

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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## Franchione leaves no doubt who's in charge

### Players learning early not to cross coach

By True Brown  
THE BATTALION

No more than 24 hours into his new job as head football coach at Texas A&M, Dennis Franchione is already laying down the law. He met with the Aggie football team for the first time Friday afternoon, and players said after the meeting there was no confusion about who was in charge.

"There were some guys talking amongst themselves, and he put his foot down and said 'When I'm talking, you guys be quiet,'" said free safety Jaxxon Appel. "I think he runs a tight program."

Players said they had a good first impression from Franchione, who has compiled a 155-73-2 in his 20-year head coaching career.

"It's exciting getting a new guy in here," said quarterback Dustin Long. "He seems like he's real excited about having the job, so we should be headed in the right direction."

Under the direction of coach R.C. Slocum, A&M finished the 2002 regular season with a

6-6 record, the worst by the Aggies since 1996.

Appel said Franchione already made sure his players knew where he stands as head coach.

"He said he was going to draw the line in the dirt," Appel said. "You were either going to be on his side or if you crossed it, he was going to deal with it. There was going to be no gray area. I really liked the way he put that."

Franchione also told the Aggies he would probably bring Carl Torbush, his defensive coordinator at Alabama, to A&M. This season, Torbush and the Crimson Tide had the nation's No. 2 defense and the nation's best rushing defense.

A&M's current defensive coordinator, Mike Hankwitz, has held the position since 1997.

Appel said most of the players came away impressed with their new coach.

"I think he's a good fit for here," Appel said. "Sometimes you get a good vibe from someone, and I think we all got a good vibe from him. He carries himself well, he speaks well. He seems like a very lik-

able, approachable person."

A&M running back Derek Farmer was recruited heavily by Franchione at Alabama, but committed to the Aggies on signing day in 2001. Now, the two have found themselves on the same team.

"I'm excited about getting to play for Coach Franchione," said Farmer, who has led the Aggies in rushing the last two seasons. "He's a great guy. I'm looking forward to this season, and hopefully he can get us off to a good start this season."

Farmer, who hails from Tyler, said he signed with A&M so he could be closer to his mother and so she could come and see him play more often.

Still, he said he had a solid impression from Franchione and his staff while he was being recruited.

"They were all great people, always up front," Farmer said. "He is a guy that you can trust, and he trusts you. I felt comfortable with him and his staff. He did a tremendous job (while he was at Alabama) and really turned their program around."



A&M freshman tight end Quinlin Germany answers questions from the media on Friday regarding the hiring of Dennis Franchione as A&M's new head football coach. Franchione met with the team on Friday afternoon.

JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

## Aggies escape Prairie View in 2OT Oklahoma wins Big 12 Title

By Troy Miller  
THE BATTALION

**PRAIRIE VIEW-** The Texas A&M men's basketball team (5-1) escaped upset-minded Prairie View A&M (1-2) by beating the Panthers 83-78 in double overtime Saturday. The Aggies pulled out a hard fought victory in front of 4,026 hostile fans at W.J. Nicks Building in Prairie View.

The crowd was boisterous from the opening tip off to the waning seconds of the second overtime period. Every timeout saw dances break out in the stands and deafening roars of "PVU."

"It was definitely a tough environment to play in," said freshman swingman Antoine Wright. "[Prairie View] came out playing hard and fed off the crowd."

A&M appeared to be pulling away with the game when its lead reached 11 at the 7:08 mark of the second half with

the score 54-43. The Aggies could only manage seven points in the final seven minutes while Prairie View, urged on by the crowd, inched closer to the Aggies. The Panthers reeled off seven unanswered points in the final two minutes to tie the game at 61.

With barely more than one second remaining, Prairie View senior guard Gregory Burks reversed in the air and flipped the basketball from his waist over his shoulder. The ball went off the backboard and in to tie the game and sent the crowd into a deafening frenzy.

"It just went in for him," said senior guard Bradley Jackson. "I couldn't believe some of the shots they were hitting, but he hit it."

After calling a timeout, Aggie senior Keith Bean tried to pass the length of the court to Wright, but the ball was thrown too long and went out of bounds. Prairie View got the ball back under its offensive basket with no time running off the clock. Wright blocked a three-point attempt by Burks to send the game to overtime.

A&M junior Kevin Turner opened the scoring 31 seconds into the first overtime period, draining a three-pointer from the corner. Prairie View fought back and tied the game 71-71 on a three-pointer by junior Malachi Thurston, who had a game-high 24 points.

In the second overtime, the Aggies started to roll once again with Turner hitting a three-pointer from the corner. This time the Panthers could not hit their shots to keep the game tight. Wright sealed the win when he buried two free throws with nine seconds left to give the Aggies a five-point edge.

Wright had his second straight double-double by scoring 21 points and collecting 12 rebounds. It was also Wright's fourth 20-point effort in only six games.

"I knew from the beginning of the game that I was going to come out and be aggressive and try to attack the glass," Wright said. "I knew that that was definitely their weakness and I was trying to exploit it."

The Aggies never could shake the Panthers during the game. At halftime, the score was 32-31 in favor of the Aggies in part because of 10 turnovers by A&M.

"We just fight a little harder, dig a little harder, and find ways to get it done," Watkins said. "We know we have to go back to the drawing board and get better, and we will."

**HOUSTON (AP)** — With no national championship berth on the line, Oklahoma and Colorado didn't pack the house for Saturday night's Big 12 title game.

At least the Sooners are headed for one of college football's coveted Bowl Championship Series spots, a nice consolation prize for missing out on the Fiesta Bowl.

Nate Hybl threw two touchdowns passes and Quentin Griffin rushed for a championship game-record 188 yards and two touchdowns as the eighth-ranked Sooners beat the 12th-ranked Buffaloes 29-7 to win their first Big 12 title.

A disappointing announced crowd of 63,332 attended the game, although Reliant Stadium appeared far less than its 69,500 capacity.

The victory probably will send Oklahoma (11-2) to the Rose Bowl against Washington State (10-2).

The Sooners played for the Big 12 title in 2000 and lost to Kansas State before going on to beat Florida State for the national championship in the Orange Bowl.

Brian Calhoun, starting for injured

running back Chris Brown, ran for 122 yards for the Buffaloes, who were trying to become the first back-to-back Big 12 champions after last year's 39-37 victory over Texas. But it wasn't to be.

Hybl threw touchdown passes of 3 yards to Trent Smith in the first quarter and 21 yards to Mark Clayton in the second quarter as the Sooners took a 13-0 halftime lead.

Colorado kicker Pat Brougham missed field goals of 41, 32 in the first half and 33 yards in the third quarter.

Jeremy Bloom gave Colorado brief momentum in the third quarter with an 80-yard punt return early in the quarter, cutting Oklahoma's lead to 13-7.

The Sooners then scored 16 straight points to ice the game. First, Griffin broke 36 yards late in the third quarter. The Sooners started the fourth period with 5:14 drive that set up a 28-yard field goal by Trey DiCarlo with 7:53 left in the game and Griffin broke free again with 3:49 left in the game.

Griffin laid the groundwork for the

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JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

A&M freshman Antoine Wright dunks over a Panther defender.

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### Volleyball team advances in NCAA Championships

The Texas A&M volleyball team swept No. 23 Utah Friday in the first round of the NCAA Championships, being held on the campus of the University of Southern California at the Lyon Center.

The Aggies have now advanced to the second round for the tenth consecutive season and will play the winner of the

No. 25 San Diego-No. 1 USC match on Saturday at 9 p.m. at the Lyon Center.

The Aggies were led by Laura Jones' 12 kills and Melissa Munsch added 10 kills and 15 digs.

"Our serving and passing has been something that has been very strong for us in our past wins," said A&M head coach Laurie Corbelli. "We knew that would be key tonight, and the team came out focused and carried out the game plan very well."

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