

Ags post solid victory over Jaguars

BY AL LAZARUS
The Battalion

It almost seemed inevitable the 13th-ranked Texas A&M men's tennis team would experience a letdown after defeating No. 4 University of Florida on Sunday.

The Aggies did not have that luxury Wednesday night at the Varsity Tennis Center.

Facing a worthy opponent in 33rd-ranked University of South Alabama, A&M dropped the doubles point but stormed back in singles to grab a 5-2 victory over the Jaguars.

"South Alabama is a good team, but we knew that coming in," A&M men's tennis coach Tim Cass said. "I'm very pleased with our effort tonight, especially after beating Florida on Sunday."

After a shaky start in doubles found them trailing, 1-0, the Aggies promptly responded by winning five of six first sets in singles play.

Four of those matches would turn into straight-set victories, while one went to three sets before an Aggie victory.

Eighth-ranked A&M junior Shuon Madden rolled over the Jaguars' Julien Raynal at No. 1 singles, 6-1, 6-0.

In the No. 5 slot, A&M freshman Ryan Newport also won easily, 6-1, 6-3, over Kosta Zinchanka.

The Aggies stretched their lead minutes later when junior Cody Hubbell put the finishing touches on a 6-4, 6-4 win over the Jaguars' Vince Baudat, who is ranked No. 72.

Leading 3-1, the Aggies had to work hard for the decisive fourth point.

Playing at No. 4, junior Dumitru Caradima would provide it with a hard-fought, 7-5, 7-6 (10), victory over South Alabama's Zak Lahmar.

Before Caradima's victory, the match was up in the air with South Alabama needing just two more points thanks to a victory at No. 6 singles.

But Caradima fought off two set points to seal the A&M victory.

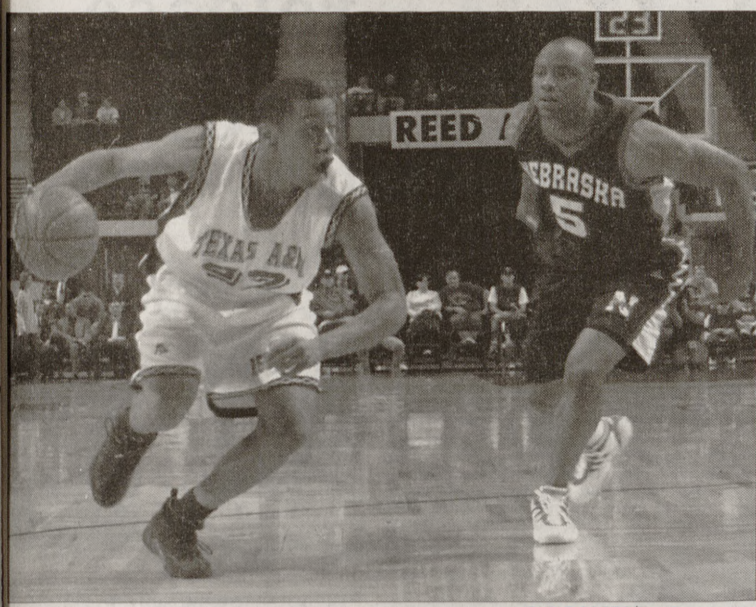
"We're thankful to get out of this match alive," Hubbell said. "Coming off a really big win, we told ourselves not to let up."

Sophomore Keith From gave the Aggies their fifth point with a 6-1, 6-7 (3), 6-4, victory over the Jaguars' Christian Thall.

The 12th-ranked duo of Caradima and Madden was victorious at No. 1 doubles, 8-3, over South Alabama's Lahmar and Paul McInerney.



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION
A&M sophomore Keith From hits a forehand in his match against the University of South Alabama's Christian Thall.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M freshman guard Bernard King eludes a University of Nebraska defender in the Aggies 83-76 win over the Cornhuskers.

Aggies upbeat about chances in tourney

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

In a season that has gone from the highest high — defeating No. 12 Oklahoma State University — to the lowest low — being defeated twice by Baylor University — the Texas A&M men's basketball team has a chance for a positive conclusion.

Thursday night the 10th-seeded Aggies (8-19, 4-12 Big 12) take on the 7th-seeded University of Colorado Buffaloes (17-12, 7-9 Big 12) in the first round of the Phillips 66 Big 12 Tournament.

The Aggies will be aiming for their first-ever Big 12 Tournament win at 6:45 p.m. in Kansas City.

Despite struggling through conference action, the Aggies are positive about their chances in Kansas City.

A&M defeated the Buffaloes 74-69 at Reed Arena earlier this season and are coming off a 83-76 overtime win over the University of Nebraska on Saturday.

The previous win against Colorado, combined with the upbeat performance in the last game of the regular season, makes the Aggies a dangerous threat in the first round.

"We expect a tough game," A&M men's basketball coach Melvin Watkins said. "We got a good look at Colorado earlier this year. They got us down by 10 in the second half and we had to fight back to win, so we know what they are capable of doing."

A&M will continue to look to freshman guard Bernard King to set the Aggies' pace in Kansas City.

King, the Big 12 Freshman of the Year, is coming off a 30-point, 10-rebound game versus Nebraska and had 34 points in the Feb. 12 win over Colorado.

"He's found a way to get it done," A&M senior forward Aaron Jack said. "He's stepped up big."

The Aggies have improved on other areas of the court since the last meeting

See Big 12 on Page 8.

Women's tennis team falls to No. 2 Lady Bulldogs

BY BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion



PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION

A&M freshman Olivia Karlikova lunges for a ball during Wednesday's match against Georgia.

The No. 2 University of Georgia Bulldogs handed the No. 38 Texas A&M women's tennis team a 9-0 defeat at the Varsity Tennis Center Wednesday.

The Aggies won one set — not a match — a set, against an absolutely dominating performance by the Bulldogs.

Junior Eva Marcial said the team was not at its best during the match. "Not good," she said. "We competed well, but what do you expect when you play a really

good team like that."

The lone set the Aggies took came in the first set of Cassie Haas' match against Georgia's Marissa Catlin, when Haas was able to pull out a 7-5 win.

After that, however, it was really just a matter of the Dawgs finishing their matches.

A&M women's tennis coach Bobby Kleinecke gave the Bulldogs credit where credit is due.

"That's the best team we'll play against this year," Kleinecke said. "We came out and we fought hard tonight and we competed hard at every position and that's

what we came out here to do."

The road doesn't get any easier for the Aggies this weekend, when they will try to build on their 2-0 Big 12 record by taking a two-day jaunt through Oklahoma by way of Norman and Stillwater.

Kleinecke was reservedly optimistic about his team's chances over the weekend.

"Oklahoma always comes out of the wood work and plays us well," Kleinecke said. "So we'll have to be ready for that match. Oklahoma State is a lot better than they were last year, so nothing is going to be easy."

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