

Women travel to face OU

By BRIAN RUFF
The Battalion

Texas A&M women's basketball coach Peggie Gillom will attempt to lead her troops to another Big 12 Conference victory today as they invade Norman, Okla., to face the No. 13 Oklahoma Sooners at 7 p.m.

The matchup will mark the second straight game in which the Aggies have faced a ranked opponent. A&M lost a hard-fought battle against the No. 7 Texas Tech Lady Raiders, 85-78, at Reed Arena on Saturday.

A&M (11-4, 1-3) played a tough game defensively against the Red Raiders, as it has done for much of the season.

The Aggies lead the Big 12 in blocks with 70 and average 15.33 steals per game to lead that category as well. The team is also third in scoring defense in the conference.

Senior forward Jaynetta Saunders led the Aggies against the Red Raiders with a career-high 34 points and eight rebounds.

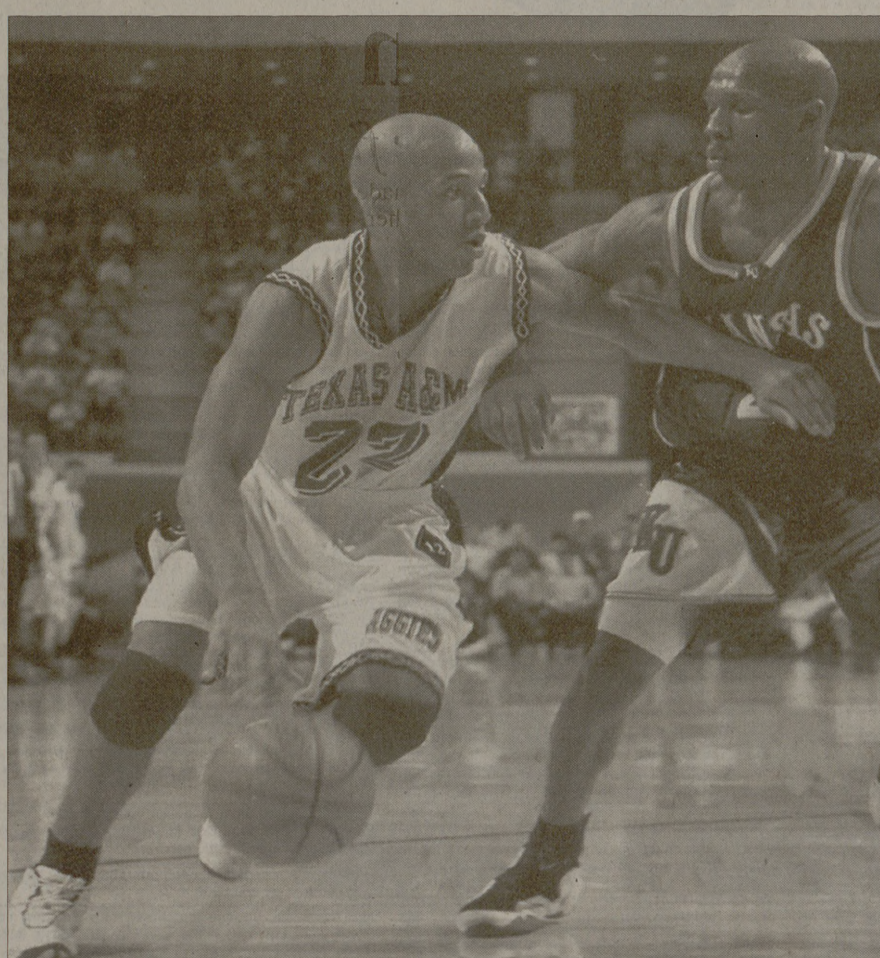
Saunders is averaging 21.4 points per game, good for second place in the Big 12.

With 21 blocked shots on the season, Saunders has moved into fourth place on the all-time shot-blocking list at A&M.

Oklahoma (11-4, 3-1) is in fourth place in the Big 12 and is coming off two straight wins over No. 14 Texas and No. 23 Baylor.

The Sooners are led by junior point guard Stacey Dales. Dales was named Big 12 Player of the Week for her performances against the Longhorns and the Bears.

She averaged 20.5 points and eight assists in her two games last week.



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION
Texas A&M junior guard Andy Leatherman dribbles the ball past a Kansas defender.

Ags attempt to end skid

Men's basketball team set to host rival Longhorns

By DOUG FUENTES
The Battalion

The Texas A&M men's basketball team finds itself in a bit of a jam.

Faced with a three-game losing streak for the second time this season, the Aggies will attempt to break that skid against a team they have not defeated in almost seven years.

The Aggies will try to stop both streaks as the University of Texas comes to Reed Arena tonight at 7 p.m.

A&M (6-9, 0-3 in Big 12) managed to snap its last three-game losing streak and followed it up with a three-game winning streak to even its record at 6-6.

But since the start of conference play, the Aggies have regressed, losing three straight by an average of 16 points.

In its last outing, A&M played as bad a game as it has all season, falling to the University of Colorado, 88-58, in Boulder.

It was the largest margin of victory in a conference game in 32 years for the Buffaloes.

The Aggies shot only 31 percent from the field and committed 24 turnovers to Colorado's 12.

The Longhorns will prove to be another tough challenge for A&M.

"Texas is a very talented, physical team," said A&M men's basketball coach Melvin Watkins. "We will have to play our best basketball. We made way too many mental mistakes at Colorado, and we're not the kind of team that can do that and win. I haven't given up on this team. I know we are capable of playing better basketball than we have the last couple of weeks."

Texas (13-3, 2-1), which had a seven-game winning streak before losing to Nebraska on Saturday, bounced back in a big way Monday night.

The Longhorns pulled ahead of No. 15 Connecticut in the final seconds and held on to upset the Huskies, 60-56, in Austin.

Even though the Longhorns got on the right track with the vic-

tory over UConn, the Aggies have a chance to catch them in a vulnerable position.

Wednesday's game will be the third game in five days for the Longhorns, who haven't had a stretch of games like this all season.

In order for A&M to catch Texas off guard, it will need to cut down on the turnovers.

During conference play, the Aggies have averaged more than 18 turnovers a game, including more than 20 in the last two games.

That could spell disaster against Texas, which is at the top of the Big 12 in defense.

The 'Horns lead in steals, averaging 10 a game, and in blocked shots with more than six a game.

"We've been consistent all year long with the turnovers," Watkins said. "When you turn the ball over 20 to 25 times it's very difficult to win ballgames. We've been that way and we work on it, but it still jumps up

See SKID on Page 8.

Aggies hope to gain victories through more consistency

The Texas A&M men's basketball team is in the midst of an identity crisis. Never mind coach Melvin Watkins' challenge of fielding the youngest team in the Big 12 Conference. Never mind that the Aggies have to face five Top 25 opponents in conference play, including tonight's foe, the Texas Longhorns.

Instead of trying to keep the hot hands of Longhorns Darren Kelly and Maurice Owens in check, the Aggies will be looking for something more subtle but equally important — intensity.



JASON LINCOLN

"We've got a team unlike any team I've ever coached," Watkins said. "We may go out and play just great."

Game nights have become coin tosses in the Aggies' roller-coaster performance through the first 15 games. Sometimes, A&M comes out fired up with the determination that saw it win two straight games to take fifth place in the Outrigger Hotels Rainbow Classic in Honolulu.

Other nights, the emotion is gone, and with it, the production in games like a 20-point loss to first-year Division I program Birmingham-Southern, a team that had never won a Division I game.

That 74-54 loss in the third game of the season appeared to be rock bottom for the Ag-

gies. After a dawn practice the following morning, A&M appeared to get back on track, eventually closing out non-conference action with three straight wins and a 6-6 record.

But three games into league play, the Aggies are approaching the bottom once again. A&M has lost its first three conference games, and with five of the next six games against ranked opponents, it's time for the Aggies to wake up and come out to play.

Tonight's matchup against Texas, which is coming off a last-minute victory over No. 15 Connecticut on ESPN's "Big Monday," offers the perfect opportunity. If the players cannot get excited about their school's biggest rival, playing on their home court and the opportunity to get a major upset and

break a losing streak all in a single game, A&M basketball has worse problems than an 0-3 conference record.

"We should be up (for Texas)," Watkins said. "Rivalry, emotion, the crowd — That's why you have to go see that game, because I'm not sure which team is going to show up."

Does that mean tonight's game is a must-win? No. But the Aggies need to come out with an excited, upbeat take-no-prisoners attitude.

"It's definitely something we're capable of doing," said junior point guard Andy Leatherman. "It's just a matter of what team shows up. I'm confused sometimes why we

See CONSISTENCY on Page 8.

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