

Softball team hits road

BY BEN WESTBROOK
The Battalion

The No. 18 Texas A&M Softball Team will try to pull off two sweeps this weekend over fellow Big 12 Conference opponents the University of Missouri and the University of Kansas.

The Aggies, who are coming off an 11-2 thrashing of Sam Houston State, will travel to Columbia, Mo. to take on the 32-16, 5-4 Big 12, Missouri Tigers Saturday in doubleheader action.

Mizzou is led at the plate by Shawna Robinson, who is hitting .357 for the season with 20 runs scored. Stacy Gemeinhardt also contributes at the plate with a .348 batting average. As a team the Tigers are out-hitting opponents .283 to .235.

Handling the pitching duties for the Tigers will most likely be Stephanie Falk, who posts a team leading 1.15 earned run average with a 19-9 record and 153 strike outs. The Mizzou staff has posted a combined 1.72 ERA.

Sunday, the Aggies will head to Lawrence, Kansas to pair up against the KU Jayhawks, who a 22-23 for the year and 3-5 in the Big 12.

The Jayhawks as a team out-hitting opponents .248 to .237. Their leading hitter, junior Christy McPhail, posts a relatively low .280 batting average with 18 runs and 17 runs batted in.

Freshman Shelly Musser is the team speedster with 31 stolen bases 28 runs scored.

Junior Sarah Workman claims the role of ace for the Jayhawks with a 1.38 ERA with thirteen wins and eleven losses. Workman also posts an impressive 169 strike outs for the year.

The Aggies are coming off an impressive performance in last Wednesday's pounding of SHSU at the Aggie Softball Complex's last game of the 1999 regular season.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION
Freshman catcher Lisa Klam talks with head coach Jo Smith before Tuesday's game against Sam Houston State University

The game saw Lisa Klam raise her team leading .374 batting average while adding one more round-tripper to bring her season total to 11.

"We're real confident now," Klam said of the Aggies' Wednesday win. "Hopefully, we can win two games [in Missouri]."

The Aggies as a team are out hitting their opponents .293 to

.223. Tiffany Esters, with 35 RBI's, has made it her duty to get runs on the scoreboard.

Amy Vining has been the workhorse for the women the entire year. Her 1.02 ERA and 181 strikeouts are tops for the team.

The sophomore ace has been helped on the mound by Jordana Barrack who has pieced together a 12-2 record and a 1.76 ERA.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Junior second baseman Sean Heaney dives for a ground ball against the University of Houston Tuesday night at Olsen Field. The Aggies host the University of Kansas Jayhawks this weekend for a three-game series.

A&M Baseball Team hosts Kansas

Third-ranked Aggies look to improve on 27-2 record at Olsen

BY MATT WEBER
The Battalion

Traditions play a big part in all facets of life at Texas A&M, and the A&M Baseball Team will look to continue a tradition of their own this weekend when they host the University of Kansas Jayhawks. A&M historically has dominated KU on the baseball diamond, leading the all-time series 19-5. The Jayhawks have not taken a game from the Aggies since 1985.

The Aggies (36-10, 16-4 Big 12), who are coming off a 5-15 loss to the University of Houston Tuesday, played one of their most important series of the season last weekend against No. 7 Baylor University, taking two of three from the Bears in a battle for Big 12 supremacy.

The Jayhawks (11-30 overall) are far out of the race for the conference title with a 4-20 record in the Big 12, but Aggie first baseman and senior captain John Scheschuk said the team knows better than to overlook Kansas.

"We can't look at [the weekend] as anti-climactic because these are every bit as important as the Baylor series," he said. "We're going to have to ready because we're going to be hunting for a win."

If the series record is not enough to discourage

Kansas, the Jayhawks also will have to battle A&M's home-field advantage. The Aggies are 27-2 within the confines of Olsen Field this season.

Scheschuk said the Aggies will be counting on the home crowd this weekend.

"Olsen Field has treated us well," he said. "It's a great place to play because of the fans and the field, so that always helps point us to a win."

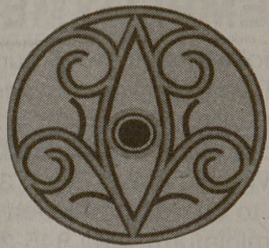
A&M coach Mark Johnson agreed but said it will take more than home-field advantage to earn a victory this weekend.

"We have some Olsen [Field] magic, but we don't want to push it too far," he said. "We want to be aggressive from the first pitch and stay out of tight situations."

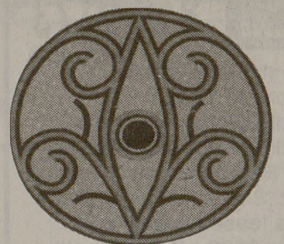
Getting the nod on the mound for Friday's game will be junior Casey Fossum, who has compiled a 7-4 record with a 3.08 ERA this season for the Aggies. Saturday's contest will feature junior Chance Caple, who is 6-3 on the year with a 3.99 ERA. Sunday the Aggies will start either senior Matt Ward (3-0, 4.58 ERA) or sophomore Chris Russ (10-1, 1.81 ERA).

Johnson said fans can expect a total effort from the Aggies this weekend.

"It's an important series because we're vying for the championship," he said. "We're ready to play."



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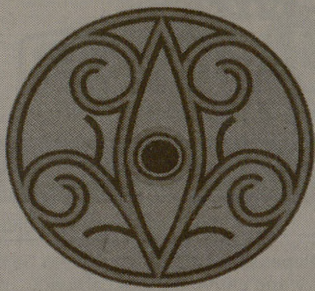
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