

Aggs battle with Badgers in Sweet 16

No. 15 A&M hoping to upset No. 6 Wisconsin in Palo Alto

By BRIAN RUFF
THE BATTALION

The No. 15 Texas A&M volleyball team will continue its quest for a 2001 NCAA Championship Friday when the Aggies take on the No. 6 Wisconsin Badgers in Palo Alto, Calif.

The Aggies (25-5) advanced to the Sweet 16 round after sweeping the University of Texas-Arlington and the University of Texas-Austin in College Station last weekend. The wins over the Mavericks and the Longhorns were the Aggies' third and fourth vic-

anybody take that away from us."

Wisconsin comes into the game after knocking off the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Michigan State University in the first two rounds of the tournament. The Badgers received an automatic bid to the tournament after winning the Big 10 Conference. Wisconsin, who have won their last 10 games, and are 27-3 on the season.

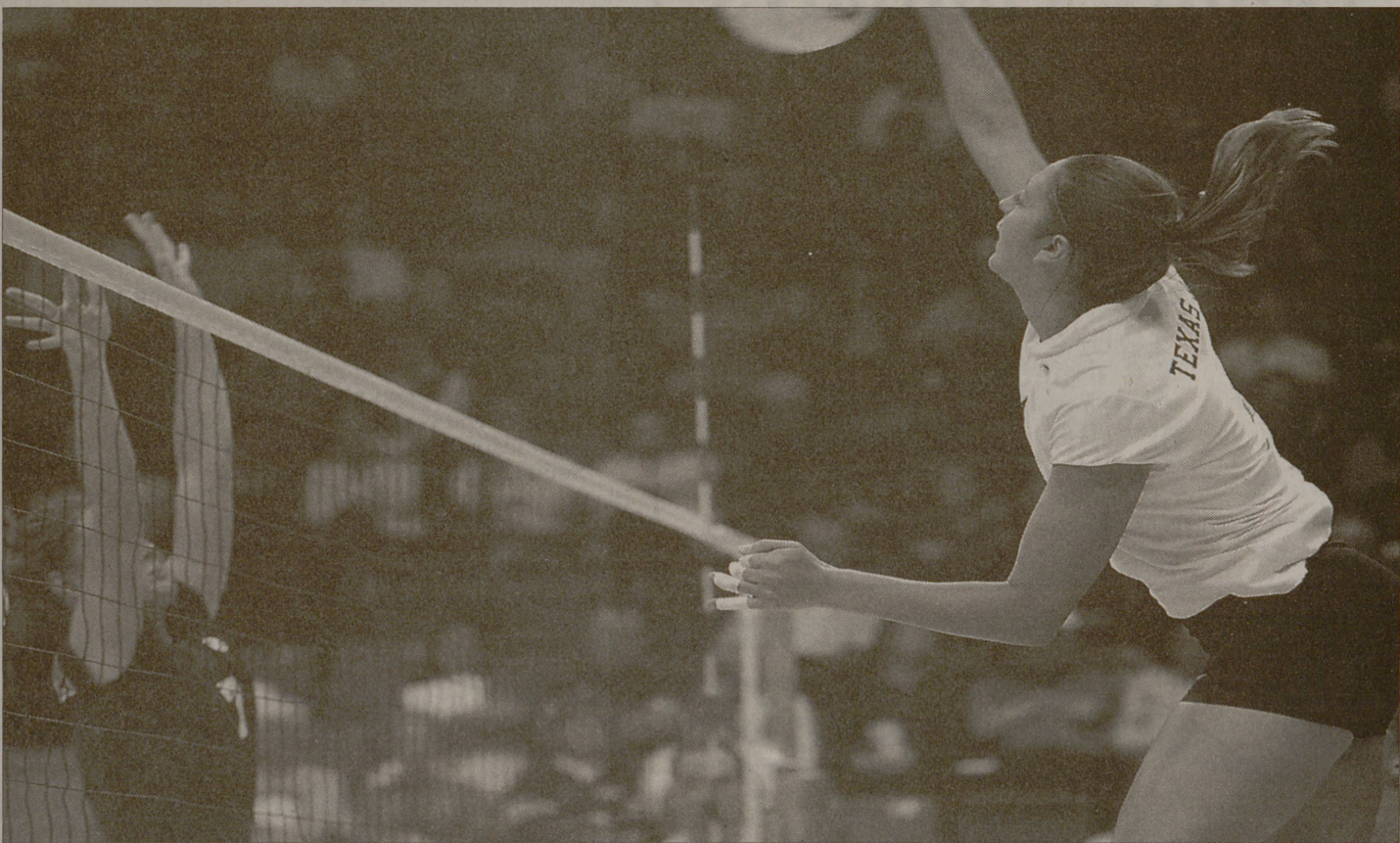
Wisconsin advanced to the NCAA championship game in 2000, but were defeated by National Champion Nebraska in five games.

The Aggies are led by senior setter Jenna Moscovic, who is ranked 21st in the country with 13 assists per game. Senior outside hitter Erin Lechler leads the Aggies in the kill department, averaging 3.55 kills per game and 4.05 points.

"I know (A&M) is a very senior-laden team," said Wisconsin volleyball head coach Pete Waite. "They are a very strong and veteran team."

The winner of the A&M-Wisconsin matchup will take on the winner of the Utah-Stanford game. The regional final also will take place in Palo Alto.

Wisconsin is led by Big 10 Player of the Year Lizzy Fitzgerald, who averages 13.8 assists per game. Senior All-American middle blocker Sherisa Livingston is hitting .409 for the Badgers, and posted 15 kills and seven blocks against Michigan State.



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

Freshman middle blocker **Melissa Munsch** and the Texas A&M volleyball team will travel to Palo Alto, Calif. to take on the Wisconsin Badgers at 9 p.m. CST in the Sweet 16 round of the 2001 NCAA Volleyball Tournament.

The Aggies are 0-2 all-time against Wisconsin. In each of the teams' two previous meetings, the match has gone the distance with the Badgers taking the wins in the fifth game.

The two teams last did battle in 1996 in Madison, when the Badgers tallied a

come-from-behind victory over the No. 20 A&M squad.

The trip to the Sweet 16 round is the Aggies' fourth trip to the third round under head coach Laurie Corbelli, and A&M's sixth trip to the Sweet 16 overall.

The Aggies' best finish in the

NCAA tournament was in 1999, when A&M upset No. 3 Hawaii in the Sweet 16 round, before being eliminated by Long Beach State in the Elite Eight round of the tournament.

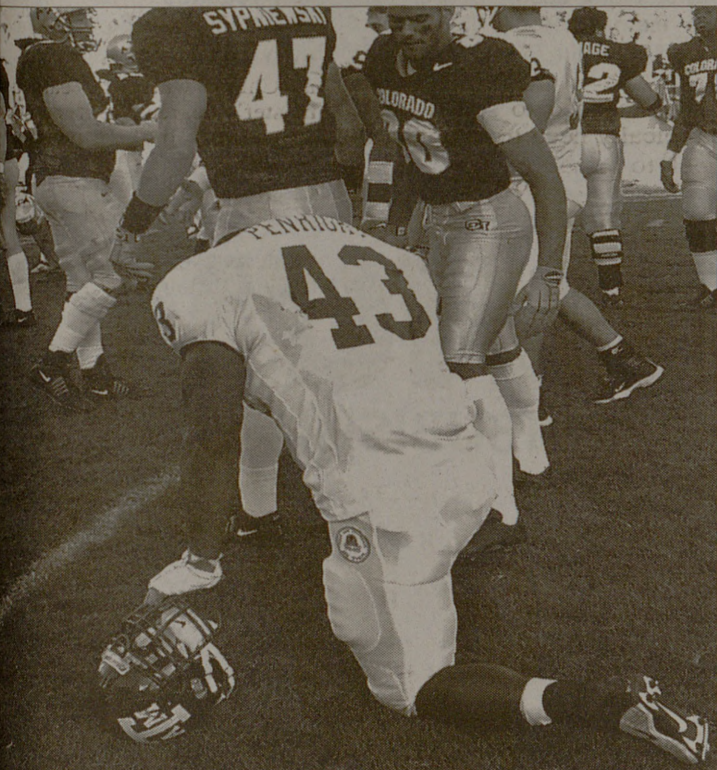
First serve is set for 9 p.m. central time.

"We just have a big goal ahead of us. We are not letting anybody take that away from us."

— Michelle Cole
A&M outside hitter

in a row. A&M received an at-large bid into the tournament after coming in second place in the Big 12 Conference behind defending national champion Nebraska.

"We just have a big goal ahead of us," said A&M senior outside hitter Michelle Cole. "We are not letting



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

Junior linebacker **Jarrod Penright** takes a knee after the Aggies' loss to the Colorado Buffaloes on Oct. 13, the team's first defeat of the season.

Sinking ship hits rock bottom

Since Texas A&M joined the Big 12 Conference in 1998, it has been invited to the Sugar Bowl, the Cotton Bowl, the Alamo Bowl and last year to the Independence Bowl.

Never before has it sunk to the depths of going to a bowl like the Galleryfurniture.com Bowl. It may be too early to tell for sure, but A&M's football program, one of the most dominant in the country in the 1990s, seems to be headed south.

The scary thing is that some think it is OK. In the Nov. 19 edition of "Ask the A.D.," A&M Athletic Director Wally Groff said words that should make any Aggie shudder.

"None of us, including (football head coach R.C.) Slocum himself, are fired up about losing the last three games of the season," said Groff. "But 7-4 and a bowl bid is a lot better than most of the teams that play NCAA Division I football."

Groff, in his ninth year as A&M's athletics director, answers questions

directed to him on AggieAthletics.com, and his comments do not leave Aggie football fans much to look forward to in the coming years.

True, there are plenty of teams who will not be going bowling this season. It is also true that 7-4 is a decent record, but it is just that: decent.

It is also true, however, that of the eight bowl-eligible teams in the Big 12, the Galleryfurniture.com Misera-Bowl is at the bottom of the barrel. Think it is a coincidence that the game is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on a weekday?

The Aggies were passed up by higher-ranking bowls for conference foes Texas Tech (last year's Big 12 representative to the Mattress Mac Bowl), Iowa State and Kansas State.

Since A&M beat the Cyclones and the Wildcats this season and all three had similar records, why would they be selected ahead of A&M?

Because A&M's offense is one of the most dismal in the country. Of the 115 teams in Division 1A football, in total offense A&M is ranked No. 107. Iowa State is No. 54 and Kansas State is No. 47. The Red

Raiders, who averaged 114 more yards per game than the Aggies, came in at No. 33.

Anyone with any sense would take a good offense over a poor offense, and it is no secret that the Aggie 'O' has struggled this season.

In the same Nov. 19 post Groff said, "Attendance was at an all-time high this year. We averaged over 100 percent capacity for the season, which is another sign of a strong program."

No. The sign of a strong program is competing for a conference championship year in and year out. The sign of a strong program is averaging more than 20 points per game. The sign of a strong program is not having the Galleryfurniture.com Bowl even be an option.

With more than 45,000 students and 23,000 donors in the 12th Man Foundation, more than mediocrity is expected, but that is what fans and donors have seen the last two seasons.

Excellence on the field, not dollar signs from ticket sales, should be the goal.

True Brown is a sophomore ag journalism major.



TRUE BROWN

BREITLING
1884

AEROSPACE

John D. Huntley
Class of '79

313 B South College Avenue
College Station, TX 77840
(979) 846-8916

INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS™

ON SALE NOW!

Friday, 21st
December

Robert Earl Keen's
Merry Christmas from the Family
with Beaver Nelson

HoustonPress PEPSI Kelsey Seybold Clinic LAS VEGAS 713-625-AMEX

Aerial Theater
Aerial Theater Box Office 520 Texas Ave. 713-225-8551
SEE IT FIRST, BUY IT FIRST — aerialtheater.com

Get Tickets At **CC.COM**

Call for Tickets 713-629-3700 (automated), or online at Ticketmaster.com. Tickets also available at all participating outlets and the Aerial Theater Box Office. All acts, dates, and ticket prices subject to change without notice. A service charge is added to each ticket. A Clear Channel Entertainment Event.

hemp pukka silver COCO

jewelry zone
visit us on the web at
reallycooljewelry.com

the hottest looks from south padre island!

1004 padre boulevard . sunchase mall
south padre island, texas 78597 . (956) 761-8477

Aggieland Depot
Diploma Framing - Aggie Cross Stitch
Aggie Items

Diploma Framing
Same Day-Graduation
Pre-order Now!

1621 Texas Ave. S., College Station
Culpepper Plaza
www.aggieland-depot.com
695-1422