

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 1B • Thursday, January 22, 2004

## No. 9 Aggie tennis hits the road

Aggies travel to No. 49 Notre Dame, No. 1 Illinois for weekend showdowns

By Kyle Davoust  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M men's tennis team tested its endurance Monday by facing three teams in one day. This weekend the No. 9 Aggies will challenge their skills as they encounter tougher competition.

The Aggies will kick off the weekend by traveling to South Bend, Ind., on Friday to face No. 49 Notre Dame. The No. 49 ranking is the lowest preseason ranking for Notre Dame since the International Tennis Association started listing more than 25 teams. It is also just the second time since 1991 that the Irish have begun the spring ranked out of the top 30.

Disappointed with their ranking, the Irish started the season strong with an impressive 6-1 victory over Indiana and are ready for Friday's match against A&M.

In fact, Notre Dame has designated the match as this season's "Gold Game," a distinction created to encourage the entire Notre Dame community to attend particular contests.

After facing the Irish Friday, the Aggies will quickly pack their bags and move on to Champagne, Ill., where they will face defending national champion and current No. 1 Illinois.

The Fighting Illini enter this season without 2003 NCAA singles champion Amer Delic and 2003 NCAA doubles titlist Rajeev Ram, who both elected to turn pro after last season.

Despite these losses, Illinois looks to be as strong as ever with the return of

seniors Bryan Wilson, who teamed with Ram to win the national doubles crown last May, and Phil Stolt, who has been ranked as high as No. 2 in the nation.

One thing Illinois will not do this weekend is overlook the Aggies.

"I think Texas A&M is an even better team than it was last year, which will make this a really tough match," Illinois coach Craig Tiley said. "When I did my preseason rankings, I had A&M in my top five, so I think that they are a top-5 team. It should be a real fun match."

Coming off Monday's sweep of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, Texas-Pan American and Trinity, the Aggies are confident that they can go on the road and handle the increased challenges that lie ahead.

"(Illinois) is the defending national champions last year, but that's last year. This year they aren't anything," A&M senior captain Kahled El Dorro said. "Obviously they're a great team and I'm not trying to take anything away from

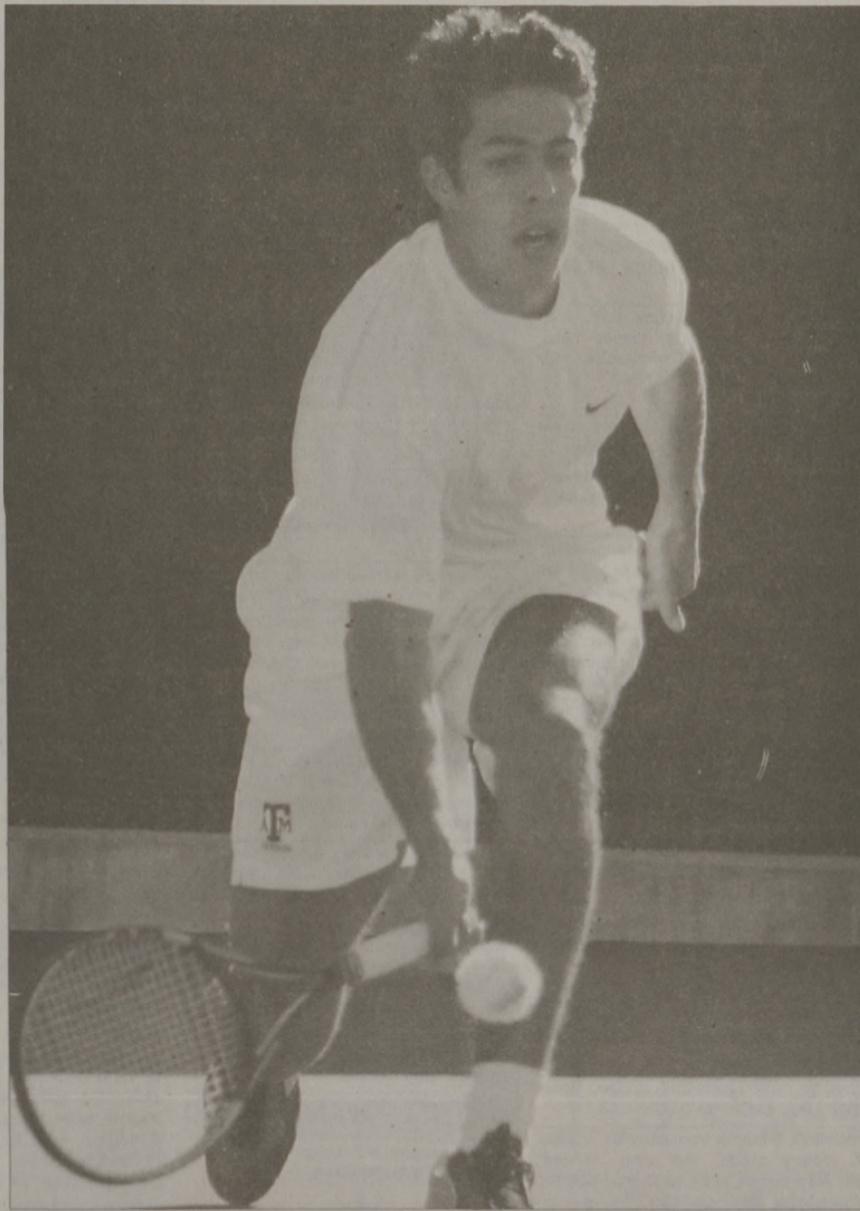
them, but that's last year and we're playing this year, and we're looking forward to something special."

While the team members remains confident in their abilities, they are concerned about Illinois' facilities.

"The next five to six matches are going to be indoors, and we're an outdoor team. We practice outdoors every week," A&M coach Tim Cass said. "We're going to have to change our mentality a little bit because of that and be more aggressive because that is what the play will dictate. And that's going to be a challenge, a big challenge."

**"I think Texas A&M is an even better team than it was last year, which will make it a really tough match."**

— Craig Tiley  
Illinois head tennis coach



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Senior Mohamed Dakki returns a volley against UT-Pan American on Monday.

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### Scates charged

Texas A&M senior punter Cody Scates was released from the Brazos County jail Tuesday at 11:43 a.m. on a \$4,000 bond after being charged with malicious mischief, a Class B misdemeanor.

Scates was arrested by College Station police and was transferred to Brazos County jail, where he stayed for about 10 minutes.

The maximum sentence for conviction on a Class B misdemeanor is a \$2,000 fine and 180 days in jail.

Details of the incident were not available Wednesday night from the College Station Police Department.

#### Men's basketball loses to Kansas State 70-61

After holding a lead as high as six with 11 minutes to play, the Aggie men's basketball team fell to unranked Kansas State 70-61 last night in Manhattan, Kan.

The Aggies (7-7, 0-3 Big 12) had the lead from the beginning, but were never able to recover after the Wildcats pulled ahead 58-57 with 4:25 to go.

Center Andy Slocum had a double-double with 16 points and 16 rebounds.

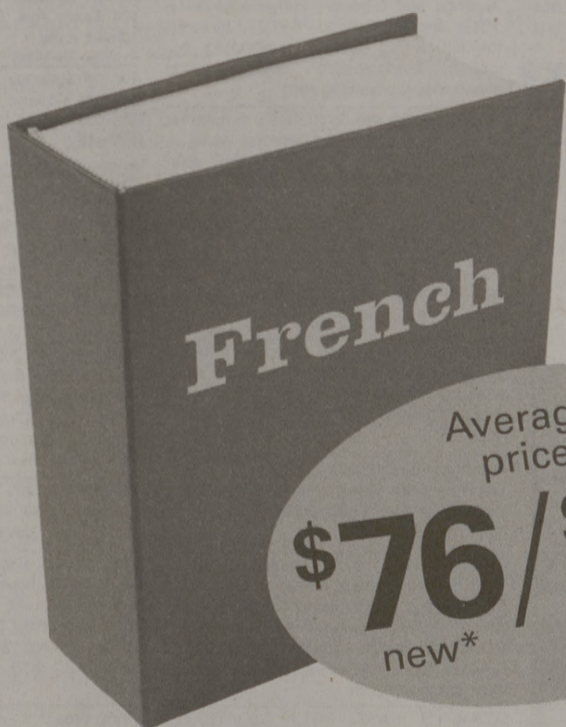
#### Blair's troops fall in Colorado 70-58

The Aggie women's basketball team failed to clinch its first conference win, losing to No. 14 Colorado last night in Boulder, Colo., 70-58.

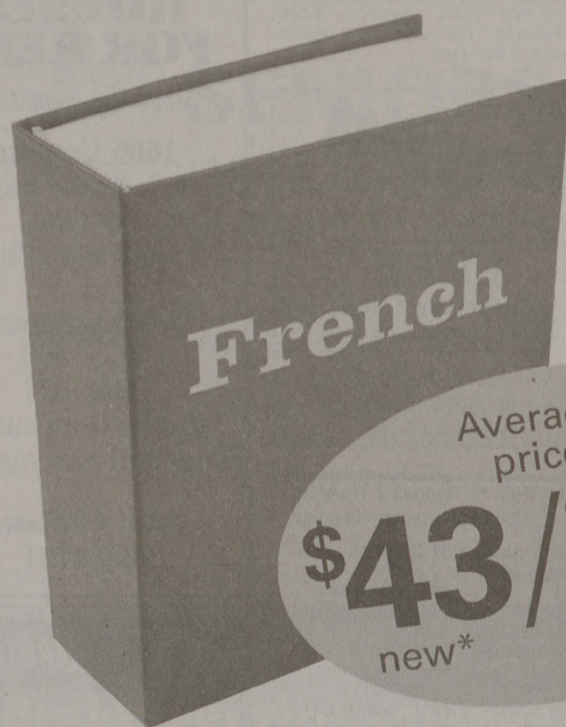
The Aggies led by seven early in the first half, but never regained the lead after falling behind with five minutes left in the first.

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