

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 1B • Friday, April 25, 2003



ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Junior **Lindsay Wilhelmson** pitches during her one-hit, complete game shutout Thursday against the Baylor Bears at the Aggie Softball Complex.

Ags travel to Norman

By Pete Burks
THE BATTALION

As the season winds down for the No. 19 Texas A&M softball team, the competition and the pressure to win increases.

The Aggies seemingly have saved the best teams for last on their schedule as this week alone they have faced No. 3 Texas, Baylor and No. 5 Oklahoma. On Saturday and Sunday, the Aggies (33-16, 9-6 Big 12) will head up to Norman, Okla. to finish the season against the Sooners in a game that has Big 12 tournament implications. The Aggies are in a tight race with the Nebraska Cornhuskers for the fifth seed in the tournament, and a couple of wins against the Sooners would certainly help their cause.

For Aggie sophomore second baseman Adrian Gregory, the most important thing for the Aggies to do this weekend in a tough environment is to simply

play their game. "They are always good and it is tough to play away games against OU," Gregory said. "It would be huge to come out of this weekend with a couple of wins for Big 12 tournament purposes. We just need to go up there and play our game, and then we'll see what happens."

In the Aggies' matchup last night against Baylor (28-25, 2-13 Big 12), junior Lindsay Wilhelmson threw a one-hit shutout, allowing only one walk and recording three strikeouts.

The Aggie offense collected eight hits in the contest, yet could only manage to put two runs across the plate against the last-place Bears at the Aggie Softball Complex.

Senior Crystal Martin went two for three in the game and drove in the team's first run in the second inning, giving Wilhelmson all of the breathing room she would need.

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A&M kicks off series with Mizzou

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

The No. 13 Texas A&M baseball team will face one of its toughest challenges of the season this weekend when it travels to Missouri to face the No. 19 Tigers.

Missouri is a half game behind the Aggies in the Big 12 standings, making this weekend's series extremely crucial for two teams that are trying to make a run for the Big 12 title.

A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson said he knows it is important to maintain steam in conference play.

"We need to keep momentum on our side," Johnson said. "We're playing as a team but we're playing pretty good too. It should be a great matchup."

The Tigers (27-13, 11-6 Big 12) have lost six of their last nine games but lit up the scoreboard last weekend in Waco against Baylor. After dropping game one of the series, the Tigers outscored the

Bears in an offensive showcase 23-18 on Saturday and added another 12 runs on Sunday in a 12-8 win to take the series, two games to one.

However, the Tigers dropped their last game at Southwest Missouri State 2-1. The Tigers bats were silenced against Southwest Missouri and were unable to back up the solid pitching performance from four different Tiger pitchers.

The Tigers are led by Jayce Tingler's .373 batting average and 38 RBIs. Missouri has three players with six home runs a piece, providing the power offensively.

Defensively, the Tigers don't have a standout pitcher and have a team ERA of 4.53.

With the exception of their 2-1 loss this week, the Tigers have used offensive explosions to win most of their games this season.

While the Tigers have lost six of their last nine games, the Aggies (33-12, 12-6 Big 12) have won nine of their last 11 games and are coming off a 9-3 win

against Sam Houston State Tuesday night.

A&M junior left fielder and reliever Scott Beerer has been the life of the A&M team this season. Beerer was three for four against the Bearkats with a three-run home run and four RBIs.

Beerer leads the team with 40 RBIs and 93 total bases and is tied for the team lead with junior center fielder Justin Ruggiano with seven home runs after his three-run blast on Tuesday.

Beerer has also been the Aggies' top reliever this season with eight saves, 36 strikeouts and a 1.32 ERA in 34 innings pitched.

"We're excited to go up there (to Missouri)," Beerer said. "It's going to be a challenge for us, and we're excited that we're playing great ball right now."

Beerer added that the teams that win championships finish strong at the end of the season.

Game one is Friday night at 6:30, game two is Saturday at 2 p.m. and the series wraps up on Sunday at 1 p.m.

Men's tennis team to face Red Raiders

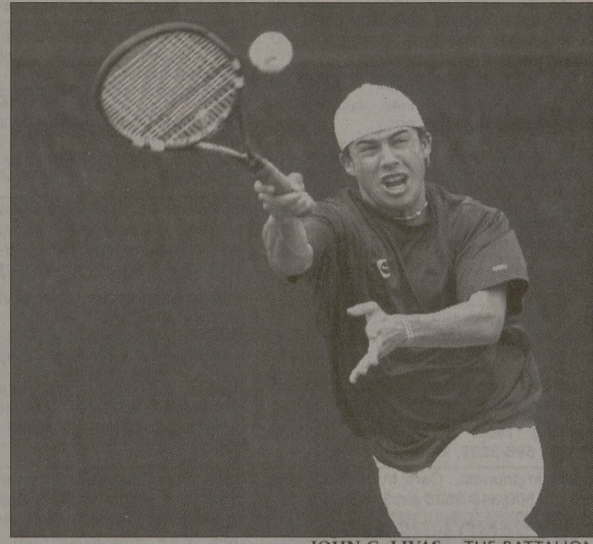
By Jeff Allen
THE BATTALION

A late string of losses kept the No. 11 Texas A&M men's tennis team from achieving all of its goals during the regular season. The Aggies (20-8, 4-3 Big 12) failed to steal the 2003 Big 12 regular season championship, dropping their final two matches by the slimmest of margins to No. 5 Baylor and No. 13 Texas. Both losses came by 4-3 scores, and both resulted from crucial losses at the doubles point.

Fortunately for the Aggies, none of that matters. The team is set to kick off the second season with a clean slate Friday against Texas Tech in the Big 12 Tournament held this year in Kansas City, Mo.

"It's never fun losing and the disappointment was that we thought we had a chance to win the Big 12," said Texas A&M Head Coach Tim Cass. "(But) we didn't and now we have a fresh start and a new season in a way in the tournament, and it's a different approach."

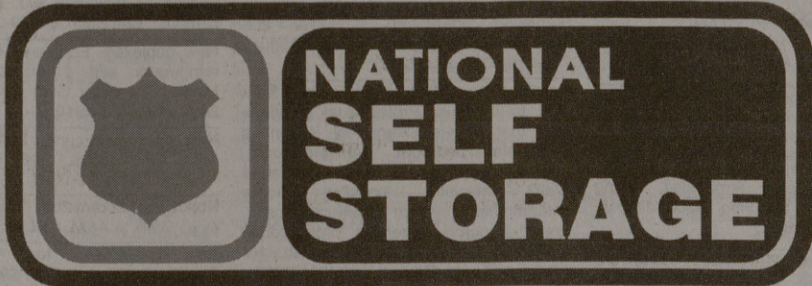
The Big 12 Tournament, hosted this year by the University of Missouri, consists of a single elimination bracket featuring all eight teams that compete in men's tennis in the Big 12. The teams are seeded according to their finish in the regular season. The Aggies finished fourth in the regular season standings, following losses to Oklahoma State, Baylor and Texas, which means they will face the No. 5 seed, Texas Tech. The Aggies faced the Red Raiders (13-7, 3-4 Big 12) earlier in the season at home, defeating them in



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore **Lester Cook** launches a serve against TCU last week. Cook and the Aggies will face Texas Tech Friday.

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