

## Balancing Act

### A day in the life of equestrian rider Jennifer Jones

By Jordan Meserole  
THE BATTALION

As the annoying but familiar alarm beeping fills the room at 6 a.m., Texas A&M senior equestrian rider Jennifer Jones fights the temptation to hit the snooze button.

The five hours of sleep don't seem adequate, but she finds a way to get up. And somehow she will do it again tomorrow morning and the morning after that.

Having a routine is the only way Jones said she can make it through each day.

"I'm a person that likes to plan ahead," Jones said. "Sometimes I'll make little notes of things I need to get done and it ends up turning into pages."

Of the 70 girls on the team, she is one of only three who participate in western and English events. She helped the western team achieve its second consecutive national championship last season, and may be a factor in helping both squads win a championship this year, but that she can win an individual championship. Jones made her first step toward the trophy recently, placing first in the first round of individual competition.

As such an accomplished athlete, it may seem that Jones should be getting an easy ride through college. Free clothes, free food and free grades — the stereotype of student-athletes. But she isn't getting that ride. Jones is enrolled in 13 hours this

semester and has to make up any tests missed due to traveling. Along with the rest of the team, Jones has to pay for her competition uniform, which usually costs near \$1,000. And on top of it all, Jones holds down a part-time job.

"Sometimes it gets stressful and overwhelming," Jones said. "I don't know how, but some way I make it through it all."

Jones said she knows many people think that college athletes get many benefits just for being athletes, but she said that notion is far from the truth.

"There might be a few athletes who do occasionally get a benefit or two, and they're the ones who give us a bad name," Jones said. "But I'm pretty certain that the majority of us don't — especially the equestrian girls."

In between classes and practicing with the team, Jones averages 20 hours a week working for the Letterman's Association. And just as with everything else, Jones receives no preferential treatment.

There is nothing special to her desk; a few pictures sit on the corner, a few post-it notes with reminders on the wall and a My Little Pony that adorns the top of the computer monitor. Jones has just as much work to perform as the other workers, including organizing events for the Maroon Club and contacting members about upcoming events. Occasionally when preparing or planning for events, Jones will be at the office until near midnight regardless if she has an early morning practice the next day.

"I love to work," Jones said.



Texas A&M senior equestrian rider Jennifer Jones not only rides for the equestrian team, but also works part time while finding time for school and a boyfriend.

"I don't mind doing it at all. I think I would go crazy if I didn't have anything to do."

Even when the few free moments pop up in Jones' schedule, she rarely sits still. Nicknamed "Martha Stewart" by some of her teammates, she

loves to sew, paint and restore antique furniture. And if she's not doing something crafty, she's hanging out with her boyfriend of two years.

"It's hard sometimes to coor-

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## Aggie tennis travels to Tulsa

By Kyle Davoust  
THE BATTALION

There will be a degree of familiarity Tuesday when the No. 20 Texas A&M men's tennis team travels to Tulsa, Okla., to take on the No. 49 University of Tulsa at the Michael D. Case Tennis Center.

Not only have these teams already faced one another this year with A&M winning 4-0 at the ITA National Indoor Championships in Seattle, Wash., but both have also followed similar paths since that time.

While A&M's record (10-3) is much better than Tulsa's (5-4), both have limited their losses to top-ranked competition. In fact, all eight of their combined losses have come against top-30 competition.

"We've always (played tough schedules)," said A&M head coach Tim Cass. "I don't know what their strategy is, but ours has always been to try to schedule 12 to 15 top-25 teams before the year is out."

The Golden Hurricane's schedule has included matches against four top-10 teams, including top-ranked Illinois, No. 3 University of Southern California, No. 6 Rice University and No. 9 Stanford University.

With a schedule like that, wins and losses are probably not the best indication of team strength. Cass said he under-

stands that when evaluating team such as Tulsa.

"They're a very good team," Cass said. "About two weeks they were able to beat (The Christian University) who is ranked sixth, so it should be a good challenge being at Tulsa."

The Aggies also know they can't rely on their wins earlier this season against Tulsa to carry them through the match. Several factors could change the flow of match this time around.

"In Seattle (at the ITA Championships) we played them indoors," said A&M senior Lester Cook. "We think that they're just going to give us the match this year because we swept them. They're going to want to win more this time, and they'll be the home-court advantage."

The match against Tulsa will also give the Aggies a chance to play on a court they should see more of this season, as Tulsa plays host to the year's NCAA Championships.

"This team, more than any team I've probably coached, one that internally is capable of doing whatever they put their minds to," Cass said. "I like the way we played against Oklahoma, I like the way we played against Miami and like the way we played against Tulsa earlier in the year. If we play with that kind of focus and intensity, I think that should come out OK for us."

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