

A&M begins season with conference wins

Ags defeat Oklahoma, Oklahoma State over weekend at Aggie Soccer Complex

BY REECE FLOOD
The Battalion

After finishing third in the Big 12 Conference last season, the Texas A&M Soccer Team started the 1999 season off on the right foot last weekend with two wins over conference opponents.

The Aggies defeated Oklahoma State University Friday night, 4-0, and beat the University of Oklahoma, 5-0, Sunday afternoon.

Junior forward Nicky Thrasher said she was impressed by her teammates' level of play.

"I thought we all went out at a high level of intensity and just kept it going throughout the game," she said. "We played 90 minutes of good soccer, attractive soccer."

The first goal of the game came 13 minutes into the contest from senior midfielder Mandy Davidson.

She received a pass from Thrasher from the left side of the field before putting the ball in the back of the net.

Davidson said she was excited about getting the season's first goal and setting an example for the team.

"I think it's a great way for me to go out as a captain and as a senior to really take the game," she said. "It was fun to get the first goal of the year."

Aggie goals were also scored by freshman midfielder Andrea Starns, freshman midfielder Jessica Martin and Thrasher.

This year's top-10 recruiting class showcased its talent as several freshmen contributed to the victory.

In addition to the goals from Starns and Martin, defender Martha Moore played well, using her speed to patrol the backfield.

Davidson said the newcomers looked like experienced players in their first collegiate game.

"I think they played excellent," Davidson said. "They are very composed, very talented players that step right into college ball, no problem."

Thrasher said walking away from the first game of the season with a victory was very important for the team.

"Especially in conference, it's very important," she said. "It's a good booster for us because it will get us going."

The Aggies carried the same attitude into their second game against Oklahoma Sunday afternoon.

A&M once again dominated its opponent with 20 shots on goal and held the Sooners to only three.

Thrasher and Starns once again found the back of the net and sophomore forward Jodie



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

Junior forward Nicky Thrasher controls the ball against Oklahoma State University. Thrasher had two goals and an assist over the weekend.

Mitchell and junior midfielder Alison Peters each headed the ball past the OU goalkeeper for goals.

Freshman forward Heather Ragsdale joined the list of scorers with a shot on an open net from the middle of the field.

Starns said she is a little disappointed the team is not ranked higher in the polls but feels that two shutout victories in one weekend will improve the Aggies' ranking.

"Right now we're not getting the respect we need nationally," Starns said, "so we're just out here to make a statement now."

Although scoring goals seems to be the team's strongest attribute, this year the Aggies have switched their emphasis to the importance of defending the goal.

"Every time that we keep a shutout in a game, we're going to post a bagel up on our bagel pole," Davidson said. "It's just a reminder to us that defense is important and that you win games with a tough defense."

After the birds and time do away with the bagels, there will be a nail in a wooden post representing each time the Aggies shut out, or "nailed".

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