

## Ags hit .500 mark with win

BY REECE FLOOD  
The Battalion

The Texas A&M women's basketball team won its second home conference game in a row and brought its season record to the .500 mark after defeating the University of Missouri 66-55 Wednesday in Reed Arena.

The Aggies are now 11-11, 3-9 in the Big 12 Conference, while the Tigers fell to 16-7, 6-6 in the Big 12.

It was not an easy victory for the Aggies, though. With 4:28 left on the clock and the game tied 49-49, it seemed the victory was up for grabs.

But sophomore guard LaToya Rose sparked the Aggie offense with a timely three-pointer. That was followed shortly by a field goal from junior guard Brandy Jones which prompted Missouri coach Cindy Stein to call a timeout.

From this point on, the Aggie offense continued to hit its shots from the field and the free throw line, helping A&M finish its 17-6 run to end the game.

Stein said her Tigers were unable to get points against the Aggies in the closing minutes due to A&M's aggressive defense.

"I think that we absolutely had an offensive meltdown," Stein said. "I give credit to Texas A&M. They really attacked our guards and made them put the ball down. We weren't getting any good shots off. They outplayed us."

The Aggie defense was impressive Wednesday, getting 19 turnovers from Missouri — nine of which came from blocked shots and seven from steals.

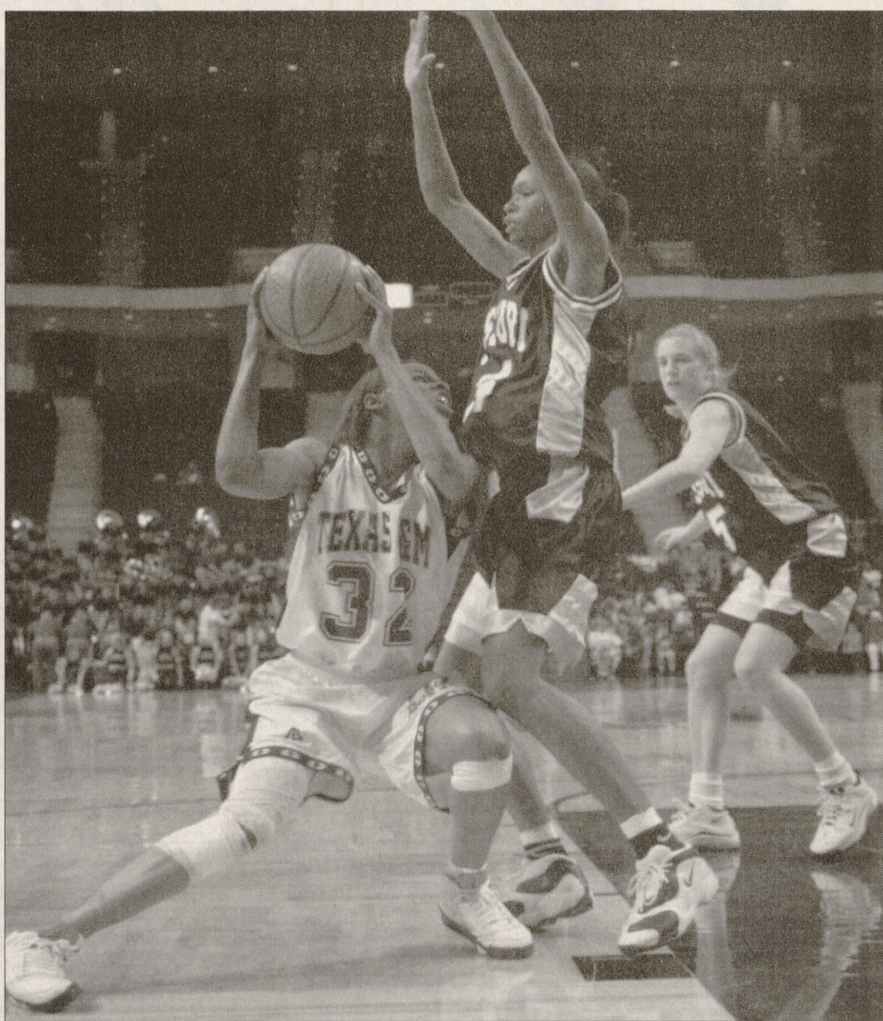
"I thought their team, they took it at us," Stein said. "They didn't back down from us. They had us on our heels."

A&M coach Peggie Gillom was excited about the win and gave credit to a solid performance on both sides of the ball.

"This is a great win for Texas A&M women's basketball tonight," Gillom said. "Tonight we scored some buckets, and we played defense and it all came."

Senior forward Kera Alexander said she noticed a difference in how the team played together in this game.

"We played real well as a team," Alexander said. "Down the stretch we have a tendency to try to go one-on-one and we kind of each get in our own little world. Today we came together."



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M junior forward **Jaynetta Saunders** attempts to go up for a shot against the University of Missouri last night at Reed Arena.

Gillom said Missouri is a very talented team. By beating them, the Aggies brought an end to a four-game Missouri winning streak.

"This is a red-hot team," Gillom said. "Missouri is not bad. I think they folded under our pressure tonight."

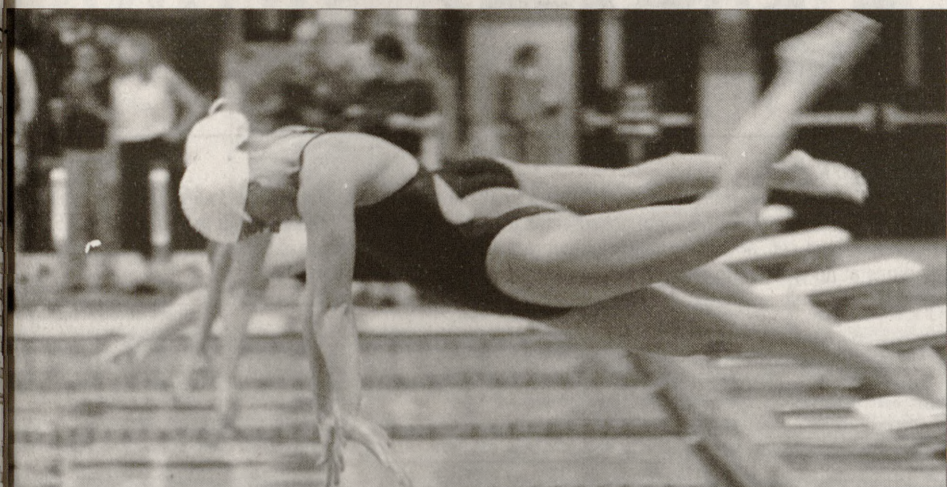
Stepping up big for the Aggies was junior forward Jaynetta Saunders, who scored a game-high 20 points and recovered nine rebounds.

Saunders went out early in the game with a twisted knee, but returned shortly to help A&M get the win.

"When I came down on my leg, I believe I twisted it," Saunders said. "I came out and everyone was telling me 'suck it up, suck it up, you ain't hurt.' They just told me to play my game."

Three other Aggies scored in double digits. Rose chipped in 13 points while senior forward Prissy Sharpe and Alexander both ended the game with 12 points.

Julie Helm led the way for Missouri with 16 points, while teammate Amy Monsees grabbed a team-high 10 rebounds.



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's swim team is hosting the 2000 Big 12 Swimming Championships Feb. 17-19 at the Student Rec Center Natatorium.

## A&M women's swim team hosts Big 12 Championships

BY BLAINE DIONNE  
The Battalion

After a three-year domination by two elite teams, the Big 12 conference is wrought with parity this women's swimming season.

This according to Jill Sterkel, coach of the defending Big 12 women's swimming champs from the University of Texas.

"It used to be there would be a couple of teams that would dominate swimming, in conference and the NAAs," Sterkel said. "But over the past few years, we've seen that all the schools are able to compete."

Sterkel said the 2000 season has continued the trend of steady improvement in the conference's talent pool, no pun intended.

Besides the usual suspects of UT and the University of Nebraska, who between them are the proprietors of every Big 12 championship since the super conference's inception in 1996, various schools have popped up as serious contenders this weekend.

"This year the quality of the Big 12 has risen a lot," Sterkel said. "Kansas, A&M and Nebraska have all gotten better."

Texas A&M women's swimming coach Steve Bultman, in his first year at A&M and in Big 12 competition, said he had to agree with his colleague from UT about the relative leveling of the playing field in the conference.

"This is my first year here and I've looked at the results in the past and clearly Texas and Nebraska have dominated the first three years," Bultman said. "But I feel like we're swimming a lot better, Kansas is definitely improved — even Missouri is a lot better, so hopefully this could be one of the closer championships ever."

The reasons the Aggies could make this a close championship starting Thursday are the same reasons they have stayed close in the standings all season.

Bultman, acting as if it were simply a foregone conclusion who would perform in the meet, rattled off his choices for A&M's top performers.

"It's probably going to be the same ones that have been doing a great job for us all year," Bultman said. "Monica Williams, Monica Stroman, Tracy Evans, Clara Ho in the flies, Amy Osmun in the backstroke, Kelly Bolton in the sprints, just to name a few."

Sterkel named virtually the same list about the talent awaiting the rest of the conference at A&M, but was also quick to point out that each school has their specialty.

"On paper, each school has an event that they can win," Sterkel said.

The schools competing are Iowa State University, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri, the University of Nebraska, UT and A&M.

The meet will be running all day Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Student Rec Center Natatorium.

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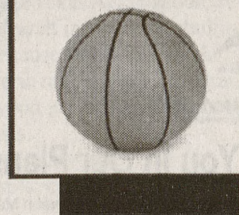
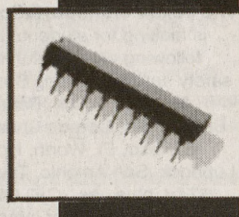
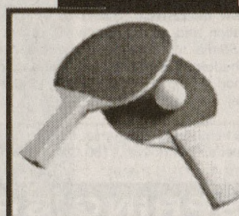
On-campus interviews will be held Mon. Feb. 28 & Tues., March 7

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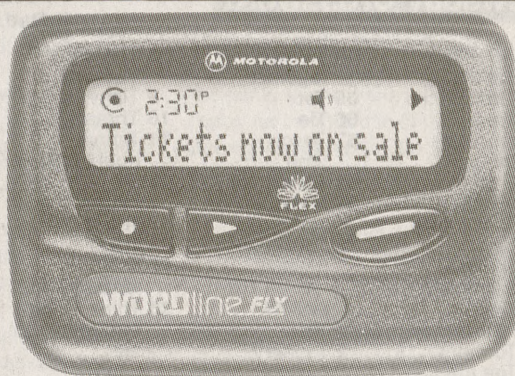
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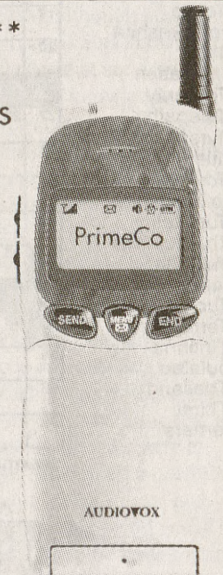
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