

Soccer finishes conference play against Missouri, Kansas

BY REECE FLOOD
The Battalion



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M junior forward **Nicky Thrasher** dribbles the ball past a University of Colorado defender last Friday at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

The road is quickly coming to an end for the Texas A&M Soccer Team. This weekend, the 12th-ranked Aggies will travel to Columbus, Mo., and Lawrence, Kan., for their last two conference games of the season.

The Aggies (12-4, 5-3 Big 12) will take on 17th-ranked University of Missouri today at 3 p.m. and will face the University of Kansas Sunday at 1 p.m.

Missouri is currently in second place in the Big 12 with a conference record of 6-2 and an 11-4 overall record.

With a win over the Tigers, A&M will jump into second place in the conference, but A&M soccer coach G. Guerrieri said winning in Missouri will be no easy task.

"It's our biggest game of the season," Guerrieri said. "They're a team that bends, but doesn't break."

Junior forward **Nicky Thrasher** said Missouri will look at A&M's recent results while preparing for the game.

"Knowing that we've lost two

games in conference, they're thinking maybe we're not the same team they've played in the past," Thrasher said. "So I think we need to come out and surprise them ourselves."

Guerrieri said the Tigers are good at facing adversity and they will not go down without a fight.

"They have been out-shot as far as number of shots," he said. "They've been out-possessed as far as time of possession, but they still find a way to win."

Missouri and A&M have had similar success this season, but each team uses a different style of play.

A&M tries to utilize ball possession and set the tempo of the game, and the Aggies use a zone-style defense.

Missouri, on the other hand, is a strong, physical team that tries to take advantage of its opponents with aggressive counterattacks, and the Tigers play man-to-man in the back.

Kansas (8-7, 3-5 Big 12) is in ninth place in the Big 12 and is still fighting for an invitation to the Big 12 Tournament, in which only the top eight teams will play.

Guerrieri said Kansas' situation

could put pressure on the Jayhawks during Sunday's game.

"The fact that we play them in a must-win situation at their place — I would imagine that they're more excited about being able to play at their place than having to play us down here," he said. "If anything, it might put more pressure on them."

Junior defender **Amber Reynolds** said Kansas will be up for the game, but she is confident the Aggies will prevail.

"They're going to be looking forward to beating us," Reynolds said. "They're really going to be coming out hard and just really trying to win. They're going to be tough, too, but we can get them."

Guerrieri said he knows that ending the conference season on the road will be difficult and there is a lot riding on these games.

"Every team we play, we get their best game," he said. "Because of the success of our program over the years, we are always going to be a target and are always going to be a big game for anyone we play."

"A lot of how our year turns out is going to boil down to what we do this week."

Aggs head to Norman to take on Sooners

BY BETH MILLER
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Football Team will begin a new season this weekend. A&M coach R.C. Slocum said when the Aggies approach a series of big conference games each year, they rejuvenate and it is as if they are starting the season over.

"It has been my experience, and I don't know if it's the weather, but there is something about getting into these big games," Slocum said. "Teams step up and practice better. It may be the weather because it's a lot more fun to practice when it's 70 [degrees] than when it's 95 [degrees]."

The Aggies will begin their "new season" Saturday when they take on the University of Oklahoma at 6 p.m. in Norman, Okla., then follow by hosting Oklahoma State University, visiting the University of Nebraska and the University of Missouri and hosting rival University of Texas. The teams have a combined record of 20-

Slocum said one reason the series seems like a new season is that the preceding games are "nightmare games" — games in which the opponents seem each to beat but are not, in reality. He said it is difficult to motivate the players for these games.

"They are 'nightmare games,' because no matter what you do, you never beat them enough, and it is frustrating," he said. "All week long, you are trying to convince the team that this team is capable of beating you."

"But I remember when I was playing, and we were watching a film of an upcoming opponent, and we were laughing and making fun of them instead of watching the film seriously. Well, halfway through the film, we didn't know it, but the coach walked in, and he turned on the lights, and we were caught. So it doesn't change; we were the same when I was in school."

If the Aggies win this weekend, it will

be Slocum's 100th win at A&M. Slocum said he would not expect to be praised for the win, that it is a team effort, and the team should receive the credit.

The Aggies' 34-17 victory over Kansas last weekend exhibited the Aggies' slowly-but-surely-becoming-balanced offense as they racked up 362 passing yards and 160 rushing yards.

OU junior quarterback **Josh Heupel** has set several school records and is on his way to breaking many more. The transfer from Snow Junior College Aberdeen, S.D., has set single-game records in completions (37), passing attempts (54), passing yards (429), total offense (410), touchdown passes in a single game (5), among others. In the Sooners-Longhorn battle Oct. 9, Heupel broke OU's single-season record by completing 31 passes to increase his season total to 150.

A&M senior cornerback **Jason Webster** said the secondary will have to keep its eye on the ball and stay interception-minded during this weekend's game to counteract Heupel's passing ability.

"They pass a lot, so we have got to keep in mind that what goes up must come down," he said.

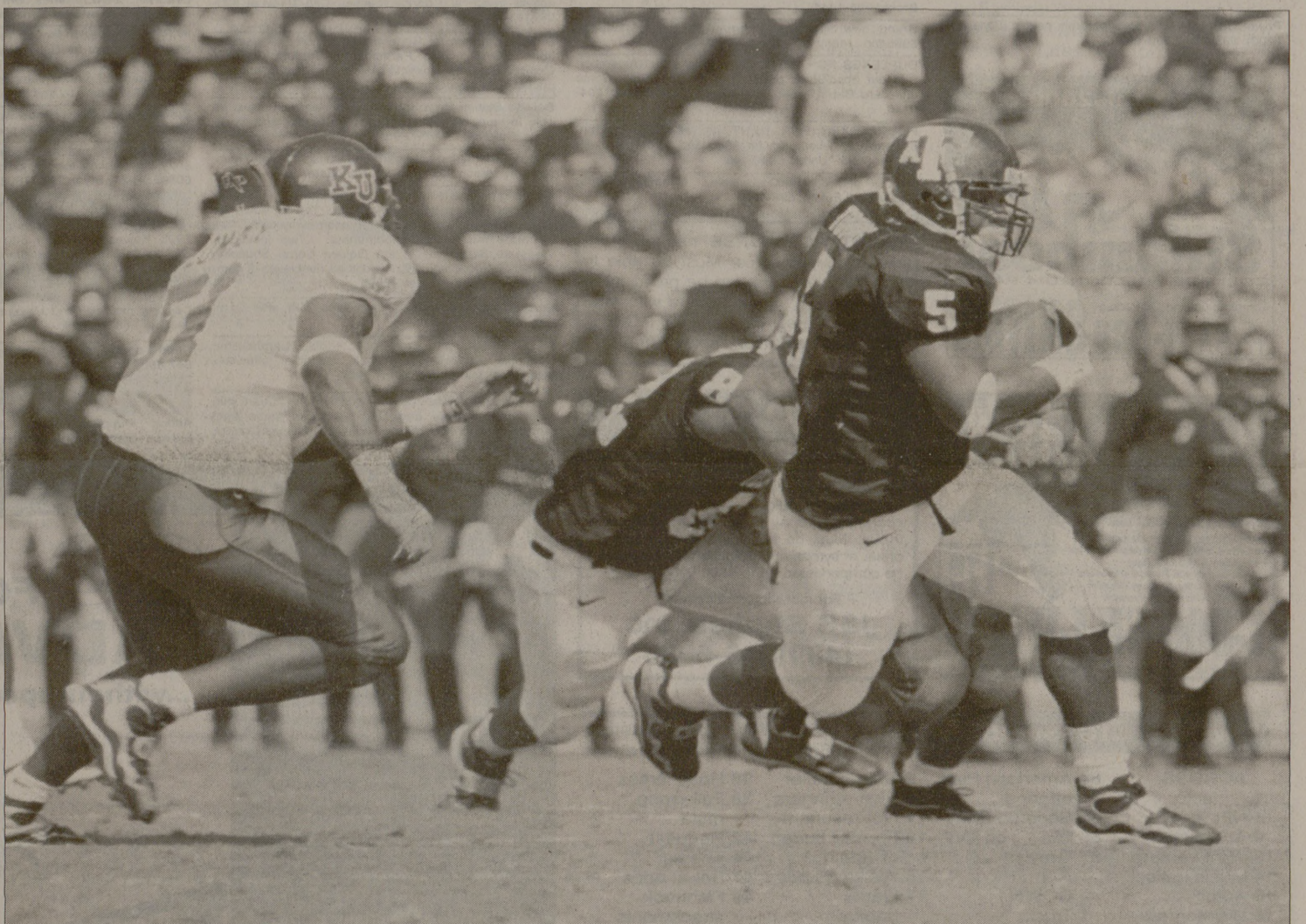
A&M offensive coordinator **Steve Kragthorpe** said Oklahoma's offense will force the Aggies to spread out their scoring in the game.

"OU has a 'high-octane' offense," Kragthorpe said. "We are going to have to score some points."

He said A&M's recent trend has been to play better during the second half of the games, but the team must give 100 percent the whole time this weekend.

Senior quarterback **Randy McCown** said the Aggies have not had as much of a need to run the ball as they will this week, so they will focus more on that aspect of the offense.

Upon realizing that the A&M offense has not gotten into the end zone during the first quarter yet this season, McCown said, "We'll have to do that this week,



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore fullback **Ja'Mar Toombs** carries the ball against the University of Kansas last Saturday at Kyle Field. The Aggies defeated the Jayhawks 34-17. A&M travels to Norman, Ok this weekend to take on the University of Oklahoma Sooners.

then. Put that on the list of things to do this week."

Saturday's game will be the 17th in Ag-

gie-Sooners history, but only the sixth since 1951; their first meeting was in 1903. In the last Aggie-Sooners battle, in 1998, A&M

shut out OU 29-0 in College Station. In their three meetings as Big 12 Conference members, A&M has outscored OU, 113-23.

16th-ranked Volleyball team hosts Buffaloes

BY BREE HOLZ
The Battalion

After compiling two wins and a loss on its longest road trip of the season, the Texas A&M Volleyball Team will be back in action at G. Rollie White Coliseum on Saturday when it faces the 21st-ranked University of Colorado Buffaloes. Match time is set for 7 p.m.

The Aggies (15-4) and the Buffaloes (12-6) enter tomorrow night's match tied for fourth place in the Big 12 conference, with each team holding a 6-3 record.

A&M volleyball coach **Laurie Corbelli** said this match is very important because the two teams are tied, and since the Aggies are playing at home, it gives them an edge.

"There is so much parity in the conference and one advantage is being at home," Corbelli said. "Being at home is so important in a match like this."

When the two teams met last year, the Aggies defeated the Buffaloes at G. Rollie White in five games. A&M has kept Colorado winless in its last three visits to College Station.

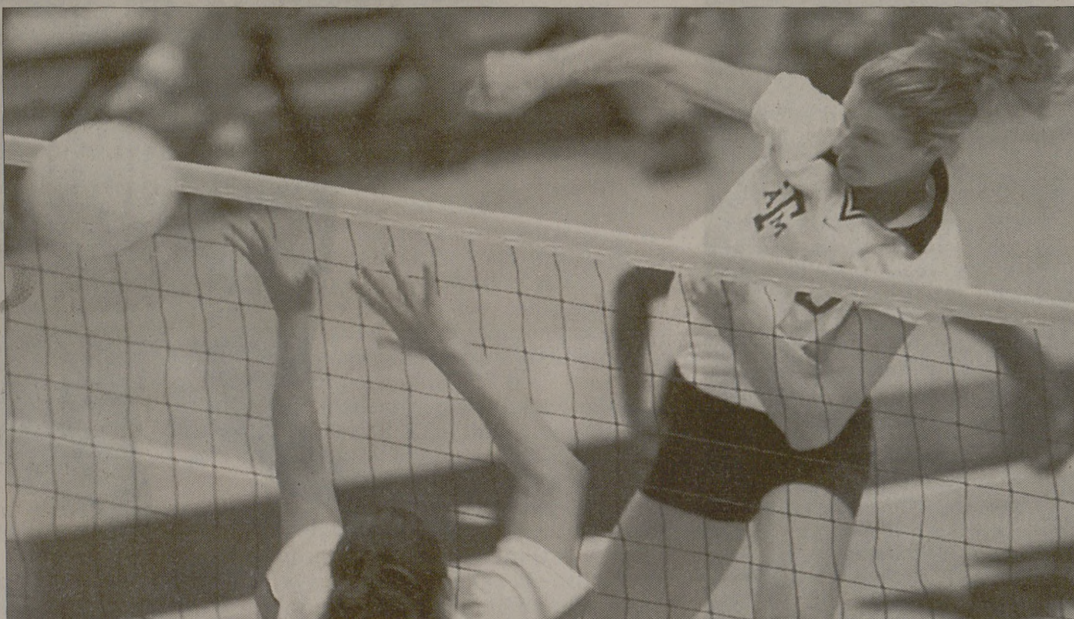
Corbelli said the match against the Buffaloes will be spirited.

"We've got an unstated rivalry with Colorado," she said. "We've both got a very similar style of play, and it's created a rivalry."

The Buffaloes return three starters from last season's team that finished with a 22-9 overall record.

They placed third in the Big 12 conference with a 16-4 mark and qualified for the NCAA tournament, but fell to the University of Illinois in the second round.

Corbelli added that if the Aggies can contin-



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M senior middle blocker **Amber Woolsey** spikes the ball against the University of Oklahoma two weeks ago at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

ue to dominate with their defense, everything else should fall into place.

"Our dependence on blocking and defense will be very important," she said. "If we can distribute to our hitters and have a disciplined defense, we should be just fine."

"We're gonna strive to come out on top." Saturday night's match will wrap up the

first round of play for the Aggies in the Big 12.

The 16th-ranked Aggies defeated Iowa State University on Wednesday night in Ames, Iowa, 15-4, 15-1, 15-6, in a match that lasted just over an hour. Sophomore outside hitter **Michelle Cole** led the Aggie hitters with 10 kills, while junior setter **Claire Harvey** posted 42 assists and a match-high 12 digs.

Fans think Rose should be reinstated to baseball

ATLANTA (AP) — By a 2-1 margin, most people think Pete Rose should be reinstated to baseball, even though many believe he did gamble on his sport, according to an Associated Press poll.

Fifty-six percent of those surveyed said Rose should be reinstated, while 29 percent said he should not, according to the poll, conducted for the AP by ICR of Media, Pa.

Seven out of 10 said baseball's career hits leader belongs in baseball's Hall of Fame, while almost two out of 10 said he doesn't. Rose is not eligible for the Hall of Fame as long as his lifetime ban remains in effect.

By a 78 percent to 15 percent margin, people said commissioner **Bud Selig** made the correct decision to invite Rose to the World Series ceremony Sunday honoring the sport's All-Century team. Rose was among the 25 players elected in fan balloting in the second half of the season.

The results of the AP poll showed slightly higher support for Rose's admission to the Hall of Fame than four polls conducted from 1989 to 1991 for the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut. Those polls

showed support ranging from 47 percent to 58 percent for Rose's admission to Cooperstown.

Two other polls — one done for Roper in 1990 and another by Gallup in 1989 — found almost identical support for Rose as the AP poll, which was conducted earlier this month. The 1990 Roper poll found 68 percent supported Rose's admission to the Hall of Fame, and the 1989 Gallup poll found 66 percent of respondents favored his being in the Hall of Fame.

Among those who think Rose should be allowed to appear at the series was **Levona Walker**, a communications specialist in her 40s from Bainbridge, Ga. The decision to let Rose appear with the All-Century team at the World Series is a good one, she said.

"He was a great player," said Walker, who considers herself a big baseball fan. "Everybody has faults, so why blame him for his faults?"

Still, more people who were asked in the AP poll don't believe Rose's gambling denial than believe him. Forty percent don't believe Rose is telling the truth about betting on baseball, while 30 percent believe him.