

Soccer team wins first-round game against Montana



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M freshman forward **Heather Ragsdale** heads a corner kick into the net Wednesday night in the Aggies' 2-1 victory over the University of Montana at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

BY REECE FLOOD
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Soccer Team extended its season by at least one more game Wednesday night by defeating the University of Montana in the first round of the 1999 NCAA Division I Women's Soccer Championships at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

The Aggies came back from a one-point deficit to earn a 2-1 victory over the Grizzlies. A&M advances to the second round, where it will face the University of Kentucky Sunday at 1 p.m. in Lexington, Ky.

In a hard-fought first half featuring 13 A&M shots and only four Montana shots, forward Heidi Melville scored a goal late in the first half to give Montana a 1-0 halftime lead.

A&M soccer coach G. Guerrieri said the team took the first half as a wake-up call. "The biggest thing that we had to

overcome was the emotion of, 'Oh my God, we've been outplaying a team and they scored and are we going to lose in the first round,'" he said. "I think that scare went through the team a little bit."

After being startled in the first half, A&M came out firing on all cylinders in the second.

Slightly more than two minutes into the second half, freshman forward Heather Ragsdale headed a corner kick from junior forward Nicky Thrasher into the back of the net to tie the game, 1-1.

Almost 20 minutes later, freshman midfielder Andrea Starns hit a shot off the left pole and into the net from 20 yards out to give the Aggies a game-winning one-point lead.

"Honestly, I didn't really see the ball go in," Starns said. "As soon as I hit it, I knew it was on, and I knew that if the goalie didn't make a play on it that it was going in. That's the best goal I've ever scored."

Guerrieri said he was not surprised that two freshmen stepped up to score the two goals that gave the Aggies the victory, because he expects his freshmen to play at the same level as the rest of the team.

"The evolution of this program is that players are coming in as freshmen and are pressing everyone to get better," he said. "By the time we got to October, we had no more freshmen. We had some seasoned college soccer players."

The Aggie offense pressured the Montana defense all night, totaling 24 shots in the game. Meanwhile, A&M presented a stifling defense that allowed Montana only six shots the entire game.

Senior goalkeeper Melanie Wilson made four big saves to secure the victory for the Aggies.

A&M was supported by a rowdy crowd of 504 and an Aggie bench that stayed on its feet the entire game.

No. 15 Ags down Bears in 5 games

BY BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

After falling behind, 2-0, to one of the top defensive teams in the Big 12, the Baylor University Bears, the Texas A&M Volleyball Team rallied for three straight wins to take the crucial match, 13-15, 11-15, 16-14, 15-9, 15-9, in front of 996 raucous fans at G. Rollie White Coliseum Wednesday night.

With the win, the Aggies (20-5, 11-4 Big 12) were able to maintain the only undefeated home record in the Big 12 this season.

The victory did not come easily, requiring several stellar performances from A&M players. Senior middle blocker Amber Woolsey tied her career high for assists with 11, moving her into No. 2 on the Aggies' all-time list. Woolsey also had a career high in kills with 28, leading the team.

Senior middle blocker Lauri Leahy also tied a career kill high with 16,

and junior outside hitter Christy Clark set career highs in service aces with 3 and digs with 18.

While getting an all-around effort from her team pleased A&M volleyball coach Laurie Corbelli, she said the way her team performed in the first two games did not.

"We weren't sharp early," Corbelli said. "We thought we were, but Baylor was testing us early and we had to really work to get some momentum going."

That momentum was a rare commodity in the first two games for the Aggies, who were frustrated early and often by Baylor's defensive prowess.

Woolsey said despite Baylor's strong defense, the Aggies were the only ones who could prevent themselves from winning, not the Bears.

"There was a momentum shift after we lost that first game," Woolsey said. "They came out strong in game two, and we knew that it was our side

of the court that needed to change in game three.

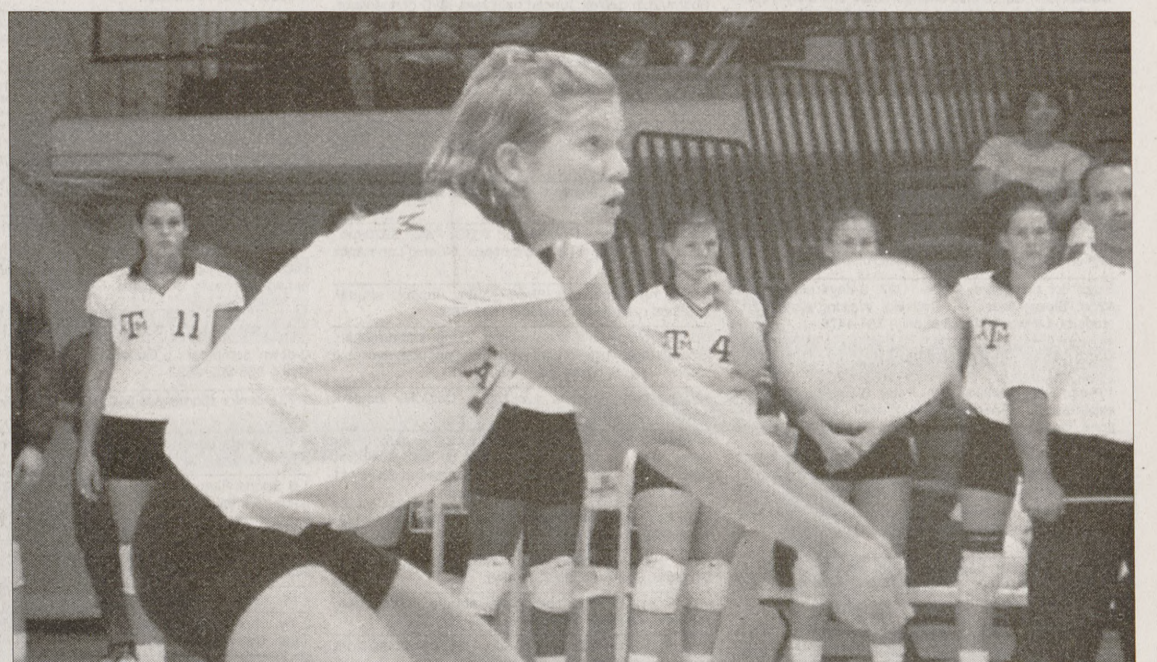
"We knew we had nothing to lose, and I think everyone stepped up their intensity on the court."

The Aggies got that momentum by matching their opponent's intensity and going back to what has been their bread and butter all season long — defense.

"I think defense is a big key for us," Woolsey said. "I think that when we have good defensive skills, we have more options on offense."

Sophomore outside hitter Michelle Cole also credited the strong defense. "When our blocking got more solid, it made it easier to read behind the block," Cole said. "When you know where the block is, you know where you have to be on defense, and that makes it a lot easier to get balls up for our middles to put down."

The Aggies will take on Oklahoma Saturday at 7 p.m. in Norman, Okla.



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M senior outside hitter **Celia Howes** digs a ball Wednesday night in the Aggies' five-game victory over Baylor University at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

How to ruin the moment #48

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