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2-female needed. 3/2 house, bus route, \$300/mo. +1/3utilities. Jennifer, 903-780-8319.

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THE BATTALION

Aggie netters head to North Carolina to face No. 8 Duke in a matchup of top 10s

By Kyle Davoust
THE BATTALION

So far this season, the No. 9 Texas A&M men's tennis team has traveled to Indiana and Illinois to take on top-ranked competition. This Saturday, the road won't get any easier as they head to Durham, N.C., to face the No. 8 Duke Blue Devils.

"Our schedule is arguably going to be one of the toughest in the country before it's all said and done," said A&M coach Tim Cass. "With that in mind, I think this poses another great challenge for us. Duke is a very good team, and like us, over the last four years they've been one of the most consistent teams in the country."

While the Aggies (4-1) have faced some early season tests, Duke (0-0) has yet to play together as a team this year. Their first match is this Thursday against William & Mary.

However, members of their team competed in the ACC Indoor Championships in Winston-Salem, N.C., last week where the team of Peter Rodrigues and Jonathan Stokke captured the doubles title.

Blue Devils coach Jay Lapidus said he likes what he has seen of his team so far on the practice courts as well as in the ACC Championships.

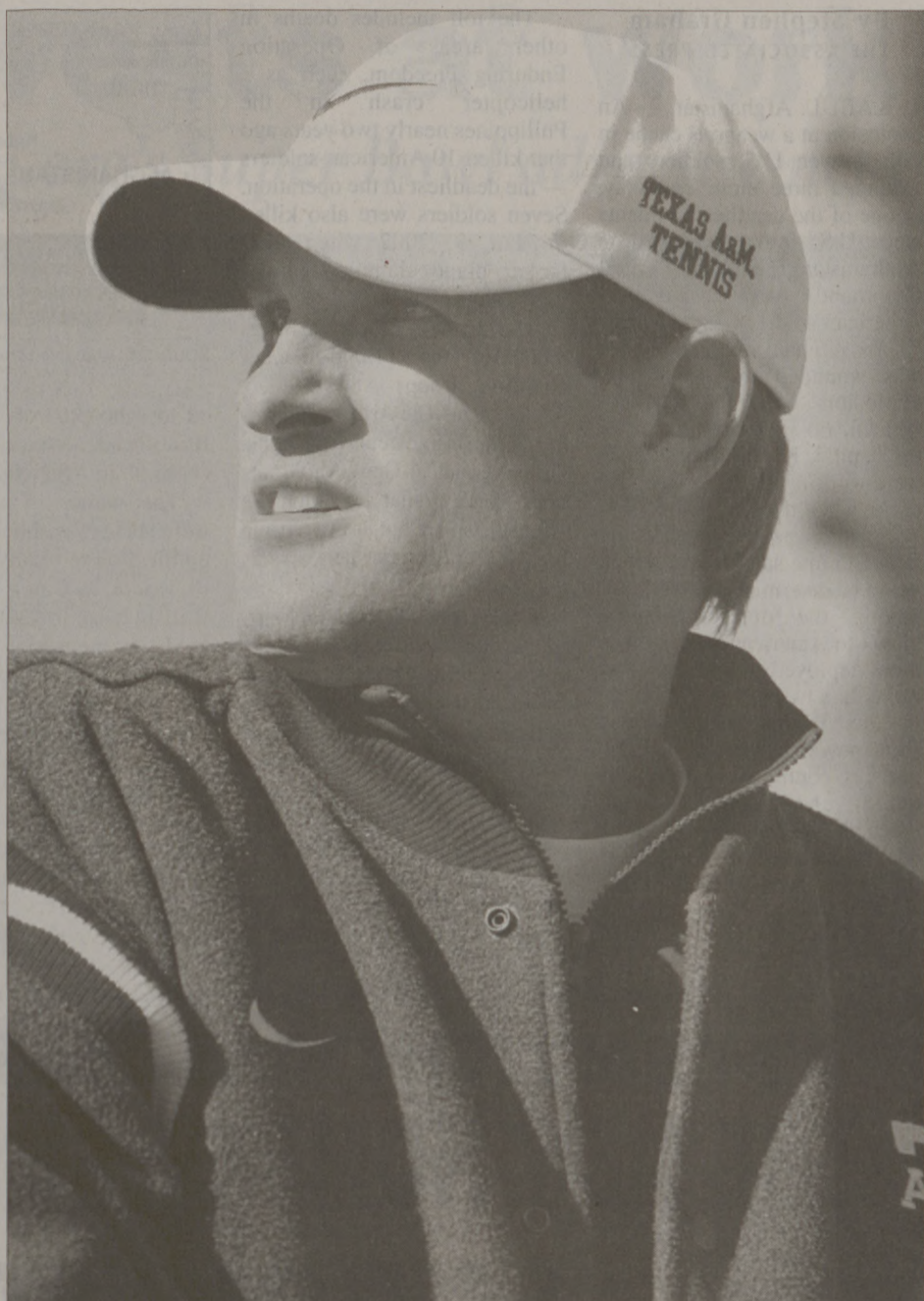
"I feel like we're a little more experienced than last year with most of the guys," Lapidus said. "We lost (Michael) Yani off the team from last year and that kind of hurt us, but most of the guys have all improved, and we have a good new freshman named Peter Rodrigues from Portugal who has played good, so I think we'll be strong again."

The return of three-time All-American Phillip King, who last year teamed with Yani to make up the nations No. 3 doubles team, and sophomore Ludovic Walter, who is ranked No. 7 nationally in singles, has given Lapidus good reason to be optimistic.

With such evenly-matched teams, there is a good chance that Saturday's contest will come down to the doubles point, where there will be an intriguing early season match-up of a No.1 versus a No. 2.

A&M's top-ranked doubles team of Lester Cook and Ante Matijevic will face its toughest competition yet as they square up against Duke's No. 2 ranked team of Jason Zimmermann and Walter, winners of the ITA National Indoor Tennis Championships doubles title last fall.

"If you look at most every dual match, the doubles point is so important," Cook



A&M men's tennis head coach Tim Cass looks on as the Aggies defeat UT-Pan American 6-1 on Jan. 19. Cass and the Aggies face No. 8 Duke in Durham, N.C., on Saturday.

said. "We played them earlier this year at All American, and we beat them indoors. But, obviously, it's totally different now that it's a dual match, and they've got a little experience under their belt also. I think it will definitely be a key factor in the match."

Cass said he believes it is going to take a little something more from the Aggies since they are playing on the road again.

"On paper it looks like its going to be

evenly matched, but I always feel like when you play on the road that the team is probably about 10 percent better at home," Cass said. "So clearly, if we're playing them on the road and indoors, we have to figure out how to make up 10 to 15 percent."

The Aggies will take on the Blue Devils at 12 p.m. on Saturday at Duke's Sheffield Indoor Tennis Center.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Former Aggies seek Super Bowl rings as New England Patriots

When the New England Patriots take on the Carolina Panthers Sunday in Houston at Super Bowl XXVIII, two Aggies will suit up in the the Patriots' red, white and blue.

Former Texas A&M receiver Bethel Johnson and defensive lineman Ty Warren were drafted in the first and second round, respectively, of the 2003 NFL Draft by New England.

Warren is a native of Bryan, Texas, and has 33 tackles and one sack in his first year as a professional.

Johnson has 16 catches for 209 yards on the season with two touchdowns. He has also emerged as New England's primary kickoff return specialist, averaging 28.2 yards per return including a touchdown this season.

Johnson held the A&M record for receiving yards until it was broken by A&M junior receiver Terence Murphy in 2003.

Johnson also held the A&M career receptions record of 117 until 2003 when Murphy ended the year 120 career catches.

Johnson, Warren and the New England Patriots will take on the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl XXVII on Sunday at 5:25 p.m.

Aggie archers take aim at Texas State Indoors in Fort Worth

Texas A&M archery looks to continue its nationally-dominating performance in Fort Worth this weekend at the Texas State Indoors Tournament.

With a phenomenal 10 All-Americans, the A&M archery team seems to be headed in the right direction.

"We look to win another national championship," said A&M head coach Kathy Eissinger. "And we have as many All-Americans as we did last year."

Top shooters for A&M are juniors Mary Zorn and Lorinda Cohen and sophomore Amber Dawson.

Zorn is the defending world champion while Cohen is a three-time All-American shooter in the recurve who looks to qualify for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

"I just want to have fun and get my degree," Cohen said.

With the season underway, A&M's roster is that of an Olympic team already.

The Aggies will not compete in another tournament after the Texas State Indoors until they host the South Indoor Nationals at the A&M Student Recreation Center.

A&M men's swimming and diving move up in the polls

Texas A&M men's swimming and diving team moved up in the polls Thursday as they climbed to No. 13.

The Aggies moved up into a tie for the 13th spot with the University of Tennessee. The ranking is the highest the Aggie men have reached this season.

The women maintained their No. 14 ranking.

The men will face Southern Methodist University in Dallas this Saturday at 4 p.m. while the women have the weekend off. The Aggie women will next face Rice University Friday, Feb. 6 at the A&M Student Recreation Center Natatorium.

For the women, their meet with Rice will be their last home meet of the season until Texas A&M hosts the 2004 NCAA Women's Swimming and Diving Championships.

Watkins

Continued from page 5

experience. Despite losing 2003 National Player of the Year T.J. Ford to the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks, the Longhorns are still loaded with seniors that went on a deep NCAA Tournament run last season.

That experience is something the Aggies have yet to gain during Watkins six-year tenure.

"Texas has won some close ballgames," Watkins said. "They're coming off a Final Four year, and they have the confidence to make plays. We know they won't beat themselves. We've got to do things right for a full 40 minutes."

In the series the Longhorns have won 28 of the last 31 meetings dating back to the 1989-90 season. Texas has also captured the last nine games played in College Station.

But A&M has played every opponent close at Reed Arena, including a two-point loss to No. 13 Texas Tech and a five-point loss to No. 12 Kansas.

"Obviously Texas is one of the better teams in the Big 12," Watkins said. "But we got them at home. We want a good crowd."

This is a must-win game for the Aggies. Climbing out of an 0-6 hole in the Big 12 conference is like ice skating with roller blades. It can be done, but not without a serious amount of concentration.

Starting the conference season at 0-5 is hard enough, but the Aggies say that their confidence is still high despite the bad start. A loss to Texas, though, might just kill any confidence they have left.

"Our spirits are good," Watkins said. "We just got to go out and get a win."

Aggies

Continued from page 5

Senior point guard Toccara Williams will lead the team once again and is within 13 steals of the Big 12 record for steals (418).

"What we have to do is some shots off transition offense," Blair said.

Williams' career high steals is nine during the Jan. 25 game against Texas.

Last Saturday's loss to Tech in Lubbock was the first game in Williams' 101 game career she did not record a steal.

After starting the season with a 7-4 record, A&M has dropped seven straight. The Aggies have been able to keep their dignity through January with only one win, versus Texas State on Jan. 3, by suffering close losses to only ranked teams.

The only non-ranked opponent the Aggies have lost to in January was Oklahoma State, and that loss was a last second defeat by two points.

The rivalry game against Texas, which Texas coach Jody Conradt described as her team surviving, came down to the final minute and was decided by two points.

Texas freshman forward Tiffany Jackson said the crowd noise at Reed Arena interfered with the Longhorns play.

"The crowd was going loud after they got up early," Jackson said.

Blair said the strong student support is an important part of the team's performance.

"I'd like to thank the students for what they did at that last game, they really are difference makers," Blair said.

Blair said he hopes a 500 bobblehead giveaway, and half-time BMX show will help bring spectators to Saturday's game.

"This is Super Bowl weekend; you got (A&M men's basketball versus) Texas, you got us playing Iowa State and you got Carolina playing New England," Blair said. "What else are you going to do this weekend, no one is going to be studying."



WATKINS