

Aggies host GTE Soccer Classic

Houston, Ohio State, Navy also ready to participate in tourney.

BY REECE FLOOD
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Soccer Team will host the Soccer Classic this weekend at the A&M Complex. With the University of Houston, State University and the United States Academy. The tournament will kick off tonight at 5 p.m. with a game between Houston and Ohio State. The Aggies' first game of the tournament will be against Navy. The teams will have a chance to regroup before play resumes Sunday. Houston and Navy will start competition Sunday at 11 a.m. The Aggies will end the tournament with a game against Ohio State at 2 p.m.

Senior forward Mandy Davidson said the Aggies have never played against Navy or Ohio State and are not sure what to expect, but the team knows what it will take to win. "We don't have to know much about a team," she said. "We just know we need to go out and play to win. We should expect the same thing from every team, a tough opponent." Sophomore midfielder Amber Childers said she expects a challenge this weekend. "I think they'll [other teams] give us a tough match," Childers said. "We're ranked 10 now, so I think they'll come in now and want to knock us off." Although concerned about the competition, Childers said she is confident in her abilities and does not think they will change their practice methods. "We come to the game thinking 'We're going to kick their butts anyway', so we prepare the same way."



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

A&M freshman forward Heather Ragsdale moves the ball against Oklahoma State University Aug. 27 in College Station. The Aggies will host the GTE Soccer Classic this weekend.

A&M soccer coach G. Guerrieri said he will use the same strategy he uses for every game. "We'll always try to outwork and outthink and outperform," Guerrieri said. "Our strategy is to try to remain balanced in how we attack, how we defend and how we keep possession of the ball." Davidson said one new gameplan Aggie fans may see this weekend is a more aggressive defense. "The last two games, [in] our defense, we've been kind of laying off teams," she said. "So this weekend we're really concentrating on making sure that our defense steps up and we play more compact as a team."

This new style of play should allow the Aggies to pressure their opponents as other teams try to advance the ball down the field and cut down on opponents' shots on goal. The Aggies hope playing at home will give them an advantage this weekend. Guerrieri said playing in Texas might have an effect on the other teams. "We'll be playing against two teams from north of the Mason-Dixon line, so I think climate will be more to our comfort," Guerrieri said. "Playing in familiar surroundings is always an advantage."

SEE SOCCER ON PAGE 8.

Tennis visits Houston for Rice Invitational

BY BETH MILLER
The Battalion

After spending the summer playing against the pros, the Texas A&M Men's Tennis Team is back and ready to take on Louisiana State University, the University of North Carolina and Rice University this weekend at the Rice Invitational.



MADDEN

A&M assistant tennis coach Scott Triebly said most of the players earned points in professional circuits in California, Missouri, Mexico and Spain this June. He said he has been impressed with their performances in practice this semester.

"They have come back pretty fit," he said. "They worked out a lot this summer. I am really pleased."

Triebly said the circuits prepare players for the competition they will face both in college and professional-level tennis and in other career choices.

"In one way or another they want to be pros, whether it is in tennis or in life," he said. "The circuits put them around pros. It puts them out on the circuit, living their own, traveling on their own. It makes them appreciate college."

This weekend's opponents are top-35 teams. LSU, a top-four team, won the Southeast Conference championship last year.

Juniors Shuon Madden and Dumitru Caradima, who earned All-America and All-Big 12 Conference honors and were named the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Doubles Team of the Month for February and April last season, will not play in the invitational so they can prepare for tournaments in the upcoming weeks, Triebly said.

Triebly said that while all matches are of value to the team, the invitational this weekend is similar to football's Kick-off Classic. It allows the team to get match experience early in the season and helping coaches to evaluate team and individual strengths and weaknesses.

Sophomore Keith From who played in the California and Missouri circuits, said the experience taught him independence.

"Traveling, in general, makes you more dependent on yourself," he said. "You learn more about yourself and things that you will use every day, like how you react to different situations."

From said this year's season will be challenging because the Aggies will play eight of the nation's top 15 teams and many of the matches are away from College Station.

From said he is looking forward to the Aggies being No. 1 in the nation this year.

"Goalwise, I think it's up to us," he said. "We have to decide what we want. I don't see why we can't be [in the] top five in the country with a chance for a national championship."

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