

Aggies finish tournament with 2-1 mark

By Jeff Allen
THE BATTALION

The University of Southern California came sauntering into G. Rollie White Coliseum this weekend for the McDonald's Texas A&M Invitational carrying with them a perfect record.

The Women of Troy had put down their first six opponents in a flawless 18 games and were looking to extend their dominance over Centenary, Southwest Missouri State and the Aggies, who were making their first appearance on their home court in the 2003 season.

The Trojans didn't break stride. They swept through SMSU and Centenary with few hassles, but Saturday night, the Aggies had hopes of changing that.

"No one in the nation has taken a game off of them yet," said A&M coach Laurie Corbelli. "We were hoping to be the first."

The Aggies, who finished the tournament 2-1, did all they could in the first game, stretching the No. 1 Women of Troy to the brink in front of a raucous, record setting home crowd of 2,846, the largest to witness a match at G. Rollie against a team other than the University of Texas. The Aggies stretched to a 24-22 lead before USC made its move.

"That was a very well-played game of volleyball by A&M," said USC coach Mick Haley. "That was championship division volleyball. They caused us a lot of trouble, but our kids were very patient and hung in there."

The Women of Troy indeed did hang in and eventually grabbed the first game from the

Aggies 30-27. From there things came a bit unraveled for the Aggies. Thanks in part to what Corbelli said could be "the toughest (serving) we'll see all year" by USC senior April Ross, the Aggies lost their feet in the second game.

"April's serve was really tough to receive," said junior Melissa Munsch. "We had a little problem and got a little shook up from it."

A&M hit at a .057 clip in the game, especially having trouble with the Trojan serve.

"We were able to drive them back and to drive them out of their comfort zone," Haley said.

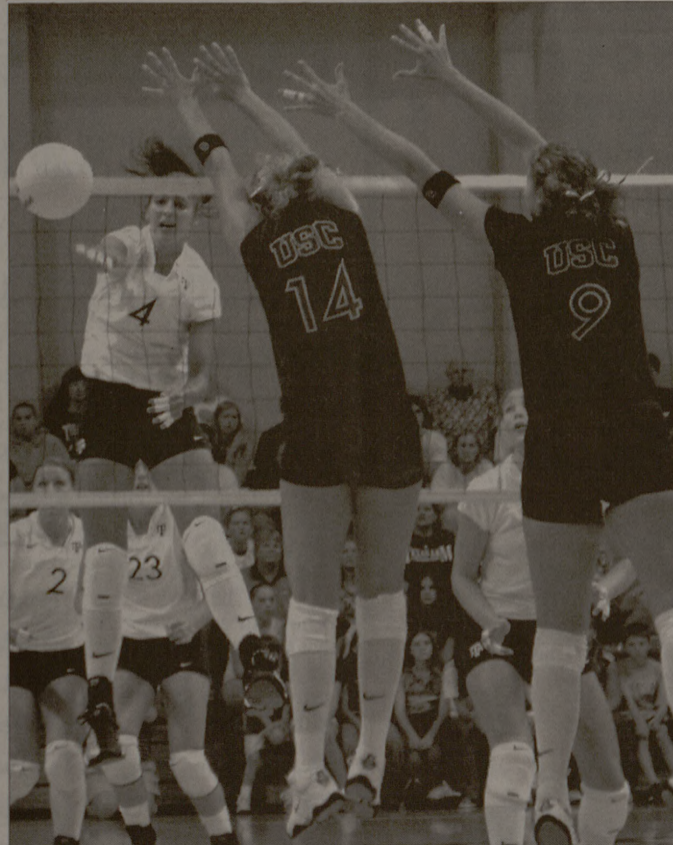
After the disappointing second game, the Aggies recovered a bit in the third but were unable to catch USC. The Trojans (9-0), defeated the Aggies (7-2) in straight games, 30-27, 30-15, 30-22.

Friday night in the home opener things looked even bleaker for the Aggies. The team came out flat against a strong Southwest Missouri State team, and the Bears capitalized, winning the first two games and sprinting out to a 27-20 lead in the third, a lead that statistically would seem insurmountable during rally scoring.

But the Aggies were to have none of that.

Facing the possibility of the first home opening loss in the Corbelli era, the Aggies went on a nine point run in the third game to capture a 29-27 lead before going on to win the third game 34-32.

Led by a rare triple double by Munsch, including a season and career high with 14 blocks, and by sophomore Laura Jones' career highs in kills and digs, the Aggies turned the



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's Melissa Munsch hits past USC's April Ross and Emily Adams on Saturday. The Aggies lost in three games to the top-ranked Trojans.

match around.

They were sparked by fresh legs off the bench from junior Carrie Moreira and sophomores Carrie Kelly and Jayna Baker.

The Aggies took the fourth game going away 30-20 and carried momentum into the fifth, grabbing a quick lead and holding on for a 15-12 win, claiming the match.

"I can't think of many matches like this, much less an opener," Corbelli said. "A lot of teams would have given up, a lot of teams would have stayed dis-

organized and in a confused manner. This team decided to slowly work their way toward changing that."

The Aggies won their second match Saturday against Centenary in straight sets, ending the tournament with a 2-1 record. USC claimed the tournament championship with a 3-0 record. Jones continued her streak of All-Tournament teams, being named for the third week in a row. She was joined by Munsch and by senior Beth Skypala.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Texans return to old ways in loss

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A week after upsetting the Miami Dolphins, the Houston Texans reverted to resembling the second year expansion team they are, losing Sunday 31-10 to New Orleans.

Quarterback David Carr

was 17-of-36 for 123 yards, had two interceptions and was sacked five times. Carr, who for the first time in his NFL career was sack free against Miami, was pressured constantly by the Saints and hit at least 10 times.

"That was the most physical game I've played since I've been here," Carr said.

Overtime

Continued from page 5

the shot wide at the last second for North Carolina.

With three minutes remaining in the match, senior midfielder Kristen Strutz played a serve into the box that was headed by Davis over the crossbar once again.

In overtime, North Carolina gained possession and played the ball down the right sideline

to senior forward Alyssa Ramsey who then made a sensational cross while sliding. The cross sailed out of reach of Spisak and onto the awaiting head of freshman forward Libby Guess who buried the ball into the back of the net to give the Tar Heels the win.

"I thought we stepped up today," Spisak said. "This early in the season, and as young as we are, we have a lot of good stuff to look forward to."

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