

# SPORTS

## Big 12 picture gets clearer as season unfolds

### Aggies among teams in middle tier of conference



**TALKING**  
**Points**  
**Dallas Shipp**

There are few certainties in this world, such as how the Big 12 Conference basketball standings will look once all the cards are on the table on March 8, after the final horn blows for regular-season play.

It is certain, however, that this season's play has seen the Big 12 teams separated into three distinct groups: the dominant, the average and the mediocre.

The top tier of the conference is made up of No. 13 Oklahoma State (7-1 Big 12), No. 5 Oklahoma (7-2), No. 6 Texas (7-2), and No. 9 Kansas (7-1).

Finding themselves in the middle of the pack are No. 21

Missouri (5-3), Colorado (4-4), A&M (3-5) and Texas Tech (3-5).

And the three teams stuck in the Big 12 cellar are Iowa State (2-6), Baylor (1-7) and Nebraska (1-7).

While anything is possible within the three tiers, here is how the Big 12 should finish going down the home stretch.

**1. OKLAHOMA STATE**

The Cowboys (18-3, 7-1) have been drastically underrated this season and should finish strong with a big win at home against Texas. OSU will have a tough contest in Norman against the Sooners in a game that could determine the Big 12 title.

**2. OKLAHOMA**

The Sooners (16-4, 7-2) fell in their first matchup with OSU in Stillwater and must win their second game in Norman to have a chance at the Big 12 Championship. OU's final game

of the year is against Texas, a team that knocked off the Sooners earlier this past week.

**3. KANSAS**

Their Big 12 loss on the road to Colorado will end up costing the Jayhawks (17-5, 7-1) a shot at the Big 12 title, but they will remain a favorite come time for the Final Four in New Orleans.

**4. TEXAS**

If Texas can come away with wins on the road against Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, then the Longhorns (16-4, 7-2) will win the Big 12 outright; but, don't count on that happening. Neither OU nor OSU has lost a home game this year, and the Sooners have won 33 straight in Norman.

**5. MISSOURI**

Missouri has a fairly easy finish having already played Texas. The Tigers (14-5, 5-3) will finish the season with a big win over Kansas at home. Their first

match up was a close one in Lawrence, Kan., but this time, the Jayhawks will travel.

**6. COLORADO**

The Buffaloes (14-7, 4-4), have been dominating at home this season with home wins over Texas and Kansas, which have been key for this up-and-coming team. Watch out next year. If it learns to win on the road, Colorado could break into the top pack in the 2003-04 season.

**7. TEXAS A&M**

A&M will have its biggest game of the year tonight at Reed Arena against Missouri. In order to finish above .500 for the first time in nine years, the Aggies (11-8, 3-5) must win three of their final eight games. With tough outings coming up on the road against Texas Tech and Kansas, home games are must wins for the Aggies.

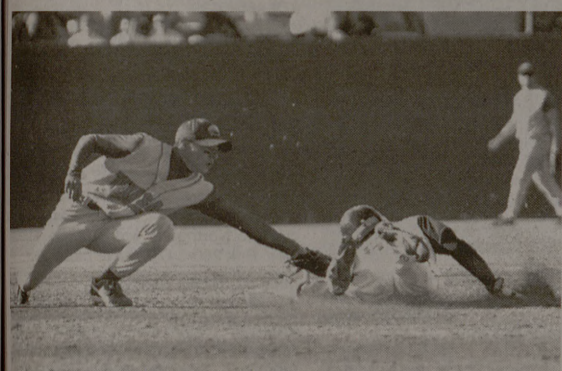


ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION  
Texas center Jason Klotz fights for a rebound against the Aggies. The Longhorns are among the elite teams in the Big 12 Conference.

See **Big 12** on page 7

## Late heroics lift A&M in season opener

By Pete Burks  
THE BATTALION



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION  
Texas A&M shortstop Scott Beerer tags A&M Corpus Christi's lame Landin at Tuesday's season opener.

When one thinks of the powerhouse teams that rule the kingdom of college baseball, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi doesn't typically come to mind.

However, the Islanders (1-1 overall) began their season as if they were an elite team, pounding the defending national champion University of Texas, 5-0 in Austin. Needless to say, the Islanders came in with every intention

of ruining the Aggies' opening day game, and it took a game-winning home run and a little Olsen Magic to keep them from doing so.

The Islanders quickly jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the top of the second thanks to their tough hitting against junior Aggie pitcher Brian Finch coupled with an untimely error by senior Aggie third baseman, Tim Petru. A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson was frustrated by his team's slow start.

"They threw a lot of offspeed pitches, which is really tough to face early in the season," he said. "We didn't do a good job with runners on

and less than two out."

In the bottom of the fourth, the Aggies finally awoke from their slumber, erupting for three runs of their own against A&M-Corpus Christi starter, Jim Hammon, who led the shutout against Texas in the Islanders' first game. Junior right fielder Cory Patton led the A&M barrage by launching a moonshot over the right field fence, nearly hitting the train tracks behind Olsen Field.

While the run surge kept the game close in

See **Opener** on page 7

The Department of Rec Sports presents

# Ramp Romp

Saturday, February 22 @ 10:00 a.m.

**Registration:**

Early Feb. 3-18 \$10/\$12\*  
Late Feb. 19-21 \$13/15\*  
Race day \$20 all

\*non-member cost. Registration forms on-line or at the Student Rec Center.

5K run and 1 mile walk through the A&M campus and the hills of Kyle Field.

recsports.tamu.edu



The place to be this Friday for



MSC Film Society's Aggie Cinema Presents:

7:30pm & 10:00pm in the Theater

Only \$1 with wristband



midnight drawing for \$250 must be present to win

Don't be alone on Valentine's Day Get Singled Out!!!

Win a date to Robert Earl Keen and Cowboy Mouth

Remember the old Mtv show Singled Out? Well, come play with your fellow Ags on Friday February 14th!

6 lucky couples will be set up with fabulous dates for Saturday, February 15th including flowers, dinner and concert tickets.

Contests will start at 10pm in the flagroom, come early to be a contestant

FREE ITALIAN FOOD in the 12th Man starting at 9pm

For more information contact 845-1515

FRIDAY NIGHT FEBRUARY 14

IN THE MSC

IN THE BASEMENT 9PM TILL 1AM

Free Bowling Free Billiards

Free Dance Dance Revolution

Free Popcorn & Soda

Arts & Crafts

Must Show A&M ID at Check-in locations around the MSC