

## Overtime goal downs Longhorns, secures 2nd place finish

By BRIAN RUFF

### The Battalion

The Texas Longhorns came into the Aggie Soccer Complex on a mission Thursday night — steal second place in the Big 12 from the No. 9 Texas Aggie soccer team.

A&M proved its No. 9 ranking by sending the Longhorns home without accomplishing their mission, just barely. An overtime goal by Heather Ragsdale gave A&M a 2-1 win.

The Aggies dominated game offensively, and continued pressure on the Texas defense for most of the first half. In the 33rd minute, midfielder Heather Wiebe ventured into the Texas penalty box and was taken out from behind, giving the Aggies a penalty kick. Wiebe blasted her kick in the upper-right-hand corner past the extended hand of Texas goalkeeper Shay Wilkerson.

The rest of the half was scoreless, with both teams battling in the midfield for most of the half. Despite a strong wind in their faces, the Aggies were unable to connect on many long passes that were pounced on by the Texas goalkeeper.

At the end of the half, A&M seemed to be well in control with a 1-0 lead. Only 30 seconds into the second half, midfielder Julie Goin pounded a shot from well outside the

penalty box that struck the crossbar.

Throughout the game Wilkerson was forced to make many saves on high shots, that resulted in eight A&M corner kicks in the half.

The Aggies continued to control the game, until the Longhorns were given a corner kick in the 85th minute. Wilkerson, the Texas goalkeeper, who is also one of the team's tallest players at 5' 10", snuck her way into the Aggie penalty box. Just seconds later she got a piece of the corner kick from midfielder Kati McBain and headed it towards the goal. Aggie goalkeeper Esther Thompson was unable to get a hand on the header and Texas tied the game to the surprise of all 1,779 on hand for the game.

The teams moved into the first overtime, and A&M showed why it has dominated most of the Big 12 play this season. A&M laid on the pressure, coming just inches of a victory several times in the early minutes of the contest.

With only 1:35 left in the first overtime, A&M sensation Kristen Strutz controlled a ball at midfield and then quickly moved the ball to a streaking Heather Ragsdale, who beat the Texas goalkeeper and laid the ball into the open net for the gamewinner.

"We had several opportunities to put the

game out of reach," Ragsdale said. "We needed to step it up and play our level of the game, so we did."

Ragsdale, the team leader in most offensive categories, scored her fourth game-winning goal of the season.

"I am really proud of our team," said A&M coach G. Guerrieri. "Our players were real upset that they let something get away from them, but they went out and rectified it."

"We knew it was going to be a big game, because it's Texas," Wiebe said. "We really had to get more mentally prepared than physically," added Wiebe.

The Aggies outshot the Longhorns, 26-16, and also had 14 corner kicks in the contest.

With the win, the Aggies secured second place in the Big 12. They will hold the second seed in the Big 12 tournament in San Antonio next week.

"We created a lot of good chances, but we've got to do better at finishing those chances," Guerrieri said. "We have one more game to work some of those kinks out prior to the [Big 12] tournament."

The Aggies (14-5, 8-2) will conclude the 2000 regular season this Sunday at the Aggie Soccer Complex. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m.



Heather Wiebe, pictured above, scored the Aggies first goal against Texas. A&M secured the second seed for the Big 12 tournament with an overtime goal against the Longhorns by forward Heather Ragsdale for a 2-1 win.

## A&M looks for upset against No. 10 KSU

### Top-ranked defenses and high-powered offenses collide at Kyle Field

By BLAINE DIONNE

### The Battalion

After a two-year hiatus, the No. 10 Kansas State Wildcats and the Texas A&M Aggies will resume their young but contentious rivalry Saturday at 2:30 p.m.

The game marks the first time A&M will face a ranked team this season and the first time the Aggies will play at Kyle Field since their home winning streak was snapped on Oct. 7 by then-winless Colorado.

Outside linebacker Jason Glenn said the Aggies are keeping the Colorado loss in perspective, particularly considering who they are facing this weekend.

"We're not worried about that (Colorado) loss anymore," Glenn said. "We could dwell on that and say, 'OK, we're at home, so we could lose again.'"

"But that's not in our mind right now. We're at home, but we've got the Twelfth Man and we're going to make it hard for the Kansas State offense."

That Kansas State offense has been one of the most productive in the country so far this season. The Wildcats boast the 15th best team offense,

racking up 434.1 yards per game, and the third-highest scoring numbers in the country, averaging 45.9 points per game.

Kansas State quarterback Jonathan Beasley is scoring the fourth most individual points per game with 11.5 a contest, and his favorite target, wide receiver Quincy Morgan, is second only to the Aggies' Robert Ferguson in total receiving yards.

A&M safety Michael Jameson said the Kansas State offense poses the biggest test the Aggies have seen so far this season.

"From what I've seen, Beasley can hurt you at any time," Jameson said. "As a DB, you really have to play your responsibility. When he scrambles, you have to stay in your coverage or mistakes will be made."

"Their record speaks for itself, though. They're a Top 10 team. I think, offensively and defensively, they are the most talented team we've faced to this point."

On the defensive side of the ball, the Wildcats have just as many outstanding athletes as on the offensive side.

They are fifth in the country against the run and the sixth best in team defense under the tutelage of former A&M football player and coach Phil Ben-

nett, a personal friend of A&M coach R.C. Slocum.

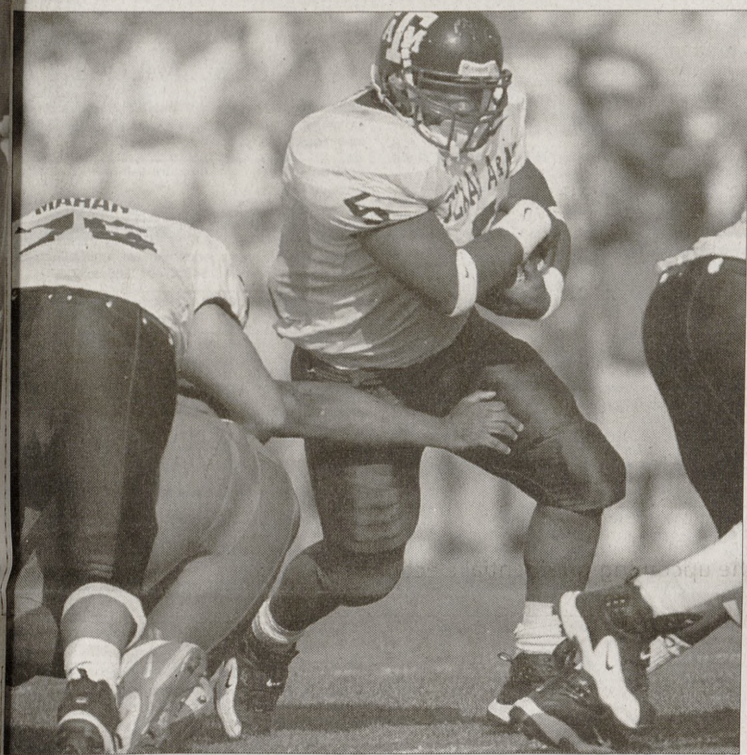
"They probably are (the best defense we've played all year)," Slocum said. "They've got great speed on their defense. They're big up front and they're physical up front. They've got linebackers that are big but can run, and they've got a good secondary. They're a well-coached and talented defense."

This game also marks the first time the two teams will meet since the 1998 Big 12 Championship game. The underdog Aggies pulled off perhaps the biggest upset in school history by knocking off then-No. 2 Kansas State, 36-33 in double overtime, making the game an instant-classic.

The victory sent Kansas State out of the Fiesta Bowl, site of the national championship that year, and into the Alamo Bowl, where a sluggish Wildcat team was punted by Purdue.

For the Aggie players who were there, it is a win that they still relish. Fullback Ja'Mar Toombs, who was a freshman at the time, said the comeback win is something the Aggies, who are underdogs again this week, can use.

"The way we came back and ended up winning, that was just the epitome of the Aggie spirit and what we can accomplish if we just keep



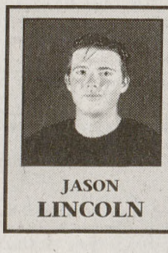
CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

Rushing veteran Ja'Mar Toombs and the Aggie backfield had their best game of the year against Iowa State. Saturday, they look to build on that against the 10th-ranked Wildcats.

## Ags look to restore Kyle Field mystique

### Slocum hopes to begin a new win streak

College football — where stadiums, fans and mascots take on a single personality that mysteriously turns the table in favor of the home team.



JASON LINCOLN

Two schools that know as much about home-field advantage as any in the nation, Kansas State and Texas A&M, will collide this Saturday.

The Wildcats ride in on a No. 10 national ranking and one of the highest scoring offenses in Division I. The Aggies, despite being unranked, have Kyle Field in their favor.

A&M watched its 22-game home winning streak, the nation's third longest, come to an end on Oct. 7 with a loss in Kyle Field to then-winless Colorado.

In 1996 it was also Colorado that ended another of coach R.C. Slocum's long winning streaks. The Aggies ended up going .500 in Kyle Field that season with three wins and three losses.

Saturday the Aggies will face that possibility once again as they look first to the 10th-ranked Wildcats and then to the third-ranked Oklahoma Sooners two weeks later. A&M already has its three wins this season. Now it wants to restore the mystique to Kyle Field to start the next streak with wins over Top 10 opponents.

Kansas State is no stranger to home-field advantage, currently holding the nation's second longest home winning streak, in Manhattan, Kan. Add to its ranking, a 60-game

winning streak over unranked opponents and the bitter memory of their upset loss to the Aggies in the 1998 Big 12 Championship that kept the Wildcats out of the national championship game, and KSU appears to be in perfect position for the win.

That is where Kyle Field enters the equation. Saturday should feature the largest crowd of Aggies ever to be on hand for an A&M football game. The A&M athletic ticket office is expecting a turnout of more than 85,000 to watch the first rematch of the teams since the Big 12 Championship in December 1998.

That crowd will be almost all maroon. Kansas State was provided with only 4,000 tickets.

"It's going to be a great atmosphere. ..." Slocum said. "If you can't get excited about this one, you're in the wrong business. This should be the largest crowd of A&M supporters to ever see a game. The fans will definitely be revved up."

A lot of emotion will highlight Saturday's game.

On Kansas State's part it will be the memory of the last time the teams met while trying to protect their Top 10 ranking and BCS bowl chances.

On A&M's part it will be trying to reenter the Top 25 and reestablish Kyle Field as one of the true X-factors in college football.

Jason Lincoln is a junior journalism major.

See related column on page 10. Kansas State Collegian sports editor shares weekend game opinion.

## Cross country teams prepped for postseason run



BERNARDO GARZA/THE BATTALION

The No. 21 Texas A&M women's cross country team, pictured above, and the unranked men's team will compete in the Big 12 Championships Saturday.

By DIANE XAVIER

### The Battalion

After sweeping the Texas A&M invitational on Oct. 14, the Aggie men's and women's cross country teams return to action Saturday, as they compete in the Big 12 Championship at the Buffalo Ranch in Boulder, Colo.

The men's 8-kilometer race starts at 10 a.m. followed by the women's 6k at 11 a.m. Mountain time.

The 21st-ranked Aggie women will encounter their toughest competition as they face fifth-ranked Colorado and ninth-placed Kansas State.

"Our goal is to finish third," said coach Dave Hartman. "We do have to

encounter some stiff competition, but with the depth we have, we should finish high on the list as well."

Hartman said the men's team has a chance to crack the top six.

"The men's situation is kind of blurred because there are so many teams that are ranked and have great depth," he said. "If the guys race with guts, they have a chance to finish well."

Hartman said the high altitude of Colorado should not affect the squads.

"We've never raced in high altitude but it is something every team deals with," he said. "If we keep our mental focus, we should be fine even though

it is on [Colorado's] home turf.

"We're not going to let it get to us."

Hartman said this race will show him where his teams will be for the regional meet, which qualifies teams for nationals.

"Hopefully, we will be able to peak at the right time during this race," he said.

Jennifer Whately is confident the women will surpass their national rankings with their postseason performance.

"We have a lot of depth and we expect to go to nationals," she said. "I think we are better than our 21st ranking, and we hope to show that at the Big 12 championship."

## Volleyball attempts to continue streak against Sooners

By BREE HOLZ

### The Battalion

After sweeping the University of Kansas Wednesday, 15-10, 15-13, 15-12, the Texas A&M volleyball team will be back in action at G. Rollie White Coliseum tonight when it hosts the University of Oklahoma at 6.

With the win, A&M broke the three-way tie for second place in the Big 12 and now sits alone. Kansas State and Missouri, who were also tied for second place, were both defeated Wednesday.

The Aggies have won six of their last seven matches and hold a 14-5 overall record and a 9-3 conference mark. A&M will attempt to extend its 27-match home winning streak, a record that began in 1998.

The Sooners have lost their last seven matches and sit in 10th place in the

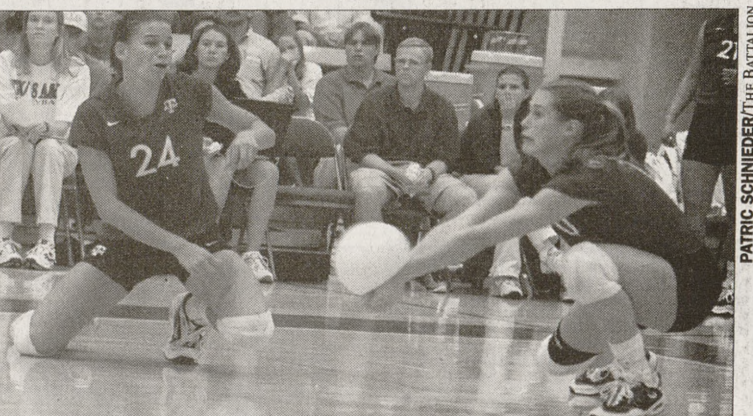
Big 12 with a 6-13 overall record and a 1-10 league record. The Sooners' only conference win this season came against the 0-11 Iowa State Cyclones.

The Aggies hold a commanding 18-1 all-time series record over the Sooners. Oklahoma's only win against A&M took place on Sept. 15, 1979. Earlier this season, the Aggies swept the Sooners in Norman, Okla.

The Aggies have eight conference matches remaining in the season with five of those matches taking place at G. Rollie White.

"I'm happy with the way our schedule worked out, and I think it works out great for this team," said A&M coach Laurie Corbelli. "The latter it gets in the season, the nicer it is to be able to play at home."

The Aggies still have to face No. 1 Nebraska and Kansas State in College



PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION

Middle blocker Heather Marshall (left) and the No. 21 A&M volleyball team return to G. Rollie White against Oklahoma on Friday at 6 p.m.

Station. Both teams beat them earlier this season.

"We've been to those places, and those are tough places to play at," Cor-

belli said. "But we've also got some other contending schools that still have to play at G. Rollie and it's not going to be easy for any of them."