

## Scoring Threat

Junior Nicky Thrasher has knack for finding back of net

BY JASON LINCOLN  
The Battalion

An early look at the 1999 Texas A&M Soccer Team shows a powerful squad capable of scoring goals at any time. Yet in previous seasons, when goals were few and farther between, Nicky Thrasher managed to get the job done when it was needed most. This year, the junior is looking to keep up 1998's pace with the hope of bringing national respect to the Aggies.

Over the weekend, in A&M's first two games of the season, Thrasher found the back of the net twice to lead the Aggies to 4-0 and 5-0 wins over Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma, respectively.

"These first two games are a great confidence booster," Thrasher said. "If you had some of the polls, several left us off even a top-20 ranking. What does that say for our level of talent? With these two games we wanted to make a statement, not just for us but for the country."

Thrasher graduated high school a year early to join an A&M team filled with veterans, who helped the young forward develop into a powerful scoring threat. The 17-year-old's drive quickly won her a starting position and the respect of the coaching staff and teammates.

"When she came into the program, she was literally a kid," A&M soccer coach Guerrieri said. "She got a great example by being a 17-year-old on a veteran-dominated team in '97. One of the things we've loved about her as a coaching staff she puts 100-percent effort into everything she does."

In 1998, Thrasher led the Aggies to the second round in the NCAA tournament and was selected offensive MVP of both the A&M team and the Big 12 tournament. She led the team with 10 goals in the regular season, including four game-winners.

Thrasher also scored three goals in the Aggies' Big 12 Tournament game against Iowa State University. She finished the year with seven assists and a team leading points.

Season after season, it seems scoring goals is what Thrasher does best. "I will score as many [goals] as I can, and if I can give the ball up, I will do it every time," she said. "I would love to set up my teammate for a goal. As long as the ball is in the opponents' net and we're in the lead, I'm satisfied. Of course I want a lot [of goals], but whatever comes, comes."

In many cases, a player's performance is merely a reflection of how hard the player worked in the offseason. In Thrasher's case, the offseason was merely a second season filled with the same winning tradition. She played on an amateur team and "Under 19" team that played for a national championship. The experiences helped make her even more of a scoring threat, Thrasher said.

"I never have an offseason," she said. "For me to play at that high level of intensity all summer really helped me keep the edge."

As much as she contributes with her play, the junior's off-field roles have molded her into a true team leader.

Fellow scoring threat, sophomore forward Michelle Remington, remembers the example Thrasher set from the beginning of the two players' careers at A&M.

"I looked up to her a lot during my [redshirt year in 1997], because she came in here ready to play," Remington said. "Then last year, she just stepped it up, led our team in goals and was a great leader for us. Just her presence on the field helps us out a lot."

Thrasher leads the team by showing the effort that helped lead the Aggies to success the last two seasons. Guerrieri said her motivation has not gone unnoticed.

"Nicky is one of several players that is always ready to go," he said. "It's contagious and spreads throughout the team. It shows the freshmen the standard at this level and what's expected of them."

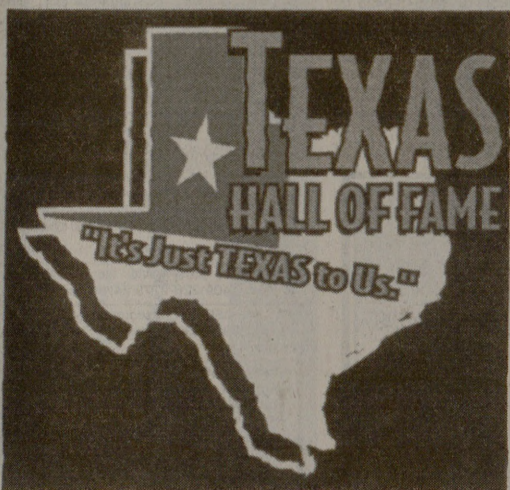
"She comes out and exceeds our expectation just with her own will. My only hope is she gets the recognition on a national level. She is as deserving a player as I have had."



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— Nicky Thrasher  
A&M junior forward



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