in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots. His 15.6 points per game is good for sixth-best while his 10.6 rebounds per game lead the conference.

Hamilton also is a candidate for All-Defensive honors,

as is teammate Cookie Belcher. The 6-foot-3 Belcher leads the league in steals with 3.0 per game, one spot ahead of A&M junior guard Clifton Cook. Nebraska redshirt freshman Cary Cochran is the best three-point shooter on the team, having made a team-high 38 percent.

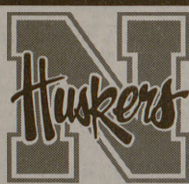
Nebraska lost its last game on Wednesday at Kansas State University, 62-45. The Huskers were held to 17 second-half points. Hamilton scored 15 points and had 10 rebounds in the first half but only managed three points and three rebounds in the second.

The Huskers are 9-5 at home and have won five out of their last six in Lincoln. Nebraska has been to post-season play the last eight seasons under coach Danny Nee.

The Aggies' win over Oklahoma was the third straight win for A&M in its season home finale. A&M has never won in Lincoln, dropping all three contests there. The 24 points by junior guard Jerald Brown at Nebraska on Jan. 11, 1997 were the most ever scored by an Aggie player against Nebraska.

A&M lost last year's meeting, 75-58, in College Station. Guard Michael Schmidt scored 15 points while forward Shanne

Nebraska



Points leader:
V. Hamilton (15.6)

Rebound leader:
V. Hamilton (10.6)

Assists leader:
Cookie Belcher (4.7)

Jones scored 10 points in the defeat. Nebraska has won both meetings between the schools in the Big 12 Conference.

The men's basketball team had four players named Academic All-Big 12 this season, tied for the best in the conference. The four players are junior Jason Boeker, sophomore Aaron Jack, sophomore Michael Schmidt, and freshman Andy Leatherman.

Boeker and Jack were named to the first team while Schmidt and Leatherman received honorable mention.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Senior guard **Chris Clayton** will play his final regular-season game for the Aggies when the A&M men face the University of Nebraska Saturday.



TERRY ROBERSON/THE BATTALION

Junior **Lisa Dingwall** and the Texas A&M Women's Tennis Team will try to bounce back from last weekend's loss to the University of Houston when they face Texas Christian University Friday.

Women host Colorado Buffaloes in final home game of season

BY TRAVIS HARSCH
The Battalion

Colorado

(13-12, 6-9 Big 12)



Points leader:
Linda Lappe (10.8)

Rebound leader:
Britt Harshorn (5.9)

Assists leader:
Linda Lappe (3.8)

The Texas A&M Women's basketball team will be looking to stop a couple of streaks against Colorado on Saturday at 2 p.m. in the final game this season at Reed Arena.

The Aggies have not won a conference game at home this year and have also dropped eight straight, with their last win coming on Jan. 27 in Manhattan against the Kansas State Wildcats.

"We are never satisfied with losing," A&M coach Peggie Gillom said. "We want to win every game."

The game will also be the final regular-season contest for seniors Brenda Beard, Kerrie Peterson and Kim Tarkington, who will be honored before the game.

The Aggies (7-18, 2-13) will play in the Big 12 Academic All-Big 12 tournament next week in Kansas City, and will go into the tourney as the number 12 seed. A&M will most likely play Oklahoma in the first round, although Baylor or Nebraska could slide into the fifth spot depending on the results this weekend.

Kera Alexander was named to the first-team Academic All-Big 12 team this past week, one of only two players selected who had a 4.0 GPA. Sophomore Brandy Jones was named to the honorable mention list.

A&M is coming off a 95-69 loss to the Sooners in Norman on Wednesday. The Aggies failed to score in the final 3:15 of the first half, despite shooting over 50 percent from the floor. Turnovers were again an Achilles heel for the Aggies, as the Sooners converted 15 turnovers in the first half into a 22 point lead at the break.

"That was just an old-fashioned butt-kicking," A&M coach Peggie Gillom said. Prissy Sharpe had 23 points, well above her average of 18.5 per game, and 11 rebounds, again bettering her season average of 9.2.

Oklahoma lost to the seventh-ranked Texas Tech Red Raiders on Sunday at home despite a balanced attack. The Buffaloes were led in scoring by Nikki Weddle with 16, Linda Lappe with 14 and Kami Carmann and Melody Johnson with 12 points apiece.

Lappe leads Colorado in scoring, averaging 10.8 points a game and is also tops in the assist column with 3.8 an outing. Britt Harshorn leads the Buffaloes on the glass, with 5.9 boards a contest.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Sophomore forward **Prissy Sharpe** looks for an open teammate against Baylor University.

Women's tennis to take on TCU, OSU

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Women's Tennis Team will start off a grueling weekend of some of their toughest competition yet this spring, when they face Texas Christian University on Friday. The Aggies look to recover from their first loss of the season at the University of Houston where the Cougars handed them a 5-4 loss.

The women's team remains a dominant force in the Omar Smith Varsity Tennis Center, holding a 4-0 record on its home courts. The doubleheader will put a strain on that record as the Aggies not only will be fighting for Big 12 ranking as they face Oklahoma State on Saturday, but will be battling TCU which defeated the Cougars earlier in the season.

Both teams rely on being consistent throughout the singles line-ups, with no weak links in the lower ranks. The teams follow up with strong doubles play, which has been A&M's weakest point early in the season.

"It is going to be a tough weekend," coach Bobby Kleinecke said. "We're going to have to play better at every position."

Saturday's match will feature the Aggies' second Big 12 opponent in a repeat of last year's 8-1 victory for A&M. Against TCU, the Aggies scraped away with a 5-4 win with every point a struggle.

"There is always a good rivalry between the teams," Kleinecke said. "Year in and year out, it is always a very competitive match."

Against Houston the Aggie women showed strong resilience and powerful play against the top of a strong Cougar team. Lisa Dingwall and Martina Nedorostova won in singles Tuesday in wins that kept the Aggies in the match to the very end.

"We've been playing good at the top of the line-up," Kleinecke said. "It is a great addition to the match and helps us a ton."

The tennis begins at 3:30 p.m. Friday against the Horned Frogs, with the match against the Cowboys starting at 1:30 p.m. Saturday.

Softball team heads to West Coast for tourney

BY BEN WESTBROOK
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Women's Softball Team will head west this weekend to compete in the UCSB/Easton Invitational in Santa Barbara, Calif. The women will look to improve their 10-4 record and rebound from last weekend's 2-3 showing at the Aggie Invitational.

The softballers will try to compensate for the loss of their lead off hitter and leading base stealer, Hollee Hayden, who is out for approximately six weeks after breaking her arm last weekend during the win against Penn State.

Coach Jo Evans said the women will be facing some tough competition this weekend,

"All of the teams in this tournament are good. Virginia has good pitching. Santa Barbara is a good hitting team, and Cal Poly is very athletic," Coach Evans said. "We will be really tested, and each team will throw something different at us. We know we are going to have to play well in order to do well."

Amy Vining and Jordana Barrack will handle pitching duties for A&M this

weekend. The pair have combined for a 0.87 earned run average this season.

The women will be looking for more run support for the two pitchers at the tournament. The Aggies boast a .305 batting average, while their opponents have posted a .222 average, but they are having trouble getting the hits when they need them.

"Offensively we continue to hit the ball well, but we just need to get more timely hits," Coach Evans said.

The women will begin tournament play at 9 a.m. against Virginia, who is 4-2 on the year. Virginia, like A&M, has faced No. 24 Illinois-Chicago, losing to them 14-2. A&M lost to ICU 3-1.

Next up for A&M will be 3-6 Cal Poly, who are being outthit .286 to .257 this season. Cal Poly's pitchers are posting a whopping 4.80 ERA for the year.

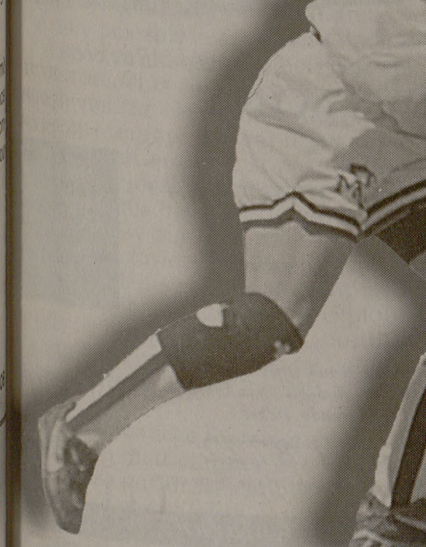
The final team to face A&M will be host UCSB. UCSB is 5-5 on the year and have already played and defeated another Big 12 team, Texas Tech.

Evans said good pitching and good defense are key for A&M.

"We want to get solid pitching all the way through the rotation. The pitchers need to hit their locations and mix up the pitches," Evans said. "We need to be more consistent on defense and do our best to play error free. It is important for us to play with confidence."

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The Texas A&M Softball Team will travel to California this weekend for the UCSB/Easton Invitational in Santa Barbara.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION