

Cross Country men, women place 5th, 9th at Big 12 meet

BY BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

Going into Saturday's Big 12 Cross Country Championships, the Texas A&M Men's and Women's Cross Country Teams felt good about their chances. The Aggies were given a break in their practice regimen last week to prepare for the meet and give them a chance to compete with at least a marginal amount of rest.

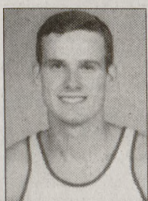
Then the University of Colorado Buffaloes decided to show up and ruin everything.

The Colorado men took the team and individual titles for the fourth consecutive season, and the women also took the individual title and won their third team title in four years, reclaiming the championship they lost last year to Kansas State University.

CU's Ron Roybal was the top finisher in the men's race, while the Buffaloes' Kara Wheeler notched the top spot on the women's side.

The Aggie men finished fifth in the team competition, while the women ended up in ninth place.

"The way Hartman trains us, our best race of the year is going to be in two weeks."



— SCOTT LENGEFELD
CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER

Senior Scott Lengefeld was the top finisher for the Aggies in the men's individual competition with a fourth-place finish. Sophomore Andrea Bookout kept up her successful season for the women's team, fighting through a pulled hamstring to finish first for the Aggies and 29th overall.

A&M cross country coach Dave Hartman said he was disappointed the women did not place as well as he had hoped,

but he was quick to point out that winning the Big 12 Championships was not the primary goal of the team this season — qualifying for nationals was.

"It would have been nice to run better here," he said. "But like I've said all year, the meet we are training for is districts (the NCAA regional meet). That's the one that counts."

Lengefeld said he was of the same opinion.

"The way Hartman trains us, our best race of the year is going to be in two weeks," Lengefeld said. "Last year, we ran awful at this meet (the Big 12 Championships), and two weeks later we did really well. Add me and Steve (Erath) to that team, I think it's going to make a huge difference."

Bookout said she plans on being 100 percent for the regional meet.

"We don't have anything this week, but in Denton, that's the one I'm talking about," she said. "There won't be any problems with my hamstring then."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Volleyball downs Missouri

The 16th-ranked Texas A&M Volleyball Team extended its winning streak to four matches Saturday with a 15-6, 15-4, 15-10 victory over the University of Missouri Tigers.

With the win, the Aggies move to 18-4 overall and 9-3 in Big 12 Conference play. Missouri falls to 8-15 and 2-10 in the Big 12.

Senior middle blocker Amber Woolsey posted 11 kills in the match, giving her 1,005 for her career and making her the 11th player in A&M history to surpass the 1,000-kill milestone.

Sophomore outside hitter Erin Gibson came off

the bench and posted her first double-double of the season with 11 kills and 11 digs. Gibson also recorded a career-high .421 hitting percentage.

As a team, the Aggies outthrew the Tigers .319 to .084 in the match to help push A&M to its eighth consecutive win against Missouri.

The Aggies' next home match will take place Wednesday at 7 p.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum, when they host Texas Tech University, which upset Big 12 conference co-leader Kansas State University earlier this week.

VICTORY

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team when they needed him the most.

As tears welled up in his eyes after the game, an emotional McCown said the team came together like never before.

"It looked like a totally different team out there today," he said. "We pulled together like never before, like we hadn't done all year. I think now it's just going to get better each week. Everybody did their job, and it worked. It paid off."

Valletta said he could not imagine the team being in the hands of anyone but McCown.

"He's the kind of guy that can just huddle everybody together and take this team down the field like we did today," he said. "I wouldn't in a million years wish to play for any other quarterback. That's the kind of guy he is."

A team's season is not defined by one game, but with what A&M showed, it was a big step in the right direction.

Doug Shilling is a junior agricultural journalism major.

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