

FOOTBALL PREVIEW 2001

THE BATTALION

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Ag volleyball hopes to repeat 1999 season

By DOUG FUENTES
THE BATTALION

If history truly repeats itself, Coach Laurie Corbelli and the Texas A&M volleyball team could be in for a magical 2001 season.

In 1999, a group of four seniors led the Aggies to a 28-6 record and the team's first trip in school history to the Elite Eight.

In 2001, another group of battle-tested seniors look to duplicate, if not surpass, what their predecessors did in 1999.

"A lot of people aren't ready for us," said senior setter Jenna Moscovic. "I think it's pretty even-keeled cross the country, besides Nebraska. Everyone else is pretty even, so I think it's our year to come up from behind and surprise everybody."

Despite the loss of the four seniors from the 1999 team, the Aggies did not miss a beat last season. They posted a 20-9 record, tied for second in the Big 12 and made it to the second round of the NCAA tournament.

This season, the Aggie seniors will be led by Moscovic and Erin Lechler. Moscovic, who has been the

starting setter for her first three seasons, and Lechler, who led the team in kills per game last season, were both all-Central Region and All-Big 12 selections last season.

Rounding out the senior class are Michelle Cole, Brandi Mount and Beth Weynand.

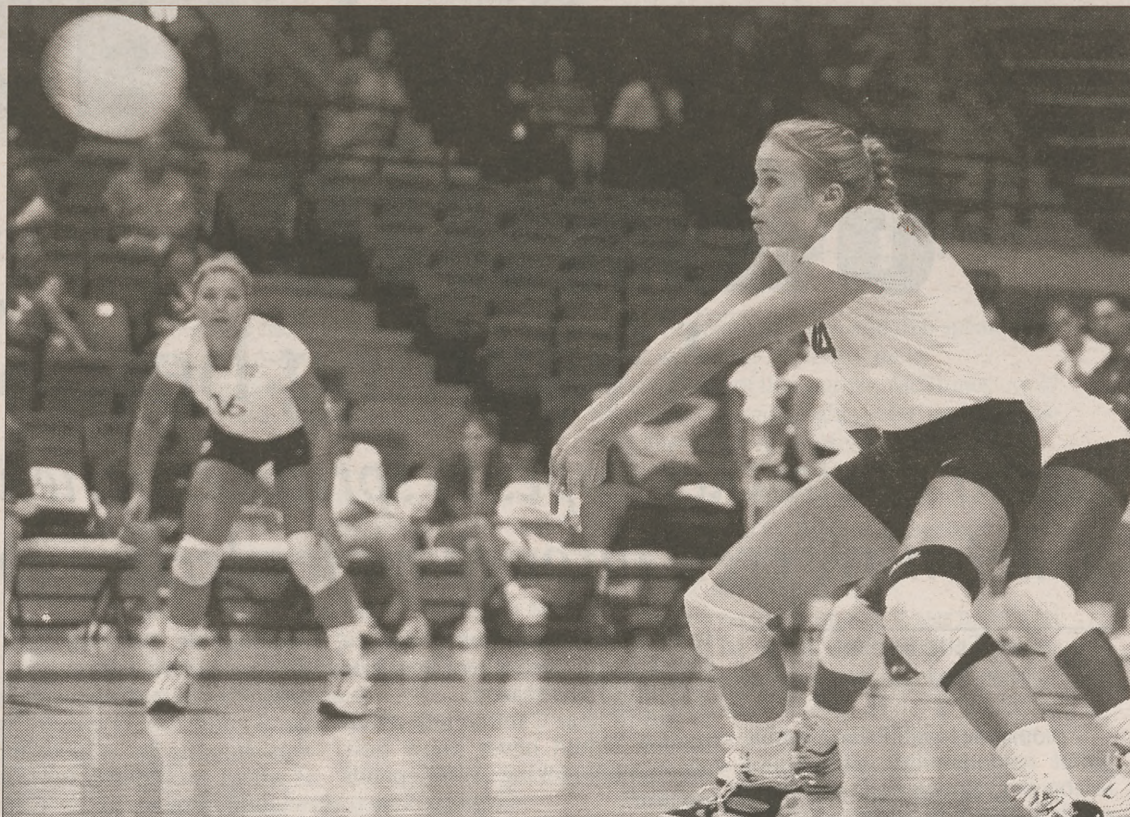
"All of us seniors were here in 1999 when we did really well," Moscovic said. "I think we learned from them and how they led and made everyone follow them. I think we're trying to do the same thing. Now, we're not going to be satisfied with the Elite 8, we're going to be ready to take it to the next level."

With Lechler and Cole holding down the starting spots on the left side, and Moscovic and Mount holding down the right, the Aggies will look to a committee of people to fill the middle.

Sophomore Tara Pulaski has the inside track to one middle spot while sophomore Carol Price and freshmen Melissa Munsch and Kendra Felder will get playing time at the other middle spot.

With the seniors leading the way and a host of other talented players,

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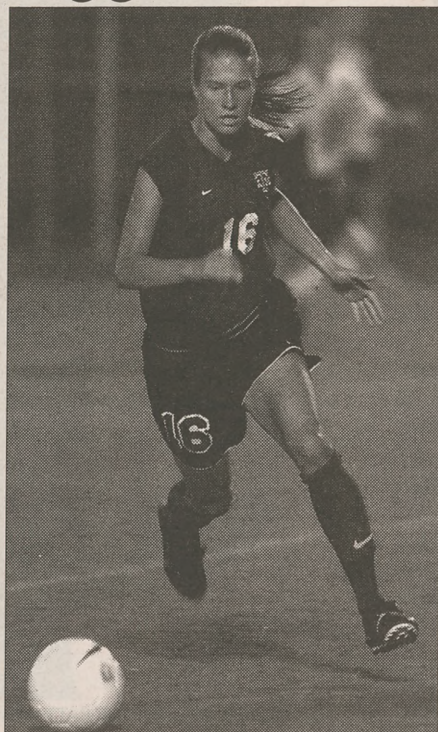


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Senior **Erin Lechler** along with the rest of the A&M seniors hope to lead their team against the rest of the Big 12 conference in 2001. The Aggies will open the season in Houston this weekend and begin their home schedule Tuesday against UTSA.

Aggie soccer team looks to improve on 2000 season success

By JEREMY BROWN
THE BATTALION



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

Freshman **Emma Smith** dribbles down field in the exhibition matchup against Tulsa on Saturday.

For the Texas A&M soccer team, the 2000 season was a season of "what-ifs."

With numerous injuries plaguing coach Gerald Guerrieri's team, it still managed to finish with an 18-7 record, advance to the round of 16 in the NCAA playoffs and end up 12th and 14th in the NSCAA and Soccer Buzz polls, respectively.

But the Aggies cannot help but wonder "what if."

What if senior forward Nicky Thrasher, the leading Aggie scorer in both her junior and sophomore years and a Hermann Award nominee, had not broken her leg in the third game?

What if Martha Moore, Michelle Remington, Anne Tamporello and Jessica Hamilton had not blown out their anterior cruciate ligaments (ACL) or if Laci Stephenson had not suffered a foot injury?

The 2001 season will be A&M's chance to answer those "what-ifs."

The Aggies are ranked 11th in the NSCAA poll and 15th in the Soccer Buzz poll. A poll of the Big 12 soccer coaches picked A&M to finish second in the Big 12 behind Nebraska.

Thrasher was granted a medical redshirt and returns for another senior season. The

rest of the injured Aggies are back to health as well. A talented group of freshmen joins the players returning from injury and the stars from last season.

The abundance of talent on the team has Guerrieri and the Aggies aiming a little higher than the polls are predicting.

"We think we have as many weapons this year as we have ever had, so the sky is the limit," Guerrieri said. "We had this type of team last year and we were so optimistic going in."

In Thrasher's absence, forward Heather Ragsdale took over as the Aggie's top goal scorer, scoring 14 goals and adding nine assists, the second most on the team.

Ragsdale was also named to the All-Big 12 and All-Central Region teams.

With the addition of freshman forward Lindsey Johnson, who had three goals in A&M's exhibition game with Tulsa, there will be plenty of firepower at the forward position to fuel Guerrieri's attacking style of play.

"Instead of just one person getting a lot of goals and the other person not getting so many, I think there are going to be quite a few forwards and other players getting just as many goals as all the others," Ragsdale said.

Forward is not the only position where the Aggies have weapons.

In order to help replace Thrasher last season, sophomore Kristen Strutz was moved from her normal position of midfielder to forward. As a result, Strutz scored 11 goals and led the team in assists with 11. She was named to the All-Newcomer team in the Big 12 and is on the preseason All-Big 12 team this season.

Sophomore defender Adrienne Dillard and sophomore goalkeeper Esther Thompson also made the All-Newcomer and preseason All-Big 12 teams.

Thompson forced her way into the starting goalkeeper position as a freshman and the Aggies went 13-2 with her in the net. She made 87 saves during the season.

Despite having a roster stocked with talent, A&M's schedule might prove difficult. In their first ten games, the Aggies face five top-20 teams, including No. 1 ranked and defending national champion North Carolina on September 2.

In the Big 12, Nebraska is the favorite and is ranked as high as No. 5. Texas is also ranked in the top 20 in both polls.

This has not discouraged the Aggies from setting their sights high, however.

"Last year was a trying year but this year you don't know what to expect," Thompson said. "We're coming. Be ready."