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Soccer team heads to Oklahoma with 9-game streak on the line

By Troy Miller

THE BATTALION

The No. 6 Texas A&M women's soccer team (10-3-1, 4-0-1) holds a nine-game unbeaten streak going into the toughest part of its conference schedule. The next five games are against five of the top six teams in the Big 12. A&M has never fallen to any of these teams in the program's 10-year history.

First up for the Aggies is Oklahoma State (12-3, 2-3) Friday at 7 p.m. in Stillwater. The Cowgirls are undefeated at home this season and are hungry after losing six straight games to the Aggies.

The Cowgirls have only scored three goals against the Aggies in their previous six meetings while the Aggies have tallied 25.

"Oklahoma State is in a position where they can qualify for the Big 12 tournament for the first time," said Aggie head coach G. Guerrieri. "They have very good results at home and they get really riled up on Friday nights. I'm sure they'll look at this as a real opportunity to not only knock off the No. 6 team in the country, but also to put themselves one step closer to their first Big 12 Tournament appearance."

Next on the Aggies schedule is the University of Oklahoma (11-3, 4-1) Sunday at 1 p.m. in Norman. The Aggies hold a 7-0 series lead over the Sooners and have dominated them 18-2 in goals since the teams first played in 1996.

Oklahoma is currently third in the Big 12 standings right behind Texas A&M.

"Oklahoma has beaten everyone in the conference except for us," Guerrieri said. "They have this game circled as a big breakthrough opportunity for their program."



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Sophomore midfielder **Christina Echavary** looks around Texas Tech defender **Lindsey Wile** for a pass during Sunday afternoon's game at the Aggie Soccer Complex. The Aggies won the match 6-2.

The Aggies then return home for their final three games of the regular season against North Division stalwarts Kansas and Missouri, and then the annual showdown with No. 4 Texas. The Aggies are 6-0, 6-0, and 13-0 against those teams, respectively.

The goal for the Aggies this season is a Big 12 Championship, and in order to do that it seems that they will have to stay perfect against these teams.

"They'll definitely be some tough games," said sophomore Linsey Woodard. "This week we've practiced on a lot of technical things during our play and we've tried to touch up those things that we're still missing in our game. I think it's starting to click more and more."

The Aggies will be looking to Woodard to increase the offensive output as she leads the team with 11 goals on the season. Sophomores Christina Echavary and Emma Smith are each coming off two-goal games against Texas Tech in the Aggies 6-2 victory.

"I needed some goals for my confidence," said Smith, who has

only four goals despite tallying 41 shots. "We came out with a lot of effort and determination (against Baylor and Texas Tech) but we didn't play our game. We're going to come out here (against Oklahoma State)."

In order to keep their streak against these teams alive, the Aggies must do better in the first half. The Aggies have found themselves in early deficits in seven games this season. In five of those games they rebounded and won, and against Baylor took an 84th minute goal by junior Kristen Strutz to earn a 1-1 tie.

"We've been emphasizing concentration," Guerrieri said. "The goals that we've given up, we think have been soft, and we think it's been because of occasional softness in our defense and occasional lapses in our concentration, which are all symptoms of a team full of freshmen and sophomores."

"Our thing is that we can't let down our concentration or let down our intensity to anything less than 100 percent of what we are, and that has nothing to do with our opponents."

Volleyball team hopes to fix road game woes

By True Brown
THE BATTALION

The road has been difficult for the Texas A&M volleyball team this season.

It will get even tougher Saturday when the Aggies play Kansas State in Manhattan, Kan., a place where the Aggies (12-5, 4-4 Big 12) own a 0-6 all-time record.

Before Wednesday, it may have seemed like the stars were aligned against this being the first A&M team to score a road win against the Wildcats. That was before the Aggies pulled off a last-minute win against Texas Tech.

The win has left the Aggies with a newfound outlook on traveling to Manhattan.

"This team has a great opportunity," said A&M head coach Laurie Corbelli.

To capitalize on the opportunity, however, the Aggies will have to keep up the momentum from Wednesday night's win against the Red Raiders.

A&M's season seemed on the verge of collapse, as the Aggies blew a two-game lead to Tech before rebounding from an 11-7 deficit to win in the fifth game. A loss would have been the second straight in which the Aggies had lost the

lead.

Instead, they are riding an emotional high. "We need to keep up this surge we are on," Corbelli said. "To see it come back was really important. We hadn't seen it in a while, but now that we have seen it, it's something we really want to build on."

The Aggies are 1-3 in Big 12 road games this season, but the Aggies want to put those losses as far away as possible.

"The foundation has been laid of what we need to do," said A&M middle blocker A.D. Achilefu, one of two seniors on the Aggies' youthful team. "We told ourselves that we were a new team. We're making changes, and this will be a great place to start."

Junior Tara Pulaski, who tied a career high with 20 kills against Texas last week, said a win against the Wildcats could potentially turn the season around.

"We have this confidence now because we were down and we got back on top," Pulaski said. "We know what that feels like. (A win Saturday) would prove how strong we really are and what we can do."

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