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# Soccer team ready to host NCAA's

By Troy Miller  
THE BATTALION

The NCAA Championship Tournament is a funny thing. Unlike most sports in which rankings in the polls are the most critical factor in deciding who plays against who and where they play, NCAA soccer seems to emphasize regional matchups over top teams playing against each other.

The No. 4 Aggies (17-4-1) feel they were not treated fairly by the NCAA. Despite playing the first and second rounds of the tournament at the friendly confines of the Aggie Soccer Complex, Texas A&M did not receive one of the top eight seeds.

The No. 8 University of Texas also did not receive a seed, despite being in the national top five for virtually the entire season. Instead, Texas will start by playing Southern Methodist University (SMU) on Friday in College Station.

"For there only to be three of our teams from the Big 12 doesn't make any sense," senior defender Jessica Martin said. "We have one of the best conferences in the nation I think."

This year's first and second rounds look almost identical to the first and second rounds from the 2001 NCAA Tournament. SMU will play Texas in a rematch of last year's first round in which the Mustangs upset the Longhorns. A&M will play Northwestern State (12-5-5), the champion and automatic bid from the Southland Conference, on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

"It's exactly the same," Aggie head coach G. Guerrieri said. "You take the

WAC champion (SMU), you take the Big 12 champion, you take their biggest rival, and then throw in the Southland Conference champion, and then you move on from there and the survivor of this bracket goes on to play a great PAC-10 team, probably."

Last year, the Aggies beat Southwestern State 3-1 in the first round. They went on to beat SMU 2-1 in an overtime thriller, and then upset No. 4 Stanford 1-0 in Palo Alto, Calif. before losing in the Elite Eight to No. 3 Portland.

This year, the Aggies will have to do the same. To reach their goal of the final four, they must take care of business at home and then win out in a bracket that includes the seventh-seed UCLA, and national powerhouse North Carolina.

"The goal is definitely a national championship," Martin said. "Of course we have to go game-by-game, but the goal is a national championship this year."

Texas A&M is led in scoring by sophomore Linsey Woodard, who has scored 14 goals on the season. Freshman goalkeeper Kati Jo Spisak has improved tremendously during the season and is the driving force for the Aggies in net.

Northwestern State is looking for its biggest upset in team history when it plays the Aggies in the first round. The Demons are currently on a five-game unbeaten streak, including two wins in the Southland Conference tournament to lift them into the NCAA Championship tournament.

"We are thrilled about the opportunity to go to College Station and face an oppo-

**NCAA Women's Soccer Tournament**  
Friday, Nov. 15  
5 p.m. Texas (15-4-1) vs. SMU (12-5-4)  
7:30 p.m. Texas A&M (17-4-1) vs. Northwestern State (12-5-5)  
Winners will advance to Sunday's second-round game at: 1:30 p.m.

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION  
The Texas A&M soccer team head coach Jimmy Mitchell said, "It will be a challenge for us, but our girls have a lot of heart and they will compete."

The Demons are led by freshman Rachel Folk who has tallied nine goals in just 27 shots this season.

"We're not going so far into the realm of the unknown," Guerrieri said. "We have to do our homework on Northwestern State for Friday night, and that will be a full emphasis for this week is preparing for what we have to do to be successful against them."

# Swimming teams host UL-Monroe Saturday

By Jeff Allen  
THE BATTALION

Both the men's and women's swimming and diving teams will be hosting their counterparts from Louisiana-Monroe tonight at 6 p.m. in the Student Recreation Center Natatorium.

The No. 23 women's team (3-2) will be trying to sustain momentum garnered from an impressive performance two weeks ago in a meet against Southern Methodist University, North Texas and Arkansas. The

women heartily defeated the Arkansas and North Texas teams while competing valiantly against the highly regarded group from SMU who entered the meet ranked No. 6 in the nation.

The Aggie men (1-2) are looking to rebound from losses to national powers Texas and the University of Southern California in their last meet held two weeks ago in Austin. Tonight's contest marks the first time this season the men will have the opportunity to compete at home. They are entering the pool with a No. 17

national ranking in tow, which extends a streak as a Top 25 team dating to the fall of 1995.

"We want to maintain that level of excellence," said men's head coach Mel Nash. "It's a little bit of a rebuilding year. We were expecting it last year, but we were a bit better than people thought we'd be and I think again (this year) we are better than people thought we'd be."

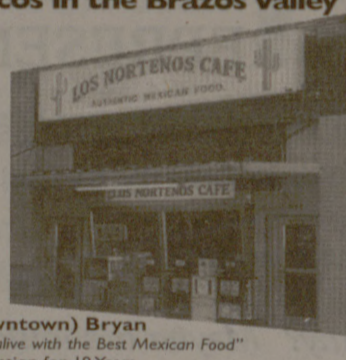
The men will be looking to some fresh young talent this year. Nine of the 26 athletes on the team are freshmen.

"This meet gives us a chance to swim some events to find out where we are," Nash said. "We have some nice swimmers who are a little smaller so we can't be some different stuff."

The Aggies will be looking to get the younger swimmers some experience heading into the meet. The women are looking to their race to unfold in a way similar to that of the men's.

The competition begins today at 6 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center Natatorium.

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