

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Wednesday, November 5, 2003

Upset still fresh in A&M, OU's minds

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

Aggies remember the 30-26 upset of No. 1 Oklahoma last season, and the resulting coming-out party of then-freshman quarterback Reggie McNeal. Most Aggies remember his four touchdown passes and 89 yards on the ground.

This year's Oklahoma team remembers too.

"I remember him making a lot of big plays," said Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops. "They made some big plays throwing the football, and he made some big plays, keeping drives alive, running."

McNeal doesn't mind being a marked man to the No. 1 defense in the country, and arguably one of the best in college football history. In fact, he revels in it.

"(Being a marked man)

comes with the position," McNeal said. "It gets me going a little bit, and if we go up there and we do it again, I'll be a marked man for a whole another year."

A year ago the Sooners came into Kyle Field ranked No. 1 in the nation shooting for the Big 12 Championship. A&M came into the game with a two-game losing streak and a 5-4 record.

Then, toward the end of the first quarter, McNeal replaced Dustin Long as quarterback with Oklahoma holding a 10-0 lead. The rest, as they say, is history.

"I knew he could play, but I didn't know if he was ready yet," said junior wide receiver Terrence Murphy. "He went out and showed everyone in the world that he was a great player."

In front of a nation, McNeal

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Ags host Huskers in big game

By Michael Crow
THE BATTALION

Tonight at G. Rollie White Coliseum, the Texas A&M volleyball team will do its best to ignore recent history. On an evening billed as "Maroon Out Big Red Night," the No. 21 Aggies will host a Nebraska Cornhusker team that has won five consecutive Big 12 Championships and upended A&M earlier in the season.

The No. 10 Huskers (20-3, 11-2 Big 12) have established themselves as one of the premier volleyball programs in the country in recent years. From 2000 to 2002, Nebraska went an undefeated 60-0 in the Big 12 Conference. NU also possesses two national titles from the 1995 and 2000 seasons.

Still, this year's program has not quite lived up to Nebraska's ambitious standards. After a hot start, the Huskers were outplayed by Georgia Tech in a mid-September meeting at the NU Coliseum.

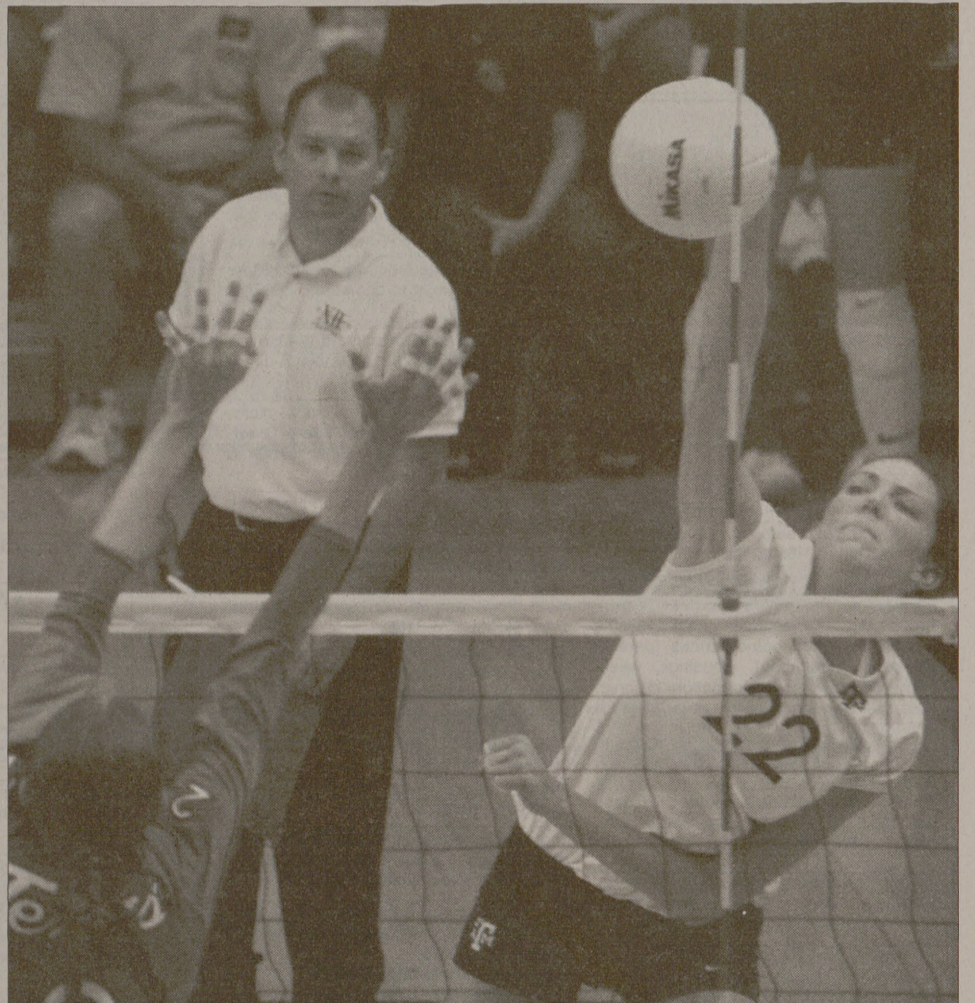
Then, after posting seven consecutive victories, including a 3-2 win over A&M in its conference opener, Nebraska tallied two straight home losses at the hands of Kansas State and Missouri.

Since, the Huskers have gotten back on track and currently own a five-match win streak capped off by a sweep of No. 12 Northern Iowa on Sunday. NIU was the highest-ranked team the Huskers have beaten this year, and it was sophomore outside hitter Jennifer Saleaumua's 18 kills that helped to spark the one-sided victory.

The Huskers' impressive rebound during the last two weeks has given NU coach John Cook reason for optimism amid a brutal conference schedule.

"We had been a little shaky at times," Cook said. "Maybe we've discovered a lineup that will allow us to play at a high level consistently. That means a lot heading into a tough stretch in the Big 12 later this week."

Meanwhile, the Aggies (17-5, 9-3) are riding a seven-match winning streak of their own. Most recently, A&M handed Missouri its first home loss of the season, rallying back from a three-point deficit in the fifth game on Saturday. Sophomore Laura Jones



J.P. BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M sophomore outside hitter **Laura Jones** spikes the ball through the hands of the University of Texas' **Jenny Andrew** on Oct. 24. The No. 21 Aggies host the No. 10 University of Nebraska tonight at 7 p.m.

had a team-high 19 kills, though four Aggies finished in double digits.

The week before, Jones led A&M to a win over conference rival Texas with 15 kills and a .560 hitting percentage. The 2002 AVCA Central Region and Big 12 Conference Freshman of the Year is putting together another strong season.

"(Laura) hits with power and precision," said A&M coach Laurie Corbelli. "She allows us to be creative with our attack

options because she is so capable."

The last time A&M and Nebraska met in late September, Jones and the Aggies took then-No. 8 Nebraska to a fifth game before faltering late in Lincoln. Jones' 23 kills were simply not enough to overcome a late NU rally.

Still, the dramatic Husker victory combined with A&M's success since sets the stage for an intriguing conference meeting.

Tonight's match is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Big East going back to basketball roots

By Jim O'Connell
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The Big East's expansion returns the conference to its roots as a premier basketball league. Football is another story.

Five members of Conference USA moved to the Big East on Tuesday, more than making up for the recent defection of three schools to the Atlantic Coast

Conference when it comes to basketball, but not even coming close to restoring its luster in football.

"We're going to be loaded right now in basketball," Big East commissioner Mike Tranchese said. "I think we're going to get better in football and we'll have to."

Cincinnati, DePaul, Louisville, Marquette and South

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