

# Women's tennis team hosts Fall Invitational

By Jeff Allen  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's tennis team will be taking the court today to compete in the Texas A&M Fall Invitational at the A&M Tennis Center.

The tournament will consist of three days of singles and doubles competition. Each player on the team will have the opportunity to compete once a day in doubles and singles matches.

This weekend's tournament will mark the end of the fall portion of the women's schedule.

Each year, the women play an allotted number of matches in the fall to prepare for the all-important team schedule in the spring. This year, the stretch of individual matches was made more important by the influx of new talent the Aggies received after graduating five seniors last May following the Aggies' second place Big 12 finish.

"I feel like we've made a lot of improvement (this fall)," said head coach Bobby Kleinecke. "We corrected things from the first tournament to the second tournament, which was a big improvement for us ... and I see some of the results of the hard work we've put in."

Washington State, TCU and Tulane have been invited to compete with the Aggies this weekend on their home courts. A&M is expecting some tough competition from each school.

Kleinecke is looking at this weekend's match-ups as a chance to determine where the team stands before the beginning of

team play next February.

"We will be playing a round robin in individual matches," Kleinecke said. "We're trying to get a feel for what the dual matches are like (for the spring) with individual matches. It's a good solid field. All four teams are pretty close, there will be a lot of good close matches and that'll be good for everybody."

This weekend's tournament is set in a format that more closely resembles that of the spring schedule. Each school will pair up and play each other on an individual basis with the aforementioned singles and doubles matches. Team points will not be tabulated as they would be during the spring schedule.

The Aggies are hoping to use this week to continue building team confidence and boost morale for what awaits them in February.

"It's to get that companionship as teammates," Metchem said. "And to know where we stand and to set goals for the spring, as a team we are really close and that'll pull us out of some of (team) matches."

The women carry two individual national rankings going into play today. Junior Jessica Roland comes in with a career high No. 59 national rank in singles, and Roland, coupled with senior Ashley Hedberg, bring the No. 12 national ranking in doubles.

The Texas A&M women are scheduled to first play Tulane today at 1 p.m. The Aggies will also play at 1 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

# Aggies travel to Big 12 Championship

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The Texas A&M men's and women's cross country teams will be making their seventh trip to the Big 12 Conference Championships tomorrow.

This year's meet will be hosted by the University of Missouri at the A.L. Gustin Golf Course in Columbia, Mo.

The lack of a national ranking, coupled with injuries and some disappointing performances earlier in the season, makes this weekend's meet loom ever larger on the Aggies' schedule.

"Any time you run (in) the Big 12 Championships it's a very important meet," said head coach Dave Hartman. "It's one of the most important of the year. The Big 12 and qualifying for Nationals are big."

The meet not only presents a chance for the men and women to compete against other teams in the Big 12, but it also gives the squads a chance to pick up some crucial at-large points that can help them in their drive to receive an at-large bid for Nationals.

"It would build a lot of confidence knowing where we are ... going into regionals. I think if we go out there and run well it'll give us a lot of confidence going into the regional meet," Hartman said.

Perennial power Colorado is heavily favored once again this year on both the men's and women's sides. The women are looking for results similar to the men's.

"A lot of teams are real close to each other ... we can be in that mix. It just depends on if we have a good day," Hartman said.

This year the men will be looking to senior Juan Debastos to lead the way. Debastos placed fourth in the Big 12 last year, but has been hampered by injury most of this season.

"Most of the year I was hurt," Debastos said. "But I'm going to try my best to get top five or ten (in the meet) ... I'm not in the same shape as last year, but I think I can make top five. (That) would be a good race."

The men will also depend on junior Tommy Bonn, who, like Debastos, has been slowed by injury this year, as well as standouts junior Andrew Cook and sophomore Jon Lewis, who have both earned Big 12 Runner of the Week honors earlier this year.

"A good performance would feel good," said true freshman Meredith Crane. "It would be really motivational as far as feeling prepared for Regionals ... our hopes will be higher for Regionals and for making Nationals."



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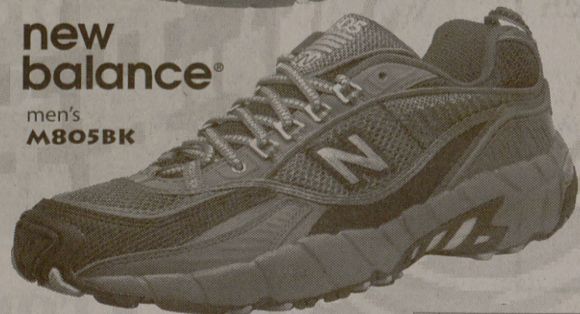
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