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SPORTS

# A&M opens road swing with match against OSU

By Dallas Shipp THE BATTALION

The No. 21 Aggie women's tennis team begins its six-match stretch on the road this weekend as it travels to Oklahoma State on Thursday and the University of Oklahoma on Friday for a weekend series north of the Red River.

The Aggies are coming off a 5-2 win against Tulsa in which the entire team played hard to get the win.

Sophomore Jessica Roland, who struggled in a loss to Tulsa's Alicia Pillay, said the

match served as a wake-up call. "I would like to play a lot better this week," Roland said. "I don't think I played very well last week, but I practiced a lot harder this week in practice. I am looking forward to getting back out on the court to redeem myself.'

Junior Ashley Hedberg will try to extend her team-best winning streak to 10 matches on Thursday after she was named the Big 12 Player of the Week.

Hedberg and Roland are also leading the team in doubles as they moved into the No. 16 spot in the Omni Hotel women's tennis rankings last week.

The duo serves as a strong foundation for the doubles matches that have been impor-

Continued from page 1B

one, Longhorn sophomore Ian Crocker.

was Crocker's first loss of the season.

He has pushed aside every opponent except

The rivalry between Rose and Crocker has been

brewing for some time. On Jan. 25 during the

teams' annual dual meet, Rose out-touched

Crocker in the 50-yard freestyle by .05 seconds. It

Crocker bit back as he took the 50-yard sprint by

.03 seconds. The loss was Rose's first loss of the

said Texas head coach Eddie Reese. "Eighty per-

cent of good athletes like to win; 20 percent of

them hate to lose. Ninety-five percent of the

Olympic team is made up of that 20 percent, and

Two days later, Rose came back by pounding

"Ian is one of the great racers in our country,"

One month later at the Big 12 championships,

Rivalry

season in the event.

[Crocker] is one of those

tant to the Aggies' success this season. A&M owns a 14-0 record when winning the doubles point and is 12-1 when Roland and Hedberg win on the No. 1 court.

Thursday will be an opportunity the Aggies have been waiting for since last year after losing to OSU, which proved to be

> Looking back on the loss, it kept us out of the championship at the end of the season.

> > Bobby Kleinecke women's tennis coach on last season's match with OSU

the match that kept A&M from winning the Big 12 regular season championship.

"The match last year was the difference in the season," said A&M head coach Bobby Kleinecke. "It was early in the season, and looking back on the loss, it kept us out of the championship at the end of the season. The girls know the importance of the conference

The all-time series is tied 7-7 with A&M winning seven of the last eight matches between the two schools The Cowgirls will try to win their second consecutive match over the Aggies.

The Aggies have won six straight matches and improved their school-best start to 142 The Aggies are undefeated in Big 12 play.

Friday's match up agains the Oklahoma Sooners will be the Aggies' first trip to OU's tennis facilities, which opened this season.

"It will be exciting to see their new facilities," Kleinecke said. "They are a much better team this year, and should have Maryland and

A&M leads the all-time series with Oklahoma, 7-4, and has won the last two contests Oklahoma ha and six of the last seven.

The Aggies will try improve to 16-2 and 5-0 in the Big 12 with wins over both Back to Roy V Oklahoma Big 12 schools.

The Aggies' next match will be at the University of Houston on Wednesday. The Aggies do not play in College Station until April 13 against Kansa fored by the m

go back again in two years. Rose hopes to represent Canada in Athens, Greece, in 2004.

"For the last Olympics I was third in Canada

so I just missed that one, and it got the fire burn ing," Rose said. "It's a long ways away, but it's in the back of my mind." At this week's NCAA Championships i

Athens, Georgia, the Longhorns will try to rais another national championship banner. Even the Aggies do not have a chance to catch Texas Rose plans on putting a large dent in the Longhorns' armor.

"He's just a name," Rose said about Crocker "I'm not out there strictly to beat Ian Crocker." In Georgia, both men have a chance to

either race. In the 50-yard, Rose is ranked No. 2 while Crocker is ranked No. 14. The leader boa is tight — the top 25 are separated by only 25 onds. In the 100-yard, Rose is ranked No. 15, an Crocker is No. 24. The two are separated in the rankings by only .3 seconds.

Crocker in the 100-yard freestyle, winning by .30 This rivalry is just starting to heat up. Both swimmers have two more years ahead of them seconds in front of a nationally-televised audience. and they will meet each other several times Both Rose and Crocker are Olympic hopefuls. Crocker represented the United States in Sydney those seasons. It looks like the beginning of by swimming the 100-yard butterfly and hopes to Texas classic.

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THE BATTA

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