

Aggies travel to Kansas State

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

In the first two games of Big 12 Conference play, Texas A&M has been close to beating two of the most prominent basketball programs in the nation: Missouri and Kansas.

Kansas State (8-5, 0-2 Big 12) also played Kansas and came close to beating the Jayhawks, but to no avail. More recently, the Wildcats gave up a 16-point second half lead, only to lose by a single point to No. 24 Oklahoma State.

Now A&M (7-6, 0-2) travels to Manhattan, Kan., to face Kansas State Wednesday night in a battle of two teams that feel as if they should have at least one upset win, if not two, under their belts.

"We've come off two of the better teams in the league, and we thought we had chances to win us some ball games, but we didn't get it done," said A&M head coach Melvin Watkins. "I'm sure (Kansas State) will be feeling the same way."

The Aggies are hoping to get senior forward Jesse King back in the lineup after he missed the team's game against Kansas due to an injured foot suffered in practice last week. King is the Aggies' second leading scorer and second leading rebounder, averaging 13 points and 5.8 boards per game.

"He will be day-by-day," Watkins said. "He was pretty sore, and they did a lot of treatment, but he was not ready to go

(against Kansas). I really think we're playing better now, and the kids are getting a little more confidence in our abilities to play against teams, but we surely miss Jesse."

King's return would help ease the pressure off of A&M senior center Andy Slocum, who had a tremendous defensive game against Kansas. Tonight, Slocum will once again face two outstanding post players when he faces Kansas State junior Jeremiah Massey and sophomore Marques Hayden.

Massey leads the Wildcats with 14.3 points a game while contributing 7.7 rebounds per contest. Hayden owns the paint for Kansas State pulling down 8.5 boards per game while averaging 10.4 points.

"I've been playing as hard as I can against every post player I play," Slocum said. "When big men come up against me I want to do the best I can so I can make a good showing."



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See Men on page 2 Senior forward Jesse King dunks over two Ark.-Pine Bluff defenders

Farmer transfers to Stephen F. Austin

By Troy Miller
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Texas A&M football will be without another player next season, as junior running back Derek Farmer was not enrolled Tuesday for the beginning of spring classes.

Farmer will finish his eligibility at Stephen F. Austin University.

"He went through admissions today," said SFA Sports Information Director Rob Meyers. "He is enrolled at SFA."

Farmer will join a team that finished 7-4 in the Southland Conference in the 2003 season.

"We are excited to have someone of Derek's abilities," said SFA head coach Mike Santiago. "He has the potential to add more quality to an already good football team. By coming in this spring, it gives Derek a chance to go through spring practice with us, learn our system and compete."

Farmer started all 12 games for the Aggies in the 2003 season, but his workload was significantly reduced due to the emergence of redshirt freshman running back Courtney Lewis.

With Lewis now the Aggie offense's premiere back, Farmer said he felt he would have a better chance at playing time elsewhere.

"I decided it was a time for a change in my football career," Farmer said. "Stephen F. Austin is a good football program with solid history. I'm looking forward to being able to come over here my senior year and help the team."



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Running back Derek Farmer transferred to Stephen F. Austin

Farmer could not transfer to another Division 1-A school because NCAA rules state that players who transfer from one Division 1-A school to another must sit out a year, and lose that year of eligibility. With only one season of eligibility remaining, Farmer had to seek out a Division 1-AA school such as SFA.

Farmer rushed for 1,582 yards in his three-year career at A&M while scoring 11 touchdowns. In 2003, Farmer carried the ball only 82 times — 90 fewer than in 2002, for 340 yards. Lewis, meanwhile, became the first Aggie back to gain more than 1,000 yards in a season since 1998.

Farmer is the second casualty the Aggies have suffered during the off-season due to transfers. Junior quarterback Dustin Long transferred to Sam Houston State in December.

Women seek first conference win on road

By Brad Bennett
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M women's basketball will look for its first conference victory against No. 14 Colorado tonight in Boulder, Colo.

Tera Bjorklund, Colorado's

6-foot-5-inch center, is the tallest obstacle the Aggies must overcome to grasp their first conference win in five tries. Bjorklund ranks second in the Big 12 scoring, with 19.6 points a game.

"(Bjorklund) will be a WNBA first-round draft choice," said A&M Head Coach

Gary Blair. "They run the triangle offense...it's just very hard because they are completely isolating that 6-5 center."

Blair said his Aggies will try to spread out the Colorado offense to overcome their shortcomings in the paint.

"I will be guarding Bjorklund with a 6-footer. You

don't win a whole lot of battles that way," Blair said. "Unless you are able to force turnovers by pressuring in the ball all over the court and not allowing (Colorado) to get into their sets."

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ROGER CREAGER

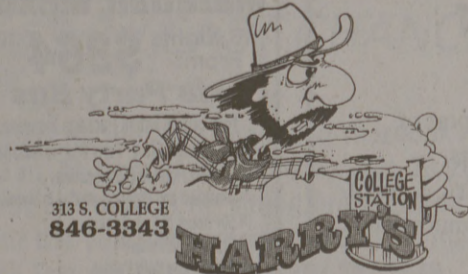
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