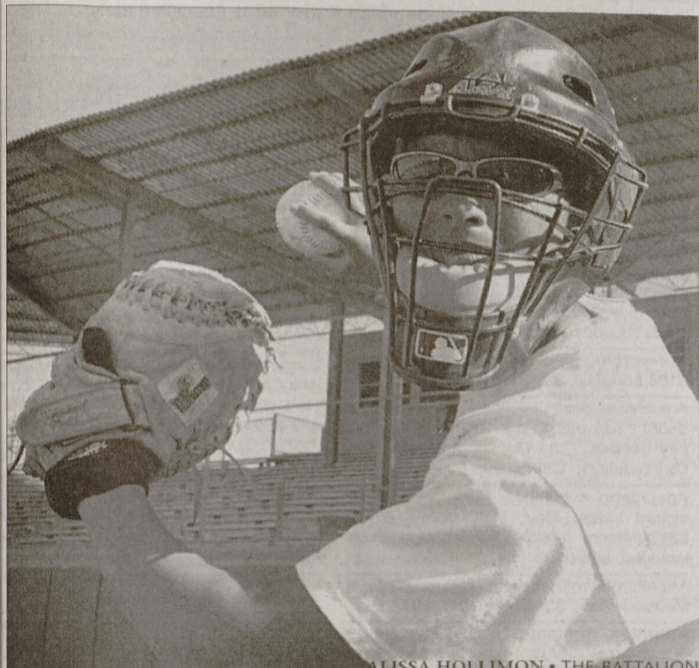


SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 7 • Wednesday, April 9, 2003

Aggies thrive off senior catcher's leadership



LISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Senior Selena Collins sets up to throw behind homeplate. Collins is currently on the watchlist for the national softball player of the year.

By Pete Burks
THE BATTALION

When Texas A&M senior catcher Selena Collins first stepped onto the playing field as a 4-year-old in Phoenix, Ariz., she was likely unfamiliar with the far-off town of College Station. The term "ACL" was probably as foreign to her as the 2003 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award was. All Collins cared about was getting onto the field, playing hard and winning.

Eighteen years later, Collins has learned very well the significance of all of these terms. However, her approach to the game remains the same as when she first laced up her cleats. For Collins, playing the game is not about accolades or statistics; it is simply about competing to the best of her ability with the

ultimate goal of helping the team win.

Growing up as one of three kids in a tight-knit family, Collins learned from an early age what it meant to compete. Her mother and father, James and Debbie Collins, participated in major collegiate athletics. James Collins played football and Debbie Collins played tennis, each for the University of Northern Arizona. In addition, Collins' siblings were both athletes. Needless to say, Collins' family was the perfect catalyst to give her a thirst for competition.

"Selena has always been competitive, even in elementary school," James Collins said. "She did well in every sport, and she even beat the boys her age. Whether it was volleyball, softball or basketball, she was competitive at every level. We began early on to work with her to kindle her competitive energy in

order to form her into a leader. Overall, one thing is for sure: she hates to lose."

As Collins got older and entered high school, her competitiveness began to yield results. At Deer Valley High School, Collins invested her time heavily into volleyball, basketball and softball, lettering all four years in each sport. However, in her sophomore year of volleyball, Collins' competitiveness and drive were tested, when she tore the ACL ligament in her knee.

No. 18 Texas A&M vs No. 5 Texas
McCombs Field, Austin, Texas 6:30 p.m.

After a lengthy rehabilitation, Collins was ready to play again. As her senior year approached, Collins began thinking of where she would be spending her years as an undergraduate after decid-

ing she wanted to play softball in college. Collins was gaining interest from teams such as Texas Tech and UNLV in addition to A&M. But, as signing day approached, fate took another strange twist. In the midst of another successful year in basketball, Selena tore her ACL again, this time in her other knee.

At this point, many other college coaches might have abandoned her, but A&M Head Coach Jo Evans did no such thing. Upon visiting A&M, one of the things Collins liked the most was the family atmosphere that she found in and amongst her future teammates and coaches. Evans' continued commitment to Collins only proved that the family atmosphere she saw was not a façade.

"By the time I had torn my second ACL, I had already com-

See Collins on page 9

Burk plans to appeal Augusta protest ruling

By Paul Newberry
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Martha Burk criticized a judge who barred her group from protesting at the front gate of Augusta National, saying Tuesday that "party revelers are taking precedence over legitimate protesters."

Burk, who wants Augusta National Golf Club to admit its first female member, plans to appeal two separate rulings by U.S. District Judge Dudley H. Bowen Jr. "I think it's clear they acted in the

best interests of the city and the club rather than the best interests of the First Amendment," Burk said in a telephone interview.

Burk, working with the Georgia chapter of the ACLU, will ask a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn Bowen's rulings before her scheduled Masters protest.

Time is drawing short. The tournament begins Thursday, and Burk's group is planning to protest during the third round Saturday.

"I'm a little surprised," Burk said. "I didn't think they would be so blatant acting in the club's interest and

not the public interest."

Burk wants to protest outside the main entrance of the club, believing that would give her cause maximum exposure. But the sheriff, citing safety concerns, said her group will be restricted to a site about a half-mile away.

City attorney Jim Wall praised the rulings.

"Certainly we are pleased the court upheld the validity of the ordinance and the validity of decisions the sheriff made as far as public safety issues," Wall said.

Sheriff Ronald Strength, who has broad authority over public protests,

said there's too much traffic in front of the club during the tournament to ensure safe protests.

Strength told Burk and other groups they must gather at a 5.1-acre site - nearly a half-mile from the gate.

A group headed by the Rev. Jesse Jackson also has been approved for a second site even further away from the club's main entrance.

The judge called the area outside Augusta National "profoundly congested" during the Masters and said allowing protesters to congregate outside the gate presents "a realistic, plausible, even probable potential for some accidental injury."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Aggies shutout by No. 1 Rice

After a successful weekend against Oklahoma, the No. 17 Texas A&M baseball team was unable to maintain its momentum against the No. 1 Rice University Owls.

The Aggies (26-11, 7-5 Big 12) fell to the Owls (33-1, 12-0 WAC), 8-0. Rice quickly jumped out to a two-run lead in the bottom of the first inning and remained effective offensively.

Rice sophomore Wade Townsend (5-0) struck out 10 and allowed only three hits through 8 innings pitched for the win.

With the victory, Rice extended its national-best winning streak to 30 games.

The Aggies return to action on Friday when they travel to Manhattan, Kan., for a three-game series with Kansas State University. Friday's game is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m.

Spend this Parents' Weekend with some of Texas A&M's most talented students...

MSC Variety Show



Hosted by

FREUDIAN
slip

❖ **This Friday!** ❖
April 11th, 7:30 pm
Rudder Auditorium
Tickets \$8 at MSC Box Office

Performing:

Apotheosis
Big Man on a Little Bike
Bobby Mayes on the
Hammered Dulcimer
Free Parking
Kyle "Abbott" Carter &
Joey "Costello" Rigney

Percussion Studio
Philippine Students
Association
Showtime Nate Rogers &
the Vagabond Troupe
Tuesday's Anthem
♦ Special Appearance by
Ballet Folklorico



2003

LONE STAR SALOON

presents
The Grand Opening of TEASERS
the hottest dance club in B/CS
THURSDAY NIGHT
Doors open at 8 p.m.
featuring
PENNY ANYTHING
single shot drinks, longnecks and drafts 8-10
One cover gets you into both clubs!!

FRIDAY NIGHTS IN APRIL

LONE STAR SALOON
presents **THE BEST LIVE COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE BRAZOS VALLEY!!**
1600 S. College, Bryan • 779-3911
(3 miles north of A&M on South College)

\$2.00 OFF COVER
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
WITH STUDENT, FACULTY OR STAFF ID