

Aggies return home to face Cowboys

BY BETH MILLER
The Battalion

Texas A&M Football Team players and coaches, baffled by last weekend's 51-6 loss to the University of Oklahoma, will attempt to correct their mistakes Saturday when the Aggies take on Oklahoma State University at 2:30 p.m. at Kyle Field.

A&M coaches and players say they cannot pinpoint exactly when they erred against Oklahoma, but they are putting it behind them and looking forward. "We have to use that game as motivation for the next game," senior cornerback Jason Webster said. "There is something inside you that tells you that you don't want that to happen again. That was the biggest game ever. But most of the successful people in this world fail before they succeed. We have to use that as a stepping stone."

Part of the bewilderment over last weekend's loss stems from the fact that the Aggies had the ball for one-third of the game, averaged half as many first downs and pass completions as OU and nearly half the amount of passing and rushing yardage of OU, but had nowhere near half or one-third of the points.

The Aggies' only touchdown came on a 37-yard pass to Chris Farris in the second quarter. Junior offensive lineman Chris Valletta said after watching the film last weekend's game he realized that it boiled down to constant offensive and defensive mistakes. "You could never imagine get beat like that — it hurt," Valletta said. "It tore at your guts; it was tough to watch."

Valletta said when he watched the film he noticed that the offense managed to salvage a few accomplishments.

"Randy had time to throw the ball, and as an offensive line we were proud of that," he said.

"There weren't many positives, but the ones there were we pulled out and hope to carry over."

A&M coach R.C. Slocum said the defense missed a large number of tackles against OU for two reasons: the players were forced to tackle in the middle of the field — rather than on the sidelines — and they were trying to tackle frantically, rather than strategically.

During the third quarter, Randy McCown left the field with a minor separation of his left shoulder. Redshirt freshman Vance Smith and freshman Mark Farris took turns relieving the injured starting quarterback.

Slocum said he is confident that McCown will play tomorrow, and McCown said he is at 100 percent throwing ability, since his right arm was not injured.

"Things are probably going to come down to how much pain I can stand, and this is one of my last four games," McCown said. "For all I know, this could be one of my last games ever to play football."

Slocum said he does not foresee having to replace McCown this weekend, but Farris would be the first man in if he does.

Farris, a 24-year-old freshman, was originally recruited by A&M in 1994 but played minor league baseball with the Pittsburgh Pirates for five years.

Smith earned all-district, all-area and all-state honors his senior year



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M senior wide receiver **Leroy Hodge** tries to elude the grasp of University of Oklahoma cornerback **Michael Thompson** during the Aggies' 51-6 loss to the Sooners last Saturday in Norman, Okla. The Aggies host Oklahoma State University Saturday at 2:30 p.m. at Kyle Field.

of high school after completing 70-of-150 passes for 1,250 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Although the Aggies already have two Big 12 Conference losses,

Slocum said he is hesitant to call Saturday's game a "must win" for the Aggies.

"Coaches don't say 'we must win' because a lot of times, you

don't win," he said. "People talk about bouncing back, but we could get better and go out and play well and still not win."

"The assumption that we are a

whole lot better than everyone else is not accurate. If you look at our schedule, there isn't a game we can't win, but there is also not a game we can't lose."

Warriers host Big 12 Championships

BY BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Men's and Women's Cross Country Teams will look to kick their season into high gear Saturday when they host the Big 12 Championships at the Texas A&M Golf Course.

The meet will mark the first time the Aggie Warriers have hosted the Big 12 Championships since the inception of the conference in 1996.

The women will run the 5,000-meter race at 11 a.m. and the men will run the 8,000-meter at 11 a.m. Admission is free.

Second-year A&M cross country coach Dave Farris said he is looking forward to the opportunity to show off his program's development. "We are extremely excited to host the Big 12 Championships," he said. "It's great to bring the meet to College Station and let the rest of the conference see the facility we have. It is a fast and wide course, that is very fan-friendly. It's a course to run."

Excitement about hosting the event is one thing, but winning on Saturday is going to be something else. The Big 12 is one of the most loaded conferences in the nation, a fact Farris said he is keenly aware of.

"The competition that will be on display Saturday is second to none," he said. "Some of the runners in the country will be here, and, likewise, the Big 12 is a very tough conference from top to bottom."

The toughest team on the men's side once again will be the University of Colorado. The Buffaloes are ranked No. 4 nationally and are defending three consecutive conference titles.



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Men's and Women's Cross Country Teams will host the Big 12 Championships Saturday at the Texas A&M Golf Course.

While CU has had enormous success since the inception of the Big 12 three years ago, it should be challenged by two teams that did surprisingly well at the Pre-NCAA meet in Bloomington, Ind., two weeks ago: the University of Texas and the University of Missouri.

On the women's side, Kansas State University and Colorado are expected to compete for first with the other teams hoping for third. The Wildcats and Buffaloes are both ranked nation-

ally in the top seven and have won the last three Big 12 Championships, and their dominance seems likely to continue.

Although the Aggies do not appear to be favorites going into the meet, they could surprise some people with a strong showing.

This week marks the first time all season that Hartman has let up on his training sessions to give his runners a chance to rest, and that could give the Aggies the boost they need to break out.

No. 16 Volleyball team set to take on Missouri

BY BREE HOLZ
The Battalion

After an impressive win over the University of Texas Wednesday night, the 16th-ranked Texas A&M Volleyball Team will be on the road again this Saturday to battle the University of Missouri Tigers. First serve is set for 7 p.m.

A&M has found itself in the midst of a Big 12 Conference championship fight, with Texas and Kansas State University the only teams ahead of the Aggies. A&M is currently 17-4 overall and holds a 8-3 conference record.

The Tigers, however, are tied for ninth place in the Big 12 with a 2-9 record and are 8-14 overall.

A&M defeated the Tigers earlier this season in College Station, 15-0, 15-8, 15-6. The Aggies set the all-time hitting percentage record (.533) for A&M during the match against Missouri.

A&M leads the all-time series between the two teams, 9-1.

Missouri returns four starters from last year's squad that placed ninth in the Big 12 conference with a 5-15 record.

Senior outside hitter Celia Howes said the Aggies know their

hopes of winning the Big 12 are still alive, but they are trying to focus on one match at a time.

"When you look toward a bigger goal, you lose sight of what's important at that moment," Howes said. "We just try to focus on the next match."

A&M volleyball coach Laurie Corbelli said the Aggies try to focus on short-term goals.

"We talk a lot about each opponent and our successes against them, and taking each match as it comes," Corbelli said. "We set short-term goals, and try to achieve those."

A&M has outblocked its opponents in 15 matches and was ranked 11th in the nation and third in the Big 12 last week with a 3.15 average.

The Aggies also are outhitting their opponents .245 to .152 and are averaging 15.86 kills, 17.49 digs and 3.08 blocks per game.

Senior middle blocker Amber Woolsey is ranked second in the conference with a .367 hitting percentage and leads the Aggies in kills with 4.04 per game.

The next home match for the Aggies will be Wednesday at 7 p.m. when they host the Texas Tech University Red Raiders.

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