



JON LIVAS • THE BATTALION

A&M junior forward Meg Banahan and the Texas A&M women's basketball team will host No. 5 Oklahoma on Saturday at Reed Arena.

Bounce

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The win kept the Sooners in contention for the Big 12 title after a loss to Iowa State last Wednesday.

"Sometimes you need to lose maybe, unfortunately, to remind you how much fun this game can be, and how much you're supposed to enjoy yourself for 40 minutes. I thought they did [Saturday]," said Oklahoma head coach Sherri Coale. "I thought they played together. I thought they enjoyed themselves

on the floor and played free." The Sooners also had a conference bye on Wednesday and should be well rested for Saturday's game.

Oklahoma leads the all-time series between the two teams, 12-7, and won the last six times the teams have met dating back to 1998.

The teams played at Reed Arena last season when the Sooners, then No. 10, beat the Aggies, 93-70.

Saturday will be the first of two conference meetings between the teams this season.

No. 19 Aggie men host No. 3 Horns

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

Some of the most elite swimmers and divers in the nation will come into College Station this weekend.

On Saturday, the No. 19 Texas A&M men's swimming and diving team will host the No. 3 University of Texas Longhorns at 4 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center Natatorium.

Longhorn head coach Eddie Reese has led his team to two straight national championships, winning his most recent in March in College Station. Since 1979, Reese and Texas are 22-0 in dual meets against the Aggies.

"They have had one of the better teams of all time recently, and then last year they graduated a pretty outstanding senior class," said A&M head coach Mel Nash. "They're not quite as strong as they've been, but they're still one of the class acts in the business."

This year Texas features two-time defending NCAA Diver of the Year, Troy Dumais, and his brother, Justin, who won the 2001 World Championship in Japan.

Junior Chris Kemp and sophomore Brendan Hansen own the nation's fastest collegiate times in the 2001-02 season in the 200-yard freestyle and the 200-yard breaststroke, respectively.

The Longhorn relay teams also hold the fastest collegiate times this year in both the 200-yard and 400-yard medley relays.

A&M will be led by All-Americans Matt Rose and Nik Tate.

Last weekend the Aggies dominated two meets against Louisiana State University and the University of Louisiana-Monroe. Eight swimmers and diver Jesse Even competed over the weekend in the Dallas Morning News Invitational. The team placed fifth out of six top 20 teams.

"The pool is not very fast [in Dallas], yet

we got some season best and lifetime swims in there, and the guys come extremely well," Nash said. "From a standpoint we're really pleased."

The Aggies come into the meet with Texas holding a 7-1 record, while the University of Texas is 3-1 in dual meets. Texas' wins have all come against top competition, and they're only loss was No. 2 Auburn, which is also A&M's blemish on the season.

"Swimming is a strange sport," Nash said. "It's not like other sports where one guy can get really hot and change the outcome of the game. In swimming, two people can't dominate a whole meet, so it's kind of tough to pull up. We're going to try to use the fact that we have some of the best swimmers in the country for our people to race against, and sets us up well for both conference and NCAA."

Rams look to challenge Eagles after

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The Rams have this mindset that nobody, not even the blitz-crazy Philadelphia Eagles, can alter: They will throw often, they will throw deep and, they believe, they will not be stopped.

So while Philadelphia looks to send everyone but Ben Franklin after quarterback Kurt Warner in Sunday's NFC championship game, St. Louis will not back down and go conservative. Not even after Warner missed much of practice Thursday with cramps in his rib cage; coach Mike Martz said he "will be fine tomorrow (Friday)."

"We are clicking and pretty much on all cylinders," said Isaac Bruce, one of four wideouts who, along with All-Pro running back Marshall Faulk, will be Warner's main targets during the final step to the Super Bowl. "It's kind of hard to stop. I mean, you have to sometimes just step back in amazement and just look at the things that are happening."

"I'm not really saying that everything goes with ease, but when you sit back on Monday

and watch film, it looks pretty easy what's happening and what we are doing."

What they are doing is averaging 32 points a game, although the defense has contributed five touchdowns this season. That defense also scored 21 points in the 45-17 rout of Green Bay last weekend.

Faulk, of course, is the most dynamic offensive weapon in the league, winner of three straight Offensive Player of the Year awards. But he also might be needed in blitz pickup more than usual against Philadelphia.

That means Bruce, Torry Holt, Az Hakim and Ricky Proehl will be featured. Often.

And particularly if Pro Bowl cornerback Troy Vincent remains hobbled by a groin injury that has kept him from practicing.

So even though Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb expects his team to have fun Sunday, All-Pro safety Brian Dawkins was not so sure.

"Not when they hit you across the head with deep balls, it's not fun," Dawkins said with

a chuckle. "But seriously, it is, because that's a challenge you want as a defense, with the speed that they have and the quarterback, where's he's putting the ball, you really have to be on top of your game. You have to be where you need to be every time."

"We are clicking and pretty much on all cylinders. It's kind of hard to stop."

— Isaac Bruce
Rams' wide receiver

"Everybody around the world knows that they are a big-play team. They want to get the big play, want to get two and three touchdowns in the first quarter and basically get you out of the game."

Yes, they do. And they are very good at it. This season, the

Rams (15-2) outscored opponents 140-51 in the first quarter, 165-85 in the second.

They do not do it quite either. St. Louis gained more than 400 yards 10 times this season. It averaged 418 yards a game, 291 passing. There are 27 pass plays of at least 20 yards, and 14 runs of at least 20 yards.

"In this offense, you have to be able to play fast," said the No. 1 wide receiver statistically with 81 catches, 13 yards and seven touchdowns. Faulk led the team with 10 catches, nine for TDs. "I know if we are the fastest in the National Football League if we run the fastest 40s and fastest 100s, but I know it's always mind-boggling."

"When you watch film you can't really judge the speed until you actually get out on the field and see how fast guys are playing, and how fast we're running in and out of routes. I know if we're the fastest meter team, but I know we play fast."

BEX

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