

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 7 • Friday, October 10, 2003

## STAFF PREDICTIONS



## BU bringing hot streak to Kyle

By Michael Crow  
THE BATTALION

**Baylor 32, A&M 28** - This is Baylor's chance to end the streak while the Aggies are down. If it doesn't happen this year, it's gonna be a while.

- Jeff Allen (1-1)

**A&M 24, Baylor 23** - The Aggies aren't that great but Baylor is worse. It will be a close game, but this is as good a game as any for A&M to finally come together.

- True Brown (0-2)

**A&M 20, Baylor 14** - The Aggie defense decides to actually show up on Saturday and not be resigned to a humiliating defeat at the hands of a team A&M has not lost to in more than 20 years.

- Pete Burks (1-1)

**A&M 27, Baylor 13** - Baylor gave up 52 points to UNT in its only road game this year, and most of the Baylor players were teething last time they won at Kyle Field.

- Michael Crow (1-1)

**A&M 21, Baylor 17** - History is on the Aggies' side but they will have difficulty stopping Baylor's rushing attack before escaping with the win.

- Kyle Davoust (1-1)

**Baylor 28, A&M 14** - Aggie defense still too banged up even for the likes of Baylor.

- Blake Kimzey (2-0)

**A&M 31, Baylor 17** - Nothing like Baylor for the Aggies to get back on track.

- Troy Miller (0-2)

**A&M 27, Baylor 13** - The Bears' offense, while impressive last week, looks like Pop Warner compared to Texas Tech's aerial attack.

- Rob Phillips (1-1)

**Baylor 31, A&M 24** - Aggie defense continues sluggish play and the Bears are riding high. The 18-year streak ends Saturday.

- Dallas Shipp (1-1)

Following a blowout loss in Lubbock last week, the Texas A&M football team is preparing to meet yet another Big 12 rival garnering its share of headlines.

This week's opponent defeated reigning Big 12 North champion Colorado last week, currently boasts a three-game winning streak and features the conference's leading rusher.

No, it's not Texas. It's not Oklahoma either. Saturday, the Aggies host none other than the Baylor Bears.

Baylor is entering College Station fresh off an improbable 42-30 home win over the aforementioned Colorado Buffaloes. The win gave the Bears a 3-2 overall record and a 1-0 mark in conference play. It also catapulted them into the national spotlight, earning National Team of the Week honors from the Football Writer's Association of America.

"That was a very impressive win," said A&M coach Dennis Franchione. "They played very well on offense. I thought their defense played solid football. They just keep playing and keep doing things and don't make too many mistakes."

Baylor quarterback Aaron Karas said while others might have been surprised by the win, he and his teammates were not.

"We definitely knew it was a possibility," he said. "I think we should probably be 5-0 right now. I think in our first two games, we pretty much beat ourselves; we didn't get beat by our opponent. So, we knew we could compete."

The Bears' three wins already match their season total from a year ago, when they finished 3-9 overall and 1-7 in conference. Since then, Baylor has replaced coach Kevin Steele with former Kentucky skipper Guy Morriss, and apparently, a shift in attitude was also a part of the team's recent makeover.

"(Morriss) brings a swagger to us, and I think it rubbed off on everybody," Karas said. "Everybody's just a lot more confident going into the games."

Karas and running back Rashad Armstrong have been the catalysts for Baylor's recent offensive success. The duo accounted for five combined touchdowns against Colorado, doing most of its damage in the second half.

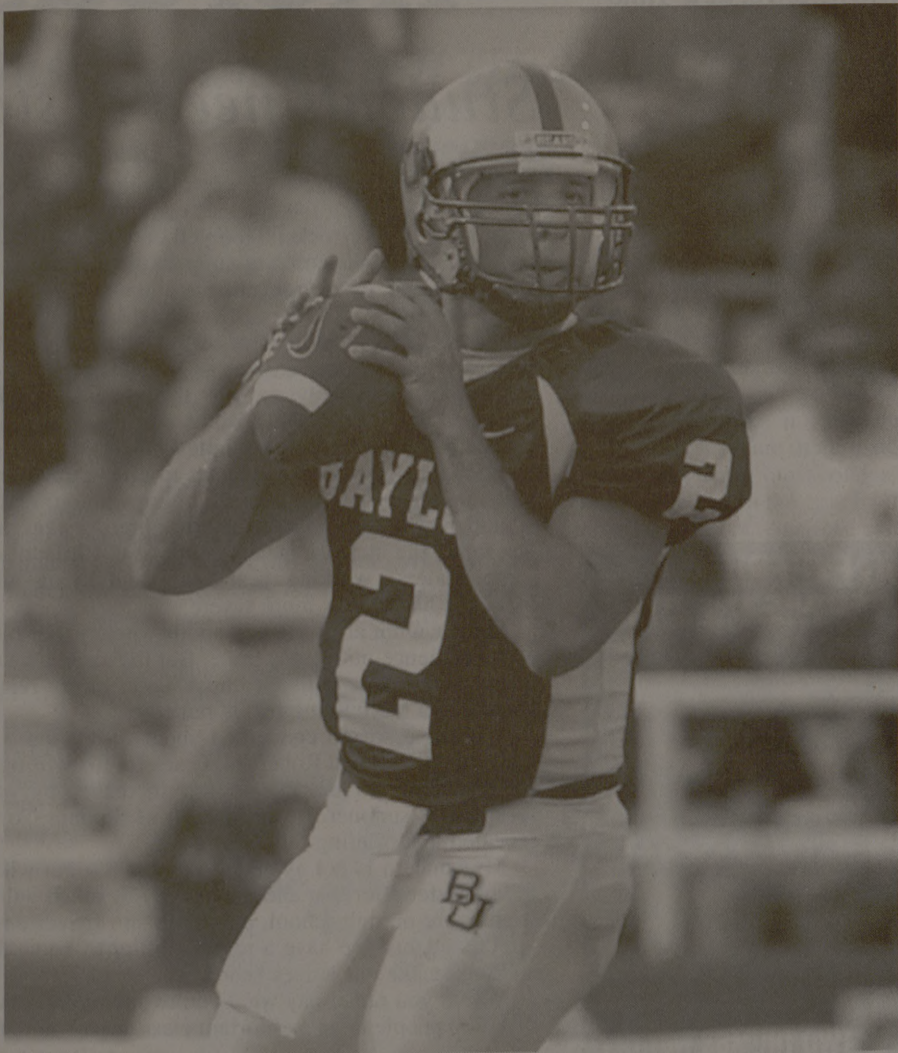


PHOTO COURTESY OF BAYLOR MEDIA RELATIONS

Baylor quarterback Aaron Karas drops back to pass during last season's A&M-Baylor game. Baylor shocked Colorado last week and is bringing a three-game winning streak to Kyle Field on Saturday.

Armstrong's 37 carries were the second most in Baylor history, and his 166 rushing yards added to the senior's conference-leading average per game (117.8).

"(Armstrong) is so consistent," Karas said. "He does everything we ask him to. He runs, he blocks. He fights for those extra yards, so he helps us a lot."

The Baylor defense appears to be finding its rhythm as well. Since surrendering 52 points to North Texas in early September, the Bears have held opponents to an average of 12.3 points per game.

The defensive unit proved its worth

against Colorado on several crucial occasions, creating four turnovers, mounting a late goal-line stand and scoring a defensive touchdown.

Saturday's game marks the 100th meeting in the Battle of the Brazos series. The Aggies lead the series 61-29-9 and have not fallen to Baylor since 1985. Still, if their recent play is any indication, Karas and his teammates are not all that concerned with history.

"It's a different team and a different group of guys," Karas said. "(History) really has nothing to do with anything. That's pretty much the way I look at it."

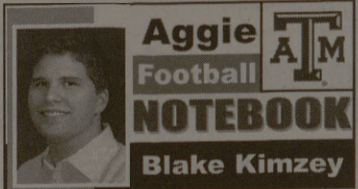
## A&M defense must improve in order for Ags to win

After enduring a thorough drubbing from the Texas Tech equivalent of an aerial blitzkrieg, the Aggies are in desperate need of a good showing at Kyle Field Saturday against Baylor.

The Aggie defense is desirous of a good performance against a seemingly overwhelmed Baylor team after giving up more than 30 points in three consecutive games, all losses. If anything, the former Wrecking Crew has played with the intensity of a Lionel Richie love song instead of the hardcore, kill-anything-that-moves mentality of Old Army lore.

The loss at Tech only emphasized some of the glaring weaknesses of the Aggie defense, namely pass defense. Currently, the Aggies (2-3, 0-1 Big 12) stand at a paltry 91st in passing defense, giving up an

average of 251 yards per game. Although Baylor (3-2, 1-0 Big 12) is not known for its passing, quarterback Aaron Karas threw for three touchdowns against what was supposed to be a tough Colorado defense during last week's win.



### Running away

A&M's rushing defense has fared no better, ranking 87th nationally while giving up an average of 170 yards per game. Though the Aggies held Tech to a respectable 64 rushing yards on 22 attempts, all is not what it seems. Tech's offense is predicated on passing, so running the ball is not what it does best. Baylor, on the other hand, got a career day from tailback Rashad Armstrong who ran for 167 yards and two touchdowns to help the Bears pull the upset.

Overall in games this year against

Virginia Tech, Utah and Pittsburgh, which all feature a strong running game, the Aggies have gone 1-2, which includes a goal-line stand against Utah. Lastly, having a member of the secondary as the leading tackler on defense will always spell trouble.

Although sophomore safety Jaxson Appel is having a monster season averaging 12.6 tackles a game, his numbers do not bode well for the front seven. In other words, opposing backs and receivers are getting past the front seven and into the secondary too often, where Appel has helped to corral them. However, Appel can't do it all, and if the Aggies want to improve, they will have to shore up a porous defensive front seven even if it means doing it without starting senior middle linebacker Jared Morris.

### Running resurgence

In the midst of all the negative things

that have happened in the past three games, the Aggie running game has been resurrected, led by redshirt freshman tailback Courtney Lewis. Against the Red Raiders, Lewis ran for a tough 91 yards and scored two touchdowns. Even though his total did not break the 100-yard mark, it is still an impressive number, considering he averaged 5.7 yards per carry.

If this is a sign of things to come, the Aggies' performance and record would stand to improve drastically. The Aggie formula for success has traditionally included establishing the running game which would give quarterback Reggie McNeal and company time to wear down the opposing defense, something that is crucial against defensive-minded powerhouses like Nebraska and Oklahoma.

A dominating ground game will also give A&M's defense time to rest and be fresh instead of having to stay on the field for more than 80 plays a game.

## Volleyball team looks to continue win streak

By Jeff Allen  
THE BATTALION

The one word surrounding the Texas A&M volleyball team this season has been consistency. The whispers have persisted throughout the ranks as the Aggies have struggled so far this season to string together complete matches, a trend that becomes most evident when the women face tough, nationally ranked competition, much like the teams they will find clumped at the top of the Big 12.

"Our mistakes ended in demise at (Kansas State)," said A&M coach Laurie Corbelli said. "We've already seen it destroy a part of our motivation and drive. It sets us back and makes us question. We are all working hard and identifying the positive."

Wednesday night the No. 24 Aggies (11-5, 3-3) found a shade of what they were looking for when they swept Texas Tech in three games. However, the Aggies were still a bit error prone, committing several service errors and nearly letting the Red Raiders hang around longer than they should have.

Tech had troubles of its own, which helped make up for many Aggie mistakes, but when A&M faces off against the top team in the conference again, those errors could prove far more costly.

"I think we made too many unforced errors (against Tech) with serving and attacking," Corbelli said. "But I think those are a sign of youth, sometimes a lack of being able to concentrate on what you need to be working on that moment, but it's coming."

The Aggies are looking to extend their consistency to all areas of the game when they head to Hilton Coliseum at Iowa State University to face the reenergized Cyclones (9-8, 2-5).

For the first time since the inaugural year of the conference, the Cyclones have won multiple Big 12 matches against Oklahoma and Texas Tech.

The Cyclones were able to dominate the Sooners Wednesday night on their home court in Norman. After controlling the first game, the Sooners were only able to put up 62 points total in the final three en route to the loss. The Cyclones held the Sooners to .062 and .024 hitting percentages in games two and three respectively.

"I think we've been a young team and rebuilding," said Iowa State coach Linda Crum. "Now they are feeling more confident in the Big 12."

The Cyclones were led in the match, as they have been much

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# Texas A&M vs. Baylor

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