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# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Tuesday, October 14, 2003

## Cook, Matijevic win ITA doubles

Staff & Wire  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M tennis standouts Lester Cook and Ante Matijevic teamed up to win the prestigious doubles championship at the Icy Hot/ITA All-American Championships on Sunday at The Champions Club in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Cook, an All-American from Sherman Oaks, Calif., and Matijevic, an All-American from Split, Croatia, are ranked No. 2 nationally and beat the No. 1-ranked tandem in the nation from Rice University in William Barker and Richard Barker, 8-6.

Cook and Matijevic were making their first appearance in the finals after reaching the semifinals last year. It marks the second doubles national championship for A&M since current assistant coach Shuon Madden teamed with Dumitru Caradima in 1999 to win the ITA National Indoor Championship.

The Aggie duo sprinted to a commanding 6-1 lead with two service breaks before the Owls rallied to tie the match at 6-6.

"We got off to a great start and maybe got a little too relaxed and let up a little," Cook said. "It got to six-all and that's when we started to buckle down and played every point hard."

The Aggies held Matijevic's

serve to take a 7-6 lead before breaking the Owls in the deciding game on the fourth match point to win the national title.

"We had broken them early in the match and had the lead in last game," Matijevic said. "We hit some really good returns to win the match."

The Barkers are twins and had won 42 of their last 43 matches dating back to last season.

"It was a big step for us to win the tournament," Matijevic said. "It should give us a lot of confidence for the spring."

With the win, Cook and Matijevic earn an automatic spot into the second national tournament of the season, the Nov. 6 to 9 ITA National Intercollegiate Indoor Championships in Ann Arbor, Mich. The season-ending NCAA Championships in May is the third national tournament of the season.

Two other members of A&M's men's tennis team also fared well over the weekend.

John Nallon and Zack Malmgren finished in second place in the doubles portion of the UTSA/Sonterra Invitational Sunday at the University of Texas at San Antonio Tennis Center.

Nallon, a sophomore from Garland, Texas, and Malmgren, a junior transfer from San Antonio, fell to Baylor's Jason Gould and John Reckeway in the finals, 8-6.

The Aggie duo reached the finals after topping Texas A&M at Corpus Christi's Oscar Roman and Luis Morris in the quarterfinals, 8-6. Then, in the semifinals, Nallon and Malmgren beat Texas' Antonio Ruiz and Andy Mack, 8-6.



COOK

## Blowout shows Ags still in it

Offense starting to find its stride

By Rob Phillips  
THE BATTALION

Teetering at 2-3 after an embarrassing 31-point loss to Texas Tech, the Aggies entered Kyle Field last Saturday at a crossroads — either win and keep things interesting in the Big 12 South, or lose to lowly-but-improving Baylor and watch the Maroon Outs riot in the streets.

Last Saturday's 73-10 flogging of the Bears served notice to fans ready to call it a season: This fledgling Texas A&M team hasn't waved the white flag just yet.

"This was a key game for us knowing that Baylor beat Colorado last week," said senior A&M wide receiver Jamaar Taylor after the game. "This was a big win for us."

The Aggies' lopsided victory was significant in more ways than one. Not only did A&M avoid its second Big 12 South loss to remain in contention for the division title, but both sides of the ball got consistent production for the first time in almost three weeks.

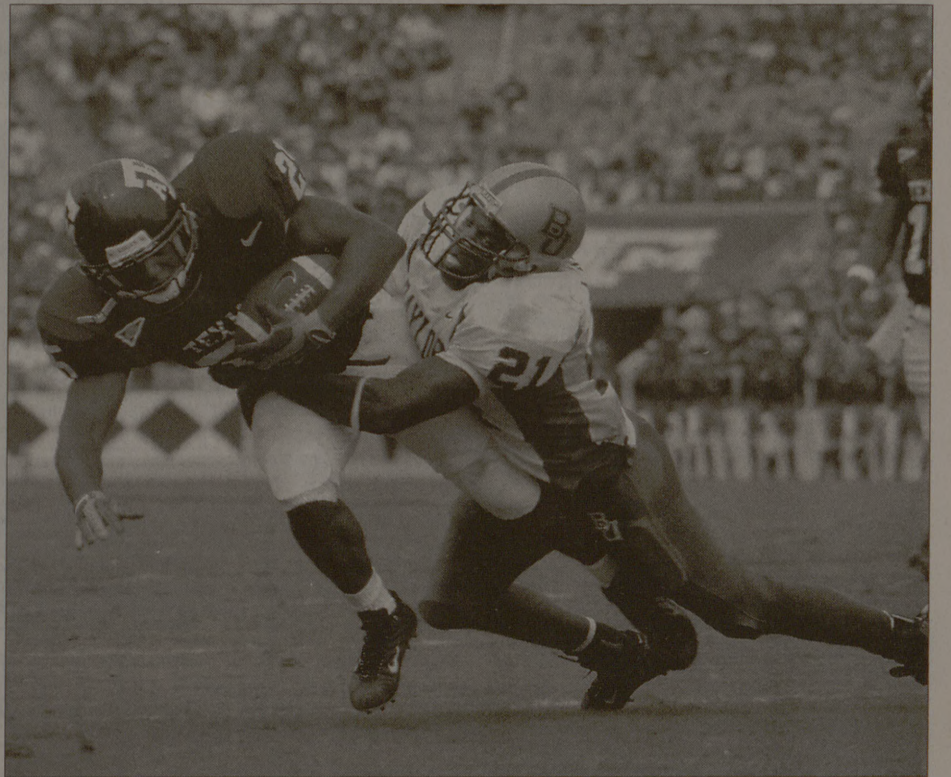
Offensively, A&M's 10 touchdowns against Baylor were its most since 1944.

Sophomore quarterback Reggie McNeal capitalized in the red zone, tossing three touchdown passes and running for two more.

"I don't think there is any way you could have predicted it would be like that," said A&M coach Dennis Franchione during Monday's Big 12 coaches teleconference. "We hadn't scored over 28 points this year offensively and we had been very up and down defensively. I think our offense has gotten a little bit better gradually and has certainly made improvements since the beginning of the year."

After recording 257 yards against Arkansas State to open the season, A&M has averaged 478.4 yards in its past five games.

Against Baylor, the running back platoon



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Texas A&M running back Courtney Lewis fights through a tackle by Baylor's Maurice Lane. A&M's offense has found its feet since the season opener and tallied 719 yards against the Bears last Saturday.

of junior Derek Farmer and freshman Courtney Lewis also became the first pair of A&M backs since 1998 to rush for more than 100 yards in the same game.

The Aggie defense, which had been stripped of "Wrecking Crew" status after allowing at least 30 points the past three games, held Baylor to just 184 total yards and forced three turnovers.

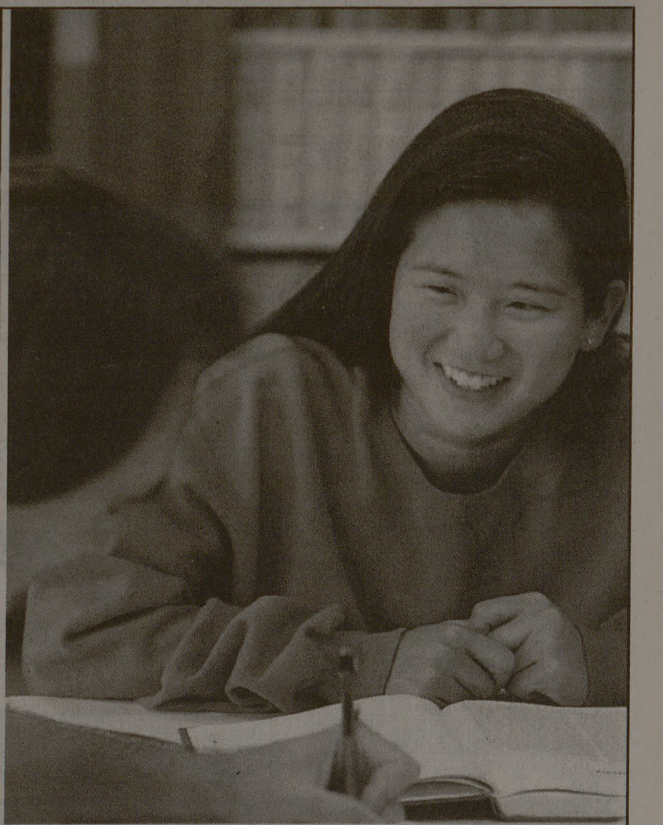
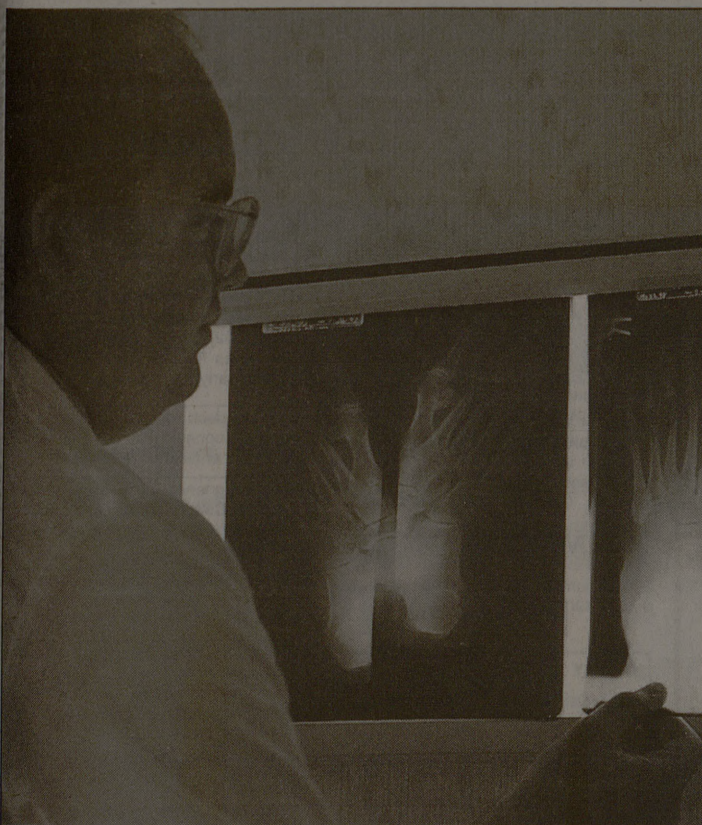
The Aggies will now be saddled with controlling Nebraska quarterback Jammal Lord, who leads the Cornhuskers' option-oriented offense.

"It was good to see our defensive guys take responsibility and step up and play the way they did, so I felt good for them," Franchione said. "(Nebraska's) offense is running the ball well and is very physical.

(Lord) is a physical football player and is hard to bring down, and can withstand the punishment for the number of carries he's getting. He's certainly a guy that can break tackles and make a lot of hard yards after first contact."

The Aggies kept their season meaningful after a convincing victory Saturday, but A&M's schedule only gets tougher. Five of its six remaining games are against Top 25 opponents, starting with No. 18 Nebraska this weekend, something that is quite a fright with Halloween just around the corner.

"We know that our schedule is the toughest in America as we go forward," Franchione said. "We know that we needed something good to happen to give us some confidence going into these last games."



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