

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Balanced attack leads Aggies over La. Tech

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M offensive players and coaches all said the same thing following their 31-3 win over Louisiana Tech Saturday night — "we took a small step in the right direction." It may have been one small step for them, but it seemed like one giant leap for many of the 72,802 fans at Kyle Field.

The A&M offense responded positively to the midweek changes made by head coach R.C. Slocum. Slocum handed the play-calling duties to assistant head coach Kevin Sumlin, who replaced offensive coordinator Dino Babers.

But no matter how effective Sumlin's play calling was, he was reluctant to take credit following the game.

"The big thing was that the offensive staff sat down this week and worked through it as a group and tried to develop a plan that would give us a chance to be successful," Sumlin said. "It's the

whole group, this is not a one man deal."

Coming into the game, the A&M offense was ranked No. 106 in the nation, averaging 286 yards per game. However, the change in play calling appeared to give the Aggies new life as they racked up 444 total yards of offense.

The offense was a balanced attack, something that many fans have been calling for since last season. The Aggies ran for 206 yards on 43 carries combined with 238 yards passing on 30 attempts.

"I thought our offense looked more balanced tonight," Slocum said. "I thought our execution was better, we did a better job of mixing things up. We ran the ball better, we threw the ball better."

Sophomore quarterback Dustin Long completed 13-of-26 attempts for 205 yards and one touchdown.

"It feels good," Long said. "Our whole motto today was that

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RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Aggie RB Derek Farmer breaks a long run in the third quarter on Saturday.

Football was finally fun again

TALKING Points
Kevin Espenlaub

There was something special in the air at Kyle Field on Saturday that could be witnessed from the very beginning of Texas A&M's victory over Louisiana Tech.

Maybe it was the change in play calling or maybe it was an outstanding performance by sophomore quarterback Dustin Long, but whatever it was, the Aggie offense became the story of the game for the first time this season.

"We talked this week about taking a step in the right direction on offense," said A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum. "We had quite a lot of work to do and we didn't expect it to be fixed overnight, but there is no question that we took a step."

Perhaps that was how it should have been with assistant head coach Kevin Sumlin the reigns of the Aggie offense for his first time after replacing offensive coordinator Dino Babers last Monday.

Perhaps it was fitting, because for the first game this season, the team actually knew who the starting quarterback would be. Long did not have to spend the entire game looking over his shoulder to see when Reggie McNeal would be coming into the game.

Sumlin and Long showed flashes of being the Aggie offensive 'Dream Team' on Saturday, if only for one game.

"Our focus was on what we were going to try to accomplish in this game offensively," Sumlin said. "The offensive staff sat down to look at what we could do — what we've done decent so far this season, and what we

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Volleyball snaps two-game slide by defeating Iowa State

By True Brown
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M volleyball team got back into the win column Friday against Iowa State, sweeping the Cyclones and ending its two match losing streak.

No. 20 A&M put together a strong defensive effort, tallying 14 team blocks and 64 digs. Eight Aggies had blocks in the match, and senior A.D. Achilefu led A&M (10-3, 2-2 Big 12) with six. Iowa State (9-6, 0-4) managed just three.

"We wanted to keep our blocking strong like we did against Missouri, and that worked," said A&M head coach Laurie Corbelli. "Iowa State has some of the top blockers in the league, and we were working

really hard to out-block them. We're excited about our performance."

Achilefu also led the Aggies with 20 kills, and Melissa Munsch added 14.

"Because our blocking was so solid, our diggers had a little easier time finding where they needed to be," Corbelli said. "We're trying to make a bigger commitment to having a real aggressive defense. (Achilefu and Munsch) are very athletic, and their experience is really showing."

A&M wasted no time jumping on top of the Cyclones in game one, building a 19-13 lead after a kill by junior Tara Pulaski. After Pulaski's kill, sophomore Lexy Beers served six straight points for the Aggies during an 11-1 A&M run.

After claiming game one, A&M led 9-7 before

Beers went on another serving spree. She served up 13 consecutive points to give the Aggies a 23-9 lead, and the Cyclones never challenged.

Beers serves what is called a "floater" that moves through the air much like a knuckleball in baseball, and the Cyclones never seemed to get a handle on it.

"I just try to get a good float on the ball and keep it low to the net," Beers said. "(Assistant coach) John (Corbelli) taught me how to contact the ball a little differently so it creates more of a float than I had before, so I've been working on that."

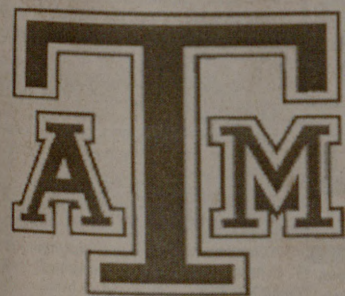
ISU kept game three close, but a kill by Achilefu gave the Aggies a 24-23 lead and began a 4-0 run that put the Aggies ahead for good. The Cyclones have yet to win a game in Big 12 play and were held to a -.016 hitting percentage against the Aggies, a

season-low for an A&M opponent.

ISU outside hitter Mandi Harms, who entered the match with a .323 hitting percentage, was held to -.050 by A&M.

Early in the match, Corbelli decided to spread around playing time to some of her reserves. Junior Beth Skypala played a majority of the match in place of usual starter Laura Jones. Skypala tallied seven kills to tie her season high. Sophomore Kendra Felder had a career-high six kills.

"The team needs to have some fresh arms at times and have people that are ready to get on the floor and into the flow of the match," Corbelli said. "Beth works her tail off and always has great attention so I wanted to make sure she got her shot out there. She'll probably be seeing a lot more time."



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Aggie Invasion at Baylor

Texas A&M vs. Baylor
October 12

\$10 Bus Ride to Waco (Includes Lunch)

Come and join other students, faculty, and members of the community as we take a bus trip to Waco to watch the Fightin' Texas Aggies beat the hell out of the Baylor Bears.

When: Saturday, October 12

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Bring participant waiver/release form to buses
Buses will begin loading at 9AM • Buses will leave for Waco at 10AM
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