

'Horns travel to face A&M women

BY REECE FLOOD
The Battalion

The Texas A&M women's basketball team will play in front of a home crowd for the last time this season when they take on the University of Texas Longhorns in Reed Arena Saturday at 3 p.m.

For four Aggie seniors, it will be their last time to play in Aggieland. Forward Prissy Sharpe, guard Amy Yates, forward Kera Alexander and forward Jennifer Burrows will all finish their A&M basketball careers at the end of this season.

Alexander has mixed emotions about her last game in Reed Arena.

"It's weird," Alexander said. "It's exciting and it's sad. It's exciting to think about I've made it through four years. But it's sad because it's the end of my time with my teammates and with coach and everything."

Coach Peggie Gillom said losing the four seniors will be a big loss for the Aggies.

"You just don't replace those kind of people," Gillom said. "You don't replace Kera and Prissy and Amy and Jen. They've been good for Texas A&M. They've been good leaders for our kids."

"Some of our new kids don't really understand the rivalry between Texas and Texas A&M, and that is a problem. But our older kids do. We have a lot of young people who don't know the rivalry between Texas and Texas A&M, so hopefully the [seniors] can get them fired up for it."

Texas is definitely one team A&M can get fired up for. In an earlier meeting this season in Austin, the Aggies fell behind by 13 points early in the game. But the Aggies battled back and went into halftime with a one-point lead of 33-32.

The second half proved to be a disappointment for the Aggies, as Texas went on to win 82-54.

Alexander hopes the Aggies can play better against the Longhorns this time.

"Hopefully we'll play two halves," Alexander said. "I mean we played them well the first half, and then we just came out flat the second half. We're both good teams. It's all about who decides to come and play."

A&M junior forward Jaynetta Saunders said the team has two incentives for coming out and playing hard on Saturday.

"We're going to be playing for two things," Saunders said. "We want to play to win, and we want to play for the [seniors]. This is their last night and we want to make it memorable."

In the previous game, senior forward Edwina Brown had a big night for the Longhorns with 21 points and 11 rebounds against A&M. This seems to be the trend for Brown, who is leading her team with a 21.8 points per game average.

"Edwina is a player," Gillom said. "It's important for us not to let other people get plays. Edwina is going to get her points, but we want to try to stop everyone else from getting theirs."



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M junior guard Brandy Jones goes up for a layup in the Aggies' 66-55 win over the University of Missouri Tigers Feb. 16 at Reed Arena.

Saunders will play a key role in limiting Brown's success. Saunders tallied 16 points, eight rebounds and seven blocks in the earlier game against Texas.

Saunders said guarding Brown was not easy the first time, but she thinks she played well.

"I contained her a little bit at Texas," Saunders said. "I blocked a few of her shots in the first half and I had her thinking. Every time she shot she was thinking 'Is it going to get blocked?'"

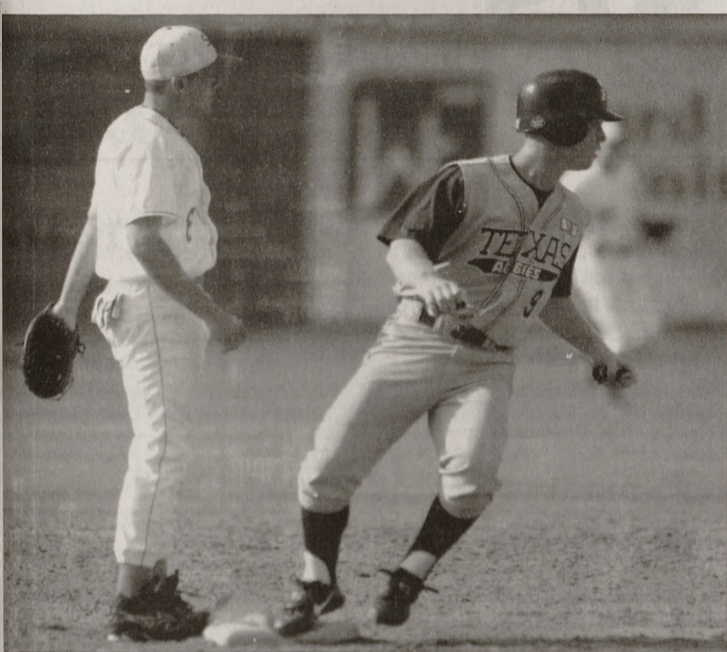
Saunders feels confident in her ability to perform well despite the fact she will have to fight a nagging ankle, knee and back injuries.

"You don't feel it in the game," Saunders said. "But after the game is when you really feel it."

Both A&M (11-13, 3-11 Big 12) and Texas (17-10, 8-6 Big 12) are coming into the game riding two-game losing streaks.

Alexander said the key for a victory is for everyone to have a good game.

"If everybody plays real well, the weight's not all on one person's shoulder," Alexander said. "And that's the difference. They have great players and we have great players. But it's about who plays the best as a team."



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M senior second baseman Sean Heaney reaches second base in the Aggies' 2-1 loss to Sam Houston State University Tuesday.

Ags open Big 12 play

BY DOUG SHILLING
The Battalion

"We're having a hard time getting on a roll and a lot of that is that we're not good enough yet. There are signs that this thing can happen but they haven't happened yet."

A&M senior second baseman Sean Heaney said he thinks the team will be able to put the Sam Houston State game behind them and be able to build off the Arizona series.

"After the Arizona series," Heaney said, "a lot of guys finally realized that we can win. After beating them, we know we can beat anyone."

Johnson said the team is not quite ready for conference play, but most teams are not ready at this point.

"Teams that have very young ballclubs like ours are never ready for conference to start," Johnson said. "Last year I was fairly comfortable to get started. This group, each game we play, we're starting to do a few things better, not all of them. No, we're not ready to start but most people are in the same boat."

It has been an up and down season so far for the Texas A&M baseball team.

After taking two of three games from the University of Arizona last weekend, the Aggies took a step back when they dropped a 2-1 decision Tuesday to the Sam Houston State Bearcats.

The team hopes to be on the rise once again as it begins defense of its Big 12 title when the Kansas State University Wildcats come to town for a three-game series Friday.

A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson said he hopes the team will be able to bounce back after the setback against the Bearcats.

"The weekend with Arizona gave us some hope," Johnson said. "It gave us a little boost and we needed that but this last loss dropped us back down. We're kinda on a roller coaster."

Sports in Brief

No. 15 Ags travel to face TCU

The 18th-ranked Texas A&M men's tennis team (2-2) will take on No. 15 Texas Christian University at 1 p.m. Saturday in Fort Worth.

The Aggies are the third-highest ranked team in the Big 12 behind only No. 10 University of Texas and No. 12 Baylor University.

In individual rankings, A&M junior All-American Shuon Madden is No. 13. Madden and junior Dumitru Caradima are No. 28 in doubles.

The Aggies' home opener is Sunday, March 5, when they host No. 4 Florida at 1 p.m. at the Varsity Tennis Center.

ic qualifiers for nationals yet, but possess many borderline athletes that could push their times ahead this weekend.

A&M track coach Ted Nelson said he looks for his team to respond over the course of the meet.

"Our ladies have been a little bit injured, but our men have a good chance to go up to Ames with a good shot to be in the top three and possibly win a championship, we feel good about that," Nelson said.

Men's hoopsters hit road to Austin

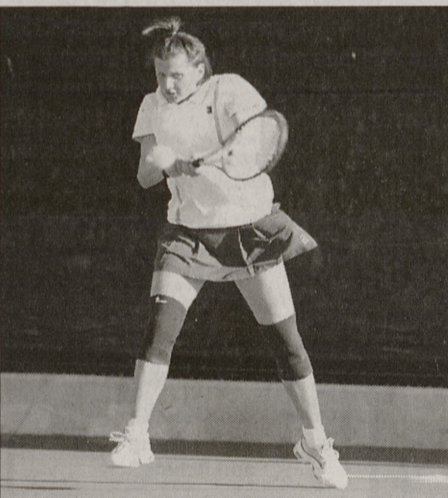
The Texas A&M men's basketball team head to Austin to take on the 14th-ranked University of Texas Longhorns Saturday at 12:45 p.m.

The Aggies are coming off an 81-76 defeat at the hands of the Kansas State University Wildcats in Manhattan, Kan.

A&M freshman guard Bernard King led the Aggies with 25 points while freshman guard Jamaal Gilchrist chipped in 18 points.

Tracksters head to Big 12 Champs

The Texas A&M track and field teams head to Ames, Iowa this weekend for the Big 12 Championship meet. Heading into the meet, the Aggies have no automat-



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

A&M freshman Olivia Karlikova hits a shot against Northwestern University.

Women's tennis hosts conference foes

BY BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

Deflated, discouraged, dispirited, depressed, dejected—take your pick of adjectives that SHOULD describe the Texas A&M women's tennis team at this point of the season.

But then you can promptly forget whichever one you chose, because none of the above apply.

Even though the Aggies have dropped three matches in a row after beginning the season with two wins and a sense that this would be their best performance in years, they are maintaining an emphatically unified front in the face of questions about their team makeup.

As always for this team, the confidence starts at the top.

A&M women's tennis coach Bobby Kleinecke said that while he obviously would rather have won than lost the matches against Northwestern, LSU and Vanderbilt, he has put the losses in perspective.

"I still believe in this team," he said. "Even though we came away with some losses to some good teams, I feel like we still have an excellent opportunity this year."

Even though the losses have been detrimental to the Aggies' national ranking, the season is still young and the Aggies begin the important phase of their schedule this weekend by hosting Big 12 foes Missouri and Iowa State.

The Tigers and Cyclones are not exactly known for being terrors on the tennis court, but after the last few weeks' humbling performances, Kleinecke said his team is not taking anything for granted.

One player that shouldn't have too much trouble with her opponent is senior Lisa Dingwall.

Dingwall, and freshman Olivia Karlikova, have the best individual records on the team so far. Dingwall said that although she has had a good deal of success so far, her teammates are not far behind.

"I think that we all have a lot of confidence in our play and in each other," she said. "I really think that everyone is doing well."

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