

Aggies fall to Cyclones in Big 12 Tournament

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Women's Soccer Team discovered the downfall of tournament competition last night — it only takes one loss to end the efforts of a whole season.

Seventh-seed Iowa State University handed the No. 2 Aggies a loss in the first round to eliminate their hope for a second win at the Big 12 Championships in San Antonio.

The Cyclones have a three-year history with A&M that is filled with bad memories. Not only did Iowa State have a 0-5 record against A&M, but it had been outscored 17-1 in the five-game series.

Iowa State knew it would have its work cut out for it to keep a lid on the high-powered A&M offense.

The Cyclones surprised the Aggies by taking on a conservative game highlighted by a defensive posture that would only advance a couple of forwards at a time.

The strategy not only worked to keep A&M from scoring, but gave Iowa State few looks toward

the net. The game would be scoreless through 120 minutes that featured two halves and two "golden goal" overtime periods.

"They played very well," A&M soccer coach G. Guerrieri said. "They laid a lot of numbers back on defense and we had trouble breaking through. It's hard to get through solid objects sometimes."

The match was forced into penalty kicks after the four periods of scoreless action.

Iowa State proved to be more accurate as it got five goals past A&M's senior goalkeeper Melanie Wilson, opposed to A&M's four into the back of the net.

"Penalty kicks, some people say, are an unfortunate abomination of our game," Guerrieri said.

Big 12 Conference action might be over for A&M, but the team is confident that its record will carry it onto the list for the NCAA tournament to be announced on Sunday.

"We played very well this season. We think our record speaks very well at 15-5," Guerrieri said.

"We're hopeful we get in, but we have taken control out of our hands."

Clutch performer

A&M wide receiver Matt Bumgardner overcomes injuries to consistently contribute to Aggies in crucial situations

BY BETH MILLER
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Football Team has what senior wide receiver Matt Bumgardner calls "a great crop of talent" in its wide receiver corps — an athletic group featuring depth and a wide variety of talent. And although Bumgardner has been plagued by injuries throughout his career, he has consistently emerged from the Aggies' gifted receiver pool with moments of greatness.

Perhaps the most memorable of those came in the Big 12 Championship game last year. Bumgardner made a 30-yard diving catch against Kansas State University during the Aggies' fourth-quarter, game-tying drive.

Bumgardner said the catch was one of the most pivotal moments in his career.

"When Brannndon [Stewart] threw [the ball], I thought, 'There is no way I'll catch this,' because the ball was flying; but it was just one of those catches," he said. "It just stuck in my hands. In my athletic career, that is definitely something I look back on."

Last weekend, Bumgardner had a career-high five catches — two for touchdowns — in a 21-3 A&M win over Oklahoma State. But that wasn't the first time he had a big game against OSU.

In 1997, with the Aggies trailing the Cowboys by 15 points in the fourth quarter at Kyle Field, Bumgardner made a 25-yard catch on third and 12, a crucial play that seemed to spark the Aggies to come back and win in a game crucial to their hopes of winning the Big 12 South.

Bumgardner spoke of his recent success against OSU and recalled each step of one of his catches.

"Randy threw it where only I could get to it; it was wet, and I just tucked it into my body and made sure I didn't let go of it," he said.

He said the reason most of his catches are spectacular is because he is willing to dive for the ball, even if thinks he will be unable to catch it, whereas other receivers might not.

Bumgardner selflessly downplays his memorable catches, instead opting to remind people that he doesn't have as many catches



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M senior wide receiver **Matt Bumgardner** had a career-high five receptions and two touchdowns Saturday in the Aggies' 21-3 victory against Oklahoma State University at Kyle Field.

as many would think. "People might assume I have more catches than I do just because they remember the few that I do have," he said.

Bumgardner does have one characteristic that makes coaches nervous on the sidelines — his history of injuries. In high school in Luling, Texas, he tore his left hamstring, which he thinks may

have caused permanent vulnerability in it. Since then, his career has been riddled with injuries including chronic hamstring pulls, a pulled quadriceps, hip flexor problems, at least one ankle injury, a slight back injury, a slight shoulder separation and a bruised calf. Bumgardner said

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Dallas QB Aikman cleared to play

IRVING (AP) — Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman was cleared to play yesterday after an MRI showed he suffered no damage from a blow to the head suffered last Sunday.

Cowboys officials said the results of Tuesday's precautionary MRI show Aikman did not have a concussion and that he will be able to play in Dallas' Monday night game at Minnesota.

Indianapolis cornerback Jeff Burris rammed his helmet into Aikman's on a sack early in the fourth quarter of the Colts' 32-24 victory on Sunday.

Aikman sat out one series, sniffed some smelling salts, then returned.



AIKMAN

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