



PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M wide receiver Greg Porter makes a 22-yard catch at the Oklahoma State 2-yard line. Fullback Ja'Mar Toombs scored one play later to give A&M its final points in a narrow 21-16 win in Stillwater.

'Huskers hand Ags familiar ending in Big 12 tourney

By BRIAN RUFF
The Battalion

SAN ANTONIO — The second-seeded Texas A&M women's soccer team came up one game short of claiming its second Big 12 soccer title Saturday night. The No. 1 Nebraska Cornhuskers handed the Aggies a 4-1 loss in front of 2,000-plus fans at the Blossom Athletic Complex in San Antonio.

The Aggies and Cornhuskers have had a long history of matchups in the Big 12 tournament since the conference began in 1996.

In the first year of the tournament, the Aggies were defeated in overtime by the 'Huskers in the championship game. A&M got revenge the following year, as it beat Nebraska in '97 and took the Big 12 title.

Nebraska took a win over the Aggies in 1998, defeating them 3-2 in triple overtime in the semifinal matchup. The 'Huskers have found their way into the Big 12 title game every year since the conference was begun.

Nebraska also ended the Aggies' season in the NCAA tournament in 1998 and 1999.

The Aggies looked to take an early lead just two minutes into the game, when Heather Ragsdale received a pass from the left side of the penalty box and blasted the ball over the head of Nebraska goalkeeper Karina LeBlanc. The shot hit the crossbar and found its way into the net.

Unfortunately for the Aggies, the linesman cut short the A&M celebration, calling Ragsdale offside before the shot. The call was a major momentum-breaker for the Aggies.

Nebraska applied heavy pressure to the Aggie defense, forcing goalkeeper Esther Thompson to make a number of tough saves, including robbing a loose ball from a Nebraska would-be goal scorer 15 minutes into the half.

Luck seemed to be on the Aggies' side when a Nebraska forward found open field and faced Thompson. Thompson moved to cut down the angle on the shot, and the Nebraska player laid the ball past the outstretched Thompson, but the shot struck the left post and rolled past

the back line.

A&M's luck struck again one minute later, after Thompson was unable to handle a Cornhusker shot, leaving a wide-open goal for a Nebraska player. Defender Amber Reynolds played hero, sliding through the ball and taking out the

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- 1st Round: November 8 Bye
- 2nd Round: November 12 T.B.A. 1 p.m. Aggie Soccer Complex

Postseason Notables:
Sixth straight appearance in tourney
1999 Results: Advanced to 'Sweet 16'

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Cornhusker player in the process. The Aggies' luck soon ran out, as Nebraska midfielder Christy Harms took a shot from the right side of the box and beat Thompson, high and inside the left corner, with 11 minutes left in the half. The goal gave the 'Huskers a 1-0 lead.

Nebraska increased its lead to 2-0 with two minutes left in the half. Cornhusker midfielder Becky Preston moved on an Aggie defender, leaving a wide-open path to the net. Thompson got a hand on the shot, but Meghan Anderson finished the scoring chance with a shot that beat the recovering A&M goalkeeper. Nebraska led 2-0 at the break.

A&M looked to claw its way back into the game when midfielder Juli Goin took a shot from the middle of the penalty box that found its way past the leaping Nebraska goalkeeper. The Cornhusker lead was cut to 2-1. Forward Kristin Strutz tallied the assist.

2000 Big 12 Tournament Offensive MVP Christine Latham sealed the Nebraska win with a breakaway goal five minutes after Goin's goal. Nebraska forward Paige Phillips added another insurance goal with 13 minutes left in regulation.

"We were beaten on moments."

See BIG 12 on Page 10.

Aggies escape Cowboy nightmare

Controversial out-of-bounds call seals 21-16 A&M win in final minute

By BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

STILLWATER, Okla. — Although the Oklahoma State Cowboys had not beaten the No. 24 Texas A&M football team since 1988 when Barry Sanders roamed the backfield in Stillwater, A&M's last few trips to Oklahoma have not been pleasant.

Everyone remembers the 51-6 debacle against the Oklahoma Sooners last year, but according to A&M coach R.C. Slocum, the Ags' last trip to OSU was no picnic, either.

"They always play us hard here," Slocum said. "Today was no different."

Saturday's excursion to A&M's neighbor to the north was no different, as A&M had to survive a last-play touchdown scare that left senior offensive lineman Chris Valletta with this to say: "I'm glad I don't ever have to come back to Oklahoma again."

A&M quarterback Mark Farris added that he wanted to get on the plane immediately before the refs had a chance to change the score.

What set up OSU's (2-6 overall, 0-5 conference) opportunity for the big win was the fact that he was able to stay with the Aggies (7-2, 5-1) until the fourth quarter, something the Cowboys were unable to do in their five previous losses.

A&M had plenty of chances to go up on the 'Pokes in the first half, entering Cowboy territory five times in the first two quarters, but came away with only seven points.

The Aggies' lone first-half score came when Farris hooked up with receiver Robert Ferguson for a 40-yard bomb to put the Aggies up, 7-0, with 9:50 left in the half.

OSU quickly answered with a score of its own on the next drive. After driving 64 yards on 10 plays, Cowboy quarterback Aso Pogi punched it in from 4 yards out to send the teams into the locker room with the score knotted at 7.

Coming out for the second half proved to be a more successful venture for the Aggie offense, as it took eight plays and 3:17 to drive 80 yards, capping off the scoring drive with a 10-yard Richard Whitaker rush to regain the lead for the Aggies, 14-7.

OSU responded on its next drive by marching to the A&M 25-yard line before being stopped by the Aggie defense. OSU kicker Seth Condeley booted the 42-yarder to pull the 'Pokes within 4.

A&M looked to take control of the game on its next possession. Driving 77 yards in 11 plays and eating 5:03 off the clock, the A&M offense extended its lead to 11 points on a Ja'Mar Toombs 2-yard run.

On the Aggies' next drive, perhaps the most damaging injury of the season struck.

On first-and-10 from the OSU 43, Ferguson caught a Farris pass for a 19-yard gain and was tackled out of bounds. As he fell, Ferguson severely sprained his knee and was shoved into the kicker's net, cutting his hand. Ferguson did not return to the game, and his status for next weekend's Oklahoma game is unknown.

The Cowboys did not mount another scoring threat until the fourth quarter, when their special teams unit hit pay dirt.

After the Wrecking Crew shut down OSU's first drive of the fourth quarter, A&M punt returner Chris Taylor unwisely fielded the punt inside the A&M 5, giving the Aggies their worst field position of the day.

The offense was unable to bring out the ball, and on the Cody Scates punt, OSU's Gabe Lindsay returned the 47-yard boot for a touchdown. The 'Pokes' two-point conversion attempt failed, leaving the score at 21-16.

The punt return was the first for a touchdown against A&M since Sanders did it in Stillwater in 1988.

The Ags were unable to do anything with the

See CLOSE CALL on Page 10.

WEEK

This week Texas A&M will take on the very best teams college sports has to offer, and they get to do it at home.

Here's what's on tap in the biggest week for 2000 Aggie Athletics to date.

MONDAY	All day
Women's Tennis	All day
■ Hosts ITA Southwest Regional	
Location: Varsity Tennis Center	
TUESDAY	7 p.m.
Men's Basketball	7 p.m.
■ Team Ezy Bond (Exhibition, 1st game)	
Location: Reed Arena	
WEDNESDAY	7 p.m.
Volleyball	7 p.m.
■ vs. No. 1 Oklahoma	
Location: G. Rollie White Coliseum	
SATURDAY	12 p.m.
Football	12 p.m.
■ vs. No. 1 Oklahoma	
Location: Kyle Field	
SUNDAY	1 p.m.
Soccer	1 p.m.
■ 2nd Round - NCAA Tournament	
Location: Aggie Soccer Complex	

Margin of victory is not a benchmark for future

The Aggies have never enjoyed crossing the Red River. There is something about playing in Oklahoma that always gets to Texas A&M.



JASON LINCOLN

Saturday's narrow 21-16 win over Oklahoma State that was decided by inches and a referee's judgment in favor of A&M did not help the impression.

"We need to get on out of Oklahoma and I don't care how we do it," linebacker Jason Glenn said after the win.

In a game that, by all rights, should have been over in the third quarter when A&M racked up 197 yards and two touchdowns, it was not decided until Marcellus Rivers landed just out of the end zone on a fourth-and-10 attempt from the 15-yard line with just

37 seconds remaining in the game.

The play was so close it could have been called in either direction, but in college football, there are no second looks via instant replay. A&M can only be relieved.

But the Aggies insist the result is not a red flag that signals trouble next week when A&M plays the No. 1 team in the nation, a team that also happens to be from Oklahoma.

Oklahoma State was not even ranked and has just a pair of wins this season. OU has eight.

"We're all about winning football games, so we'll take this one," said quarterback Mark Farris. "The Big 12 Conference is a tough conference and it's always hard to win on the road."

Unlike A&M's last win over a team with just two wins, Baylor, the Aggies were more pleased with the win than upset at nearly letting it slip away.

A lot factored into the different post-game attitude, not to mention that OSU was a much better team. To A&M's credit, it put up one of its biggest offensive performances to date against a Cowboy team that was fired up by rumors of the future dismissal of coach Bob Simmons.

The game was not inspiring, but then, neither was 1998's near-win at Kansas. The next week, A&M returned to Kyle Field to upset No. 2 Nebraska.

"We got a free lesson never to let any other team get the momentum," said offensive linemen Chris Valletta. "We're just happy. We're real excited about this OU game, and I'm glad we don't have to come back to Oklahoma state for it."

This time, its south of the Red River, where A&M reigns supreme against ranked opponents that enter Kyle Field.

But will boundaries be enough to improve the Aggies' effectiveness and keep the same result in the win column.



PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION

Wide receiver Robert Ferguson had a record day before leaving with an injury.

Soccer receives sixth straight bid in NCAA tourney

The No. 9 Texas A&M (17-6) soccer team received its sixth consecutive bid into the NCAA tournament field of 48 teams Sunday night.

A&M received a bye past the first round, scheduled for Wednesday.

The Aggies will meet the winner of Marquette and Wright State Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

The Aggies lost to Nebraska in the finals of the Big 12 Championship game on Sunday, clearing the way for Nebraska to claim the fourth seed in the tourney.

With the positioning, A&M will not have to face the 'Huskers again unless the Aggies advance to the finals.

Sports in Brief

Knee injury cuts short Ferguson's big day at OSU

Robert Ferguson was on pace for a record day Saturday. The Texas A&M standout posted a personal best 11 catches for 119 yards before leaving the game with a knee injury.

A&M trainer Karl Kapchinski reported after the game that

the injury was a knee sprain.

The injury came as Ferguson was pushed out of bounds on a 19-yard reception, when he collided with the practice field goal net, cutting open his hand and injuring his knee.

"It felt like I got rolled up on," Ferguson said. "I don't know about next week's game. I'll do whatever the trainers tell me to do so I can be ready for next week."

Archery sweeps titles in Invite

The Texas A&M archery team swept the team titles at its host meet, the Aggie Invitational, this weekend.

The Aggies finished with six of the top seven spots in compound competition and nine of the top 10 places in Olympic bow, including each of the top eight.