

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Aggies looking to rebound against Baylor

Football team trying to even Big 12 record

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M and Baylor football teams could not be coming from more opposite performances last week, but both are looking forward to the matchup this weekend in Waco.

The Bears (3-2, 1-0) are coming off their first Big 12 Conference win in 29 games, a streak that dates back to October 1998.

"It was obviously good to get a win, and a Big 12 win," said Baylor head coach Kevin Steele. "I thought the team did what they had to do to win, though there were mistakes."

This week, Baylor will be without the services of junior linebacker John Garrett, who is arguably its top defensive starter. Garrett suffered a knee injury that will force him to sit out the remainder of the season.

"You could tell it bothered him," Steele said. "But he's a tough guy.

He understands this is something he'll bounce back from."

Meanwhile, the Aggies (3-2, 0-1) are coming off their worst defensive performance in recent memory after giving up 544 yards of offense to Texas Tech in a 48-47 overtime heartbreaker in front of more than 86,000 fans at Kyle Field.

"That was not a great defensive performance based on our standards," said A&M head coach R.C. Slocum. "That was a very average to below-average performance based on what my expectations for the defense are."

This week, the Aggies are hoping to prove that last week was a fluke and that the Wrecking Crew is still one of the top defenses in the nation.

"We were bound to have an off day and I think Saturday was it," said senior linebacker Brian Gamble. "I think it's important for the guys on defense to come out and perform well this week. We

have a chance against Baylor to regain some confidence against a similar style of offense."

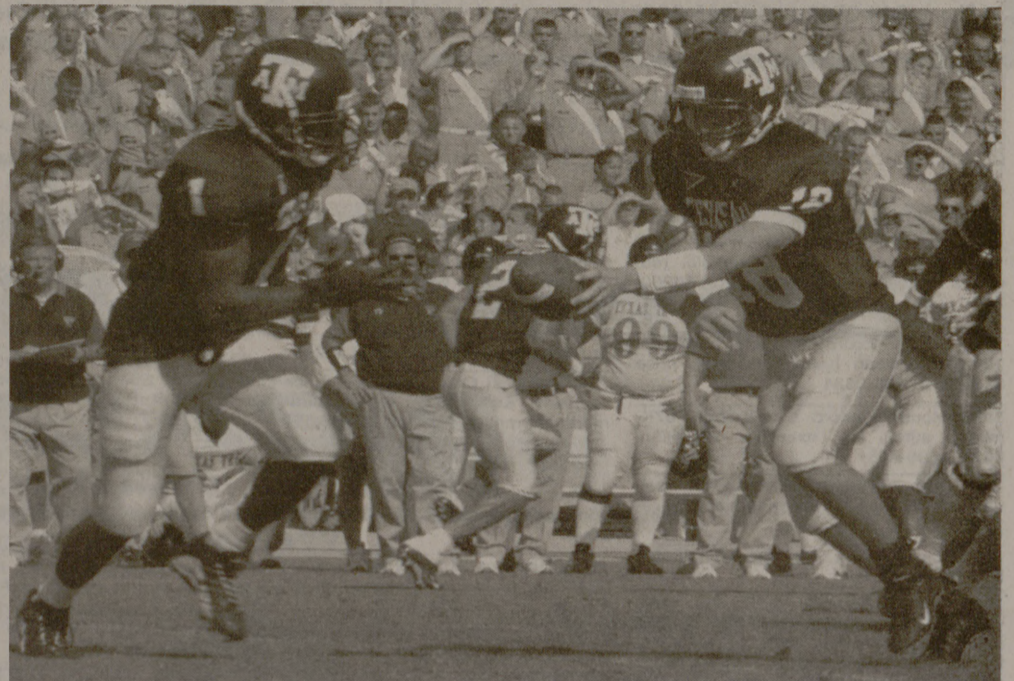
While the defense struggled to live up to its billing, the offense surprised a lot of those in attendance last week, racking up more than 500 yards of offense and setting a new Big 12 record with seven touchdown passes from sophomore quarterback Dustin Long.

"We have a level of confidence on offense right now that hasn't been matched since I've been here," said senior offensive lineman Taylor Whitley. "That's a long time."

Much of the offensive success in the last two games has been attributed by many on the offensive side of the ball to Long.

Junior wide receiver Jamaar Taylor says that Long has done a fantastic job as quarterback this season.

"I think he has become a field



ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Aggie sophomore quarterback Dustin Long hands the ball off to sophomore Derek Farmer in the Texas Tech game last weekend. Farmer has rushed for more than 100 yards in the past two games.

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Men's tennis team sends three players to New Mexico

By Gary Livingston
THE BATTALION

Three members of the Texas A&M's men's tennis team will play in the University of New Mexico Balloon Fiesta Classic that began Thursday and will run through Sunday.

It will be a special trip for Coach Cass as he returns to his alma mater.

"I'm really looking forward to going," Cass said. "It's going to be a special trip because I coached and played there for eight years."

Cass took over the New Mexico program in 1988 at the age of 23. At the time he was one of the youngest persons ever to be a head coach at the Division 1-A level. In just two seasons, Cass

guided the program to the school's first Western Athletic Conference Championship in 23 years, and took the Lobos to the NCAA Championships.

Between 1991 and 1995 Cass earned five straight WAC Coach-of-the-Year honors by capturing five WAC Championships.

The Aggies will be sending junior Khaled El Dorry, and freshmen Matt Loucks and John Nallon.

Both El Dorry and Loucks saw action earlier this season at the H.E.B. Baylor Intercollegiate Tournament. This will be Nallon's first appearance of the year.

"I'm curious as to what they (Loucks and Nallon) can do and how they handle themselves," Cass said. "They are entering a competitive field

and trying to make a name for themselves."

Both El Dorry and Loucks received first round byes in the tournament and will be starting action on Friday afternoon.

Nallon is set to face off with New Mexico's Brent Salazar on Friday at 10 a.m. in the first round of action.

Joining A&M in action at the tournament will be Air Force, Denver, New Mexico State, Colorado, New Mexico Military Institute and Northern Arizona University.

In addition to the New Mexico Tournament, three other Aggies have been competing since Tuesday in Chattanooga, Tenn. at the Icy Hot/ITA Men's All-American Championships.

Sophomores Lester Cook and Ante Matijevic

both dropped single matches in the qualifying rounds on Tuesday.

Cook fell to Tennessee-Chattanooga's Jason Ontog, 7-6 (2), 6-3, in the single elimination tournament.

Matijevic lost to Oregon's No. 5-seeded Manuel Kost, 6-4, 6-4.

Matijevic was named last year's Big 12 Conference Newcomer of the Year.

Cook and Matijevic will be teaming in doubles throughout the tournament. As a duo, the two are ranked No. 14 in the nation, despite the fact that they have never played a doubles match together since coming to A&M.

Senior Ryan Newport is also participating in the main draw singles competition.

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