

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Aggies prepared for first road game of season

By Kevin Espenlaub
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's basketball team will head to Dayton, Ohio for its first road game of the season Tuesday when they take on the Wright State Raiders in a game scheduled for a 6 p.m. tipoff.

The Aggies have rolled off four consecutive wins after dropping the season opener to Northwestern State and used a 19-2 run to open the second half Saturday against Arkansas-Pine Bluff before cruising to a 79-51 victory at Reed Arena.

"We tried to come out with as much intensity as possible (in the second half)," said A&M junior Janae Derrick.

A&M head coach Peggie Gillom recognizes that while

the teams the Aggies (4-1) have been playing are not as solid as the Big 12 competition they will face later this year, they could still present problems.

"We have to come out ready to play these teams because they come ready to play you," Gillom said. "We missed a lot of open shots (against Arkansas-Pine Bluff), but we got back and played defense and that was the difference in the game."

The Raiders (1-4) have struggled early this season and are coming off of a 110-69 defeat at the hands of the Miami (OH) Red Hawks on Saturday.

Raider sophomore Tiffany Webb scored a career-high 36 points in the game, but the team

still came up short and allowed the most points in a game since the 1992-1993 season.

A&M was missing its leading scorer on Saturday, junior guard Toccarra Williams, forcing the Aggies to rely heavily on the services of Derrick and senior Kim Moore, who both tallied a season-high 15 points.

Derrick is the leading rebounder this season for the Aggies and is averaging 7.6 rebounds per game.

Freshman Rhianna Reed took over for Williams at point guard and scored five points while recording five assists for the game.

Williams, who signed with A&M out of Hollywood, Fla., had started in 61 consecutive games before injuring her ankle

early last week in practice. She is expected to play against Wright State.

She is currently moving up the ladder for career totals and ranks second in school history in steals and fifth in assists. She led the Big 12 in both categories last season.

The two teams have squared off once before with A&M taking the 89-65 victory last November at Reed Arena.

Williams recorded the first triple-double in school history in the game with 13 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds.

The performance was the fourth all-time in the Big 12.

The Aggies will return to Reed Saturday for a matchup against the University of Texas-Arlington.



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION
A&M freshman Rhianna Reed makes a move around Pine Bluff's Thuretta Arnold Saturday. Reed was playing for injured guard Toccarra Williams.

Ohio State, Miami ready to party at the Fiesta Bowl

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Before the season, Ohio State coach Jim Tressel took his staff on a road trip to watch other teams' spring workouts. One of the stops was Miami.

Why there, Tressel was asked. "They're Miami. They're the national champions," he said.

Now Ohio State will get another look at the Hurricanes in the Jan. 3 Fiesta Bowl. And this time, Tressel hopes the Buckeyes come away with that coveted title. Miami is a 13-point favorite, but that doesn't bother Tressel.

"I don't think we get too involved in the broad type of things, like who's the underdog or who's not," Tressel said. "I think our guys are just excited to have a chance to play in the Fiesta Bowl and to play against the national champions."

The game matches two undefeated teams who used similar weapons but different routes to the same destination.

Top-ranked Miami (12-0), seeking to become the first repeat champion since Nebraska in 1994-95, scored sometimes at will, averaging 41.9 points. But it also gave up more points (18 per game) than it might have liked.

No. 2 Ohio State (13-0), going for its first championship since 1968, played defense more diligently, allowing just 12.2 points per game. It also scored less, averaging 29.

Miami never scored fewer than 26 points in a game and pounded most opponents. Still, there were close calls. A missed field-goal attempt by Florida State saved that victory for the Hurricanes. They trailed hapless Rutgers in the fourth quarter before recovering. Pitt had a chance to tie the Canes on the game's final play.

Saturday's Fiesta Bowl-trip clincher, a 56-45 shootout against Virginia Tech, stretched Miami's winning streak to 34

straight, sixth longest in NCAA Division I-A history.

Ohio State had its own narrow games, beating Purdue 10-6, Penn State 13-7, Wisconsin 19-14, and Michigan 14-9.

The teams share common denominators at running back and quarterback.

Miami's Willis McGahee rushed for 1,686 yards and 27 touchdowns. Ohio State freshman Maurice Clarett gained 1,190 yards and scored 16 TDs.

Miami quarterback Ken Dorsey, like McGahee, is a Heisman Trophy candidate and has a career record of 38-1. He threw for 3,073 yards and 26 TDs this season.

Those numbers had him eighth in the Division I-A quarterback rankings. Right above him at No. 7 is Ohio State quarterback Craig Krenzel, who passed for 1,988 yards and 12 TDs, but edged Dorsey in efficiency ratings, 148.1 to 148.

"I know there are going to be a lot of

people around the country saying, 'Ohio State does not belong in this game. Ohio State can't win this game,'" Krenzel said.

"I don't think that's true, and none of the guys on our team believe that's true. We believe we deserve to be playing on Jan. 3. We respect Miami and we know they're a great team, but there's not a guy on this team who doesn't think we can compete, who doesn't think we can't go out and win."

Miami has not seen much of Ohio State and will get its first look at the Buckeyes on film on Tuesday. Miami knows Clarett can be explosive.

"From what I've seen, he's a good back, and he's going to get his yards," defensive back Sean Taylor said.

Both coaches are familiar with the opposing program — and it goes back further than spring practice.

Miami coach Larry Coker spent two seasons as an assistant to Ohio State head


coach John Cooper in 1993-94. He served as an assistant at Miami before taking over the head coaching position two years ago — and hasn't lost.

"I have great memories of Columbus, Ohio, and the Ohio State University," Coker said. "It was just a great experience for my wife and myself. We loved every moment of it. It's very intense. Football is very important to Ohio State."

Tressel was a candidate for the Miami job when current Cleveland Browns coach Butch Davis was hired to take over the program in 1995.

Tressel denied that he was offered the job. He said he interviewed for it, but said the timing wasn't right for all the parties involved.

"It's interesting in life: usually things work out," Tressel said. "Things worked out for all of us and here we have a chance to be at Ohio State. Things always work out."



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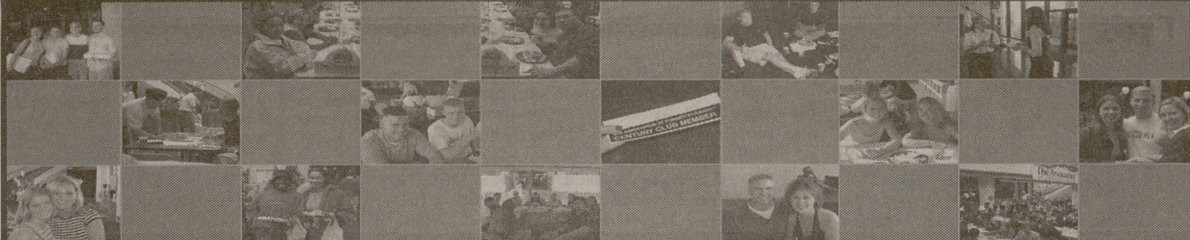
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