

## A&M aims at final four

By JEREMY BROWN  
THE BATTALION

The No. 8 Texas A&M soccer team avenged its first loss of the season with a 1-0 win over No. 4 Stanford last weekend to get to its first-ever NCAA Women's College Cup quarterfinal game.

In the Big 12 tournament earlier this month, the Aggies avenged an Oct. 14 loss to No. 11 Nebraska to advance to the Big 12 Championship game.

To get to its first-ever NCAA semifinal game, A&M must again get revenge for another early season loss. On Sunday, A&M (17-3-1) will get the chance to make it a clean sweep with a win against No. 5 Portland (19-3).

On Sept. 21, Portland came from behind to win the first-ever matchup of the teams' 2-1 loss in the Nike-Husky Invitational in Seattle.

"They were the best team we have played all year," said A&M head coach G. Guerrieri. "This will be our biggest challenge of the season."

In the first game, Portland freshman forward Christine Sinclair scored the game-winning goal with just 4:03 left on an assist from junior midfielder Erin Misaki.

Despite being outshot, A&M took the early lead as freshman forward Linsey Johnson beat several defenders to score 7:13 into the game.

However, Portland's junior forward Lisa Casagrande evened the score 18 minutes later and the Portland defense clamped down on A&M's attack.

"Any goals you score against them, you definitely earned," Guerrieri said. "If they score first, it is very hard to even it back up."

Portland has one of the nation's best defenses, allowing only .6 goals per game. It is led by junior defender Lauren Orlandos who is a Hermann Award nominee and a finalist for the Soccer Buzz National Player of the Year.

"We learned a lot about them from that game," Guerrieri said. "They are very good and very poised. They do not necessarily have any weakness."



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Sophomore defender **Kristen Strutz** dribbles by a SMU player in the second round of the NCAA tournament. The Aggies will travel to Washington to take on Portland Sunday.

If last week's third-round game between Portland and Nebraska is any indication, having experience against the Pilots might not help. After losing to Portland 3-0 in October, the Cornhuskers did even worse in the rematch, falling 4-0.

Comparatively, A&M split its games against Nebraska with a 4-2 loss and a 3-2 win.

In the game, Portland's freshman goalkeeper Cristin Shea made three saves and

posted her third straight shutout. For the season, she had a .53 goals-against-average, 26 saves, six shutouts and an 8-1 record.

During the first three rounds, Portland has outscored opponents 11-0.

In A&M's third-round game, the Aggies won despite being outshot 12-6 by Stanford. Sophomore defender Adrienne Dillard headed the winning goal in off a corner kick.

Sunday's game will start at 2:00 p.m. CST.



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Freshman middle blocker **Melissa Munsch** slams a ball by two Tech defenders on Nov. 24. The Aggies will host UTA Friday at 7 p.m.

## Aggies enter title hunt against UTA

By DOUG FUENTES  
THE BATTALION

As the clock ticked down on its court time during Thursday's practice, the No. 15 Texas A&M volleyball team lined up along the end lines of the court at G. Rollie White Coliseum. As the clock reached zero, the team jumped off the court and let out a resounding yell.

The Aggies jump off the practice court and into the NCAA Tournament on Friday as it hosts the University of Texas-Arlington Mavericks in a first-round matchup at 7 p.m. at G. Rollie White.

The Aggies (23-5), who are the 11th seed in this year's NCAA Tournament, are making their ninth consecutive tournament appearance, all under head coach Laurie Corbelli.

Under the direction of Corbelli, the Aggies have hosted first round matches seven out of nine years and have yet to lose a first-round match with Corbelli at the helm.

"It's really, really nice to be at home with the comfort of your home facility and your crowd," Corbelli said. "Most sports have home-court advantage, but I really feel it in volleyball. We're lucky to have the 12th Man and the Spirit of Aggieland and a facility we're comfortable in."

A&M enters the tournament on a roll. The Aggies swept a pair of matches last week with the University of Texas and Texas Tech

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