

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Hedberg stems from tennis roots

By Blake Kimzey
THE BATTALION

Most tennis players aren't born with a doubles partner. For that matter, most people aren't born into a family of tennis players spanning three generations. Yet, when senior Ashley Hedberg came into the world, this was her reality. The Hedberg family tree branches off into tennis rackets.

Growing up in Austin made it easy for Ashley to get hooked on tennis. In fact, it was easy for Ashley and her twin sister, Lindsey, to spend countless hours hitting with each other, surrounded by parents and grandparents who not only encouraged their talent, but shared a mutual love for the game.

"Tennis was the easiest sport to get into growing up," Ashley said. "We just played for fun at the beginning; our mom said she wasn't prepared for us to be good. She didn't want to put that much pressure on us."

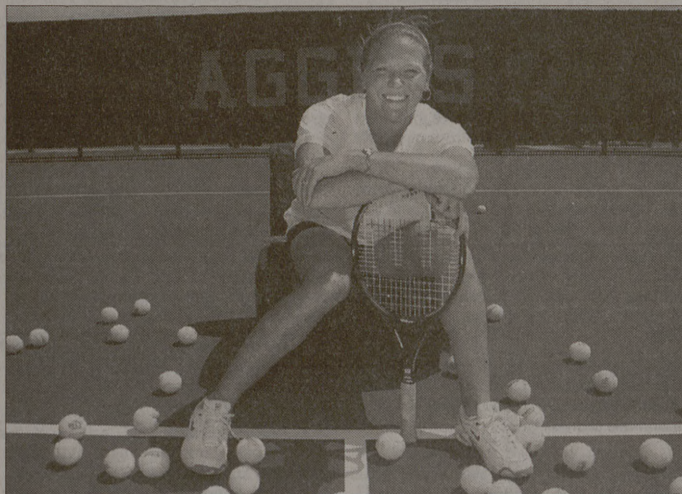
It wasn't long before it was apparent that Ashley could be more than just a casual player.

Ashley, as early as 5 years old, honed a passion and a spirited drive for the game that she could share with her sister. Dawn Hedberg says her twin daughters had an advantage because they were inseparable on the court.

"When the girls were 11, they figured out that they were in charge of what happened on the tennis court and they could control what happened to them in their lives," Dawn said. "They started to play very often and competitively. One advantage they had was they could always go hit together."

After a few years of hitting together and with their mother, at 16, Ashley and Lindsey decided to be proactive about their ability and take lessons from a real coach at a tennis ranch in New Braunfels. Even when tennis took a competitive turn, it was always for the fun of playing, the way it had always been in their family.

"I guess this is when we both got serious on a national level," Lindsey said. "We took lessons for the next couple of years, and



The Aggies' only senior, Ashley Hedberg, hails from a family of tennis fans.

that is when we really started to excel and began to keep a solid hold on our 1 and 2 rankings."

After discovering an aggressive fire that fueled her fervor for tennis, Ashley continued to grow as a player, and the prospect of following in her mother's footsteps and playing in college became a tangible reality. Ashley was recruited by a host of

schools, including Texas A&M, but chose to attend and play tennis for the University of New Mexico her freshman year.

While Ashley headed just a state away, Lindsey departed for San Diego State University in California. Having chosen separate schools and being apart for

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A&M opens tourney

By Blake Kimzey
THE BATTALION

After the dust settled on the final day of the season for the Texas A&M women's tennis team, it found itself sharing the Big 12 conference title with Baylor University. The No. 26 Aggies (17-9, 9-2 Big 12) completed an Easter weekend sweep of the University of Kansas and Kansas State University on the road, downing each 7-0.

A&M needed the chips to fall into place with Baylor (11-11, 9-2 Big 12) and the University of Texas (10-13, 8-3 Big 12) losing their final matches of the season for the Aggies to pull even with the Bears atop the Big 12 standings.

Baylor lost to Oklahoma State University (14-6, 10-3 Big 12), 4-3, and the Longhorns fell to the University of Missouri (14-6, 6-5 Big 12), 4-3, opening the door for the Aggies to share top honors in the Big 12.

"One of our big goals was to peak at the end of the year, and

the last week of the season we did that," said A&M Head Coach Bobby Kleinecke. "We didn't win this title the easy way, but they kept their heads up during the tough times and continued to work harder and believe in themselves and their teammates. I am so proud of them."

With identical 9-2 records going into the Big 12 conference tournament today, Baylor received the top seed by virtue of its 4-3 victory over the Aggies in late March at the A&M Tennis Center.

Much like A&M, Baylor Head Coach Joey Scrivano said his team doesn't have to depend on just one player, which is a luxury heading into the end-of-season tournament for the young Baylor team.

"The strength of our team is that in every match a different combination of players step up, and that is what has kept us competitive in the Big 12 this year," Scrivano said. "This is the time of year where we are continuing

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Women's golf team finishes eighth at Big 12 Tournament

1. Oklahoma State (909)	7. Baylor (947)
2. Missouri (910)	8. Texas A&M (949)
3. Texas (918)	9. Iowa State (960)
4. Oklahoma (923)	10. Colorado (971)
5. Nebraska (926)	11. Kansas (973)
6. Kansas State (936)	12. Texas Tech (978)

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Golf team heads to Big 12 championship

By Marcus White
THE BATTALION

All is quiet on the green. The gallery falls silent as sophomore Roy Mackenzie lines up his putt. The Aggies have been hitting fairways and making shots all day. He draws the club back and hits the ball with a controlled, silky smooth stroke. The ball winds its way to the cup before dropping in the hole with a plunk. The Texas A&M players and coaches shout with excitement, having just become Southwest Conference Champions in men's golf. It is 1987.

Sixteen years have come and gone since the

Aggies last won a conference championship. If the Aggies want to reclaim past golf glories this weekend at the Big 12 Championship in Tulsa, Okla., they will have to slay some fierce Big 12 dragons. The latest polls from Golfweek/Saragin rank 11 of the conference's 12 schools among the top 100 programs in the country, including No. 3 Texas and No. 8 Oklahoma State.

OSU is led by junior sensation Hunter Mahan. The 20-year-old was recently named one of 11 finalists for the prestigious 2003 Ben Hogan Award. More amazingly, Mahan finished 28th in the 2003 Masters' Tournament at legendary Augusta National. He also led the field in driving, besting the likes of Tiger Woods and Phil

Mickelson by averaging 297 yards off the tee.

"Physically, he's ready to play professional golf," said OSU Associate Head Coach Mike McGraw. "He's working out the mental aspects of his game right now. He's got some maturing to do before he's ready to compete at that level, and he knows that."

As a team, McGraw said the Cowboys are focused on keeping the Big 12 championship title in Oklahoma at the end of the day.

"We're going there trying to win. That's the main goal," McGraw said. "Anything short of

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