

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 1B • Thursday, September 25, 2003

A&M outlasts Colorado in 5

By Pete Burks
THE BATTALION

After taking No. 7 Nebraska to the wire in Lincoln last week, the Texas A&M volleyball team was bound and determined not to let another close one slip through their collective fingers. Facing a very green but tenacious Colorado Buffalo team, the Aggies fought their way to victory in a back-and-forth, five game match.

The Buffaloes came charging out of the gates in game one with a blistering .341 hitting percentage compared to a woeful .179 for the No. 25 Aggies, leading to a 30-24 Colorado win. However, the Aggies were not deterred by defeat in game one, coming back to win two close games in a row (30-28, 30-28) before Colorado forced a decisive game five with a 30-26 win in game four.

Similar to the other four games Wednesday, the fifth game came down to the wire. Only with some crucial serves and timely blocks were the Aggies able to pull it out in the end. The Aggies (9-3, 1-1 Big 12) were outthit again by the Buffaloes .290 to .209, and when the two teams switched sides, the Buffs had the upper hand, leading 8-7.

Unfortunately for Colorado (9-4, 1-2 Big 12), A&M sophomore outside hitter Laura Jones helped put the game on ice with some well-placed serves, leading the Aggies to an adrenaline-pumping 15-13 victory.

"We were extremely pleased to pull out the victory," said Aggie coach Laura Corbelli. "This win was huge for us, especially because we won at home. I felt we came out more fired up in the fifth game because we didn't want this one to get away. Laura (Jones) went up and powered the ball, and it really helped us slow down their offense."

Perhaps the catalyst for the Aggie win was junior middle blocker Kendra Felder. Felder had a career night, scoring a career high 16 kills with an incredible .500 hitting percentage.

"I was furious when we lost the first game," Felder said. "I felt that the team was looking for a spark, and so I figured, 'why not me?' From that point on, I just poured my heart



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Texas A&M outside hitter Carol Price (second from left) celebrates with her teammates after a kill in game one Wednesday night. The win for the Aggies was their first in the Big 12 and ninth this season.

into it, and luckily, we came out on top."

As for Colorado, the close loss no doubt stung. However, on the bright side for the Buffaloes, they picked up some much-needed road game experience in a hostile environment. The story of the night for Colorado was the play of sophomore middle blocker Allie Griffin who was a one-woman juggernaut, recording 27 kills and a hefty .351 hitting percentage.

For Colorado coach Pi'i Aiu, taking the Aggies to a fifth game regardless of the outcome was encouraging due to the number of young players on his team.

"One good thing about youth is that young players are too stupid to know that a place like A&M is a very tough environment," Aiu said. "We've done a good job playing through the middle of games. We just have to get our kids to play to the end as well."

Nebraska hopes to continue rolling

After a wild weekend in which four top-10 teams went down in the same day, including two against the non-BCS Mid American

Conference, the underdogs of college football have served notice to the BCS big boys that anybody is fair game.

When No. 15 Nebraska cruises into Hattiesburg, Miss., tonight, Southern Mississippi will be looking for the same result.

Nebraska will be riding a wave of confidence after beginning its season 3-0, including big wins against Oklahoma State and Penn State. Thanks to the resurgence of its legendary Blackshirt defense, Nebraska is giving up a measly eight points per game to lead the nation in points allowed, and has only allowed an impressive total of 190 rushing yards in three games combined.

Led by junior linebacker and Butkus award candidate Barrett Ruud, the Blackshirts will be looking to continue their dominance by shutting down the air attack of Southern Mississippi.

However, Nebraska has had the added advantage of playing at home in front of a supportive home crowd. M.M. Roberts Stadium in Hattiesburg will be anything but friendly.

With the expectation of a raucous capacity crowd of 33,000, Nebraska should be well aware of the danger it

could face at Southern Miss. Although the Cornhuskers won their first three games, their offense has resembled "The Little Engine That Could"

rather than a freight train that steam-rolls opponents as it has in years past.

It could be a recipe for disaster if quarterback Jammal Lord and company can't get it going because Southern Miss has a history of stingy defenses, and this year is no different.

With senior linebacker and leading tackler Rod Davis (34 tackles, 3 tackles for loss) leading the way, there is no doubt the Golden Eagles will be out for BCS blood with a side order of national respect.

Texas Tech looks for improvement versus Ole Miss

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the state of Mississippi, Texas Tech (2-1) will march into Oxford to take on the Ole Miss Rebels (2-1) in a battle of high-octane offenses at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

The Red Raiders will take the field with new senior signal caller B.J. Symons at the helm. Last weekend against a top-25 North Carolina State team, Symons torched the Wolfpack secondary to the tune of 586 yards passing to set a new Big 12 record. However, as the saying goes, defense wins championships, as evidenced by Tech's

See Big 12 on page 3B



BIG XII NOTEBOOK
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