

Clash in the mountains

No. 25 A&M's undefeated record on the line against Colorado

By TRUE BROWN
THE BATTALION

Year ago, the University of Colorado left Kyle Field without a win and on the list of lows. The Buffaloes were 0-4 and had the distinction of being labeled as one of the disappointing teams in the Big 12.

Meanwhile, Texas A&M came into the season riding high after three straight home games and the comfort of knowing the game would be played in Kyle Field, where the Aggies had lost in 22 consecutive games.

Colorado sneaked away with a win, ending the Aggies' chances at capturing the Big 12 South.

This season, it is No. 20 Colorado that is riding high. The Buffaloes (4-1, 2-0 in Big 12) handed Kansas State a 16-6 loss in Manhattan, Kan., last week.

No. 25 Aggies, on the other hand, are off to a squeamishly close 16-10 win over Baylor that saw A&M (5-0, 2-0) score one touchdown on four trips inside the redzone.

In question, the redzone was frustrating for the Aggies. "It's something we are going to put emphasis on this week," said A&M offensive coordinator Brian Gamble.

It also will put a major emphasis on Colorado quarterback Craig Ochs, a dancin' scrambler who rushed for 70 yards last week against K-State. Ochs has passed for 922 yards and five touchdowns this season.

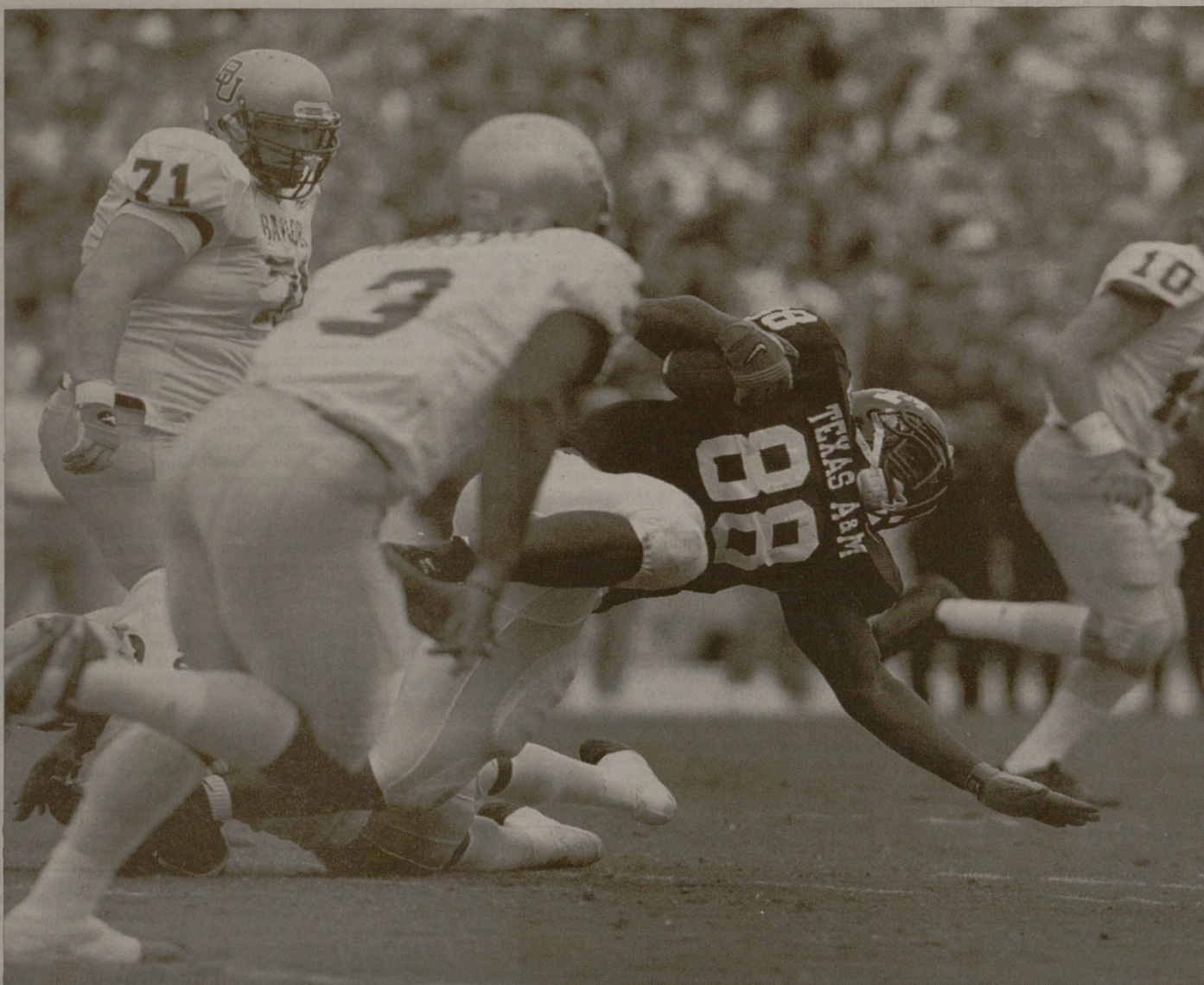
"Ochs is a killer scrambler," said A&M defensive coordinator Jarrod Penright. "He knows when to run." Penright also will put a major emphasis on Colorado's run-oriented offense led by tailback Chris Brown.

Brown is the Buffaloes' leading rusher, averaging 4.6 yards per carry and leads the team with seven touchdowns. Behind Brown, the Colorado offensive averages 304 pounds per player and returns punts from last season.

Size and experience have led the Buffaloes to the best rushing offense in the Big 12, averaging 107 yards per game. "We really have to attack their running game," said Gamble. "A lot of the things they do involve the line."

They try to pound the ball and run it down the field. Not only are we going to have to be physical this week, but everyone is really going to have to step up."

Pennington has not been the problem for the A&M defense so far this season, as the Aggies rank first in



A&M defensive lineman Linnis Smith struggles for yardage after intercepting a pass from Baylor quarterback Greg Cicero last Saturday.

The Aggies will battle No. 20 Colorado in Boulder, Colo., Saturday. Both teams are undefeated in Big 12 play.

the Big 12 and third in the nation in total defense, allowing a meager 227.2 yards per game.

A&M has not allowed more than one touchdown since allowing two to Wyoming on Sept. 6.

Junior linebacker Jarrod Penright has recorded at least one sack in every game this season and leads the Big 12 in sacks with 8.5.

"This is a big game for our team," said Colorado football head coach Gary Barnett. "[A&M's defense] has a lot of speed, and they seem to improve as the game goes on. They really pride themselves on their defensive play, so we'll have our work cut out for us."

After beginning the season against a Division I-AA

school and four struggling teams with a combined record of 7-11, Saturday will be the beginning of a brutal stretch of games for the Aggies.

"We're stepping into the thick of the Big 12 race," said A&M football head coach R.C. Slocum. "If we are going to stay in it, it's imperative we go up there and play as an excellent football team."

Counting Colorado, four of A&M's six remaining opponents are ranked in the latest Associated Press poll and are a combined 13 games over .500.

"We are 5-0 and there aren't many other college teams that can say that," Gamble said. "But we'll see what kind of football team we are this weekend."

STUART VILLANUEVA • THE BATTALION

Ags set to defend titles

By MAYA THOMAS
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M cross country team will host the 14th annual Texas A&M Invitational, one of the largest meets in the region, Saturday at the A&M golf course.

More than 20 collegiate teams will compete, most of which are from Texas schools, including Baylor, Prairie View A&M, Rice, Sam Houston State, Texas Christian and the University of Texas-Arlington.

A few schools from outside Texas also will compete against the Aggies, including Oklahoma State and McNeese State.

The men's team and the No. 18 women's team will defend their first place finishes of 2000. The Aggie women have won the title two years in a row.

At last year's meet, members of the women's team took four of the top five places.

Seniors Melissa Gulli and Andrea Bookout captured the individual gold and bronze, respectively and both are on the roster for this year's meet.

Approximately 75 high schools also are slated to race, including Bryan St. Joseph's, McKinney, Rockwall, Caldwell, Brazos, Hearne and Huffman-Hargrave.

A&M head coach Dave Hartman will use the meet to scout potential A&M recruits.

"We will have a couple thousand high school kids running," Hartman said. "That's always a big deal. Having that many potential recruits on your campus is always a benefit."

The meet consists of 10 races starting at 9 a.m. and ends before noon. The women race at 10 a.m., and the men's race will begin at 10:20 a.m.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Volleyball to Nebraska

Beating Texas Tech in a 3-0 sweep on Wednesday, the No. 1 A&M volleyball team will defend national championship Sunday.

Wednesday's match, the Aggies remained undefeated on the season, posting a 36-38, 39-37, 30-25 win.

Blowing a six-point lead in the first game, A&M came right back in the second game to even the match game a piece.

The Aggies jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the third game and a late Red Raider rally, the game on a Texas Tech error.

Outside hitter Erin Lechler led the Aggies with 17 kills. Middle blocker Melissa continued her stellar rookie season by adding 13 kills.

Outside hitter Michelle led A&M with a match-high 15 kills. Senior setter Jenna added 52 assists, and middle blocker Tara led the team in blocks with 10.

The Aggies kept the Aggies (12-2, Big 12) in second place in conference standings.

Loss was the Red Raiders' home this season. A&M will lose a road game.

A&M's match against No. 2 Iowa begins at 2 p.m. at G. White Coliseum and will be televised on FOX Sports Net.



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

Senior forward Nicky Thrasher and the Texas A&M soccer team will take on Big 12 champion Nebraska Sunday at the Varsity Soccer Complex.

Ags, Huskers to battle for Big 12 supremacy

Reigning Big 12 champs 9-3 against A&M

By JEREMY BROWN
THE BATTALION

No. 10 Texas A&M and No. 6 Nebraska will meet Sunday at the Aggie Soccer Complex in a showdown of the only two teams to win the Big 12 soccer tournament. The Aggies must first contend with unranked Iowa State tonight, but the game with Nebraska will be what the Big 12 will watch.

Nebraska has dominated the Big 12 by winning the regular-season title three times and the conference tournament four times, including the last three straight. In 1997, A&M won the regular season and tournament titles, giving A&M its first Big 12 title in any sport.

The Cornhuskers have had seven consecutive wins against the Aggies, but only one of those games was in College Station. Last year, Nebraska beat A&M 2-1 in Lincoln and 4-1 in the Big 12 tournament in San Antonio.

A&M soccer coach G. Guerrieri said this year's team has the ability to end that streak.

"We are in as good of a position to beat them as we ever have been with the speed

that we have up front now," Guerrieri said. "By the time we played them last year, we had lost six players to ACL injuries. We were without all of our guns."

While Nebraska holds a 9-3 record against in the series, A&M is 2-1 against the Cornhuskers in College Station. A&M lost its last home match of the series 1-0 in 1999.

This year, Nebraska is 8-1 and 3-0 in the Big 12. Its only loss was to No. 7 Notre Dame, 1-0 in South Bend.

The Cornhuskers have given up only one goal in Big 12 play this season and are giving up only an average of one goal per game this season.

Sophomore goalkeeper Erin Miller has made 38 saves in her first season as the starter.

"She has been great in her last four or five games," said Nebraska soccer head coach John Walker. "She's really turning into a very good goalkeeper."

A&M has had similar defensive success, giving up only 1.4 goals per game this season.

Guerrieri said both teams like to attack opponent's goals and, therefore, keep the ball

away from their own.

Junior forward Christine Latham leads the Cornhuskers attack with seven goals, all of which were scored in the last six games. Senior midfielder Meghan Anderson is just the 29th Division I player in NCAA history to score 40 career goals and 40 career assists.

"It usually plays out as a one goal type of game," Guerrieri said. "I imagine every inch of ground will be a battle."

In tonight's game with Iowa State, A&M will face a young team with eight freshmen on its 19-player roster.

The Cyclones are 3-6 and have an 0-6-1 record all-time against the Aggies.

Iowa State is coming off two straight losses, but Guerrieri said his team will not look past them.

"Our biggest problem is that we haven't played enough games and we need to play games to get our rhythm," Guerrieri said. "Coming off the Baylor game, we need to keep up our momentum against a young Iowa State team. If we don't beat Iowa State, the game on Sunday will not be as important."