

# A&M men's tennis faces No. 2 Baylor

By Kyle Davoust  
THE BATTALION

The No. 25 Texas A&M men's tennis team has already battled through a tough non-conference schedule, with matches against teams such as No. 1 University of Illinois and No. 6 Duke University.

Now that conference play has begun, it doesn't look as if life will get any easier for the Aggies (16-6, 3-0 Big 12). In fact, Saturday's 1:30 p.m. home match at the George P. Mitchell Tennis Center against No. 2 Baylor University could be the toughest test for the Aggies thus far.

To win the Big 12, a team has to play to perfection, literally. This is true, at least, for the last five regular season champions, as each went undefeated during its respective title year.

The Aggies and Bears (17-2, 1-0) certainly understand this point. The two teams have won the last four regular season Big 12 Championships, with A&M winning in 2001 and the Bears claiming the rest, including the past two.

Despite the recent dominance by Baylor and A&M, there are several other teams with a chance to win this year's title.

"It's a tough conference. Last year we weren't thinking about teams like Oklahoma State and Texas," said A&M junior Lester Cook. "There are some tough teams, so we can't just think about Baylor."

Baylor head coach Matt Knoll said he understands the challenges of playing in the Big 12, regardless of the sport.



Texas A&M senior Khaled El Dorry hits a backhand in A&M's 6-1 win over the University of Oklahoma last Saturday. El Dorry and the Aggies will take on No. 2 Baylor University Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at the George P. Mitchell Tennis Center.

"The Big 12 is a great conference, obviously the best conference in the country," Knoll said. "We always have teams competing for the national championship in every sport. As far as tennis, we had four teams in the Sweet 16 last year. It's just a tough conference all around."

Baylor has had few missteps thus far, as it looks poised to capture its third consecutive conference title. With a tough conference schedule ahead, however, Baylor knows that it won't come easily.

"We have a lot of difficult tests ahead," Knoll said. "Besides hav-

ing to play (the University of Texas) and A&M, we still have to go up to Stillwater to face (Oklahoma State University), so nothing is set up for us. There is still a lot of tennis left."

Knoll also warns that his team can't concentrate on A&M just yet. It first has to worry about the University of Nebraska, which will visit to Waco on Friday. Even though Knoll claims to have not overlooked Nebraska, he knows what to expect from the Aggies.

"When you play a team like A&M, you're playing a program," Knoll said. "When you

go there, you face a great program and all the traditions they have. This conference there are some tough places to play, and A&M is definitely one of them."

Like the Bears, the Aggies will enter Saturday's match with a high note after going on the road and defeating No. 49 Tulsa earlier this week. The victory marks the fifth straight for the Aggies.

"I feel that our ranking is what we deserve because of our results, but I think a lot of our guys' minds are realizing that they can play anybody," said A&M coach Tim Cass.

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## Worship Directory

## Track and field runs at Texas Relays

By Craig Martin  
THE BATTALION

A week after an outstanding performance in El Paso, the Texas A&M track and field team will travel to Austin Thursday to compete in the Texas Relays. The annual event showcases 75 to 100 schools with more than 5,000 individual entries, including tough conference rivals Baylor University and the University of Texas.

A&M head coach Ted Nelson said this weekend's meet will allow his team to prepare for the NCAA meet at the same venue later in the season. "This weekend will allow the team to adjust and become more familiar and comfortable with Austin," Nelson said.

Twenty-one A&M athletes qualified for regionals and seven athletes received gold medals at the University of Texas-El Paso Invitational last Saturday. Freshman sprinter Monique Lee qualified in the 200-meter dash only days after qualifying in the 100-meter. Other regional qualifiers included junior Justin Sutton in the pole vault, freshman Ashley Robbins in the high jump and sophomore Anthony Alfier in the javelin throw.

Alfier said he is especially looking forward to this meet because it will be his first meet competing with the A-Group. Alfier said he is looking to rebound from his poor performance at last year's Texas Relays.

"This is one of our first meets of the season," he said. "It will be a good meet to prepare for the competition we will face at regionals."

A&M senior runner and defending Big 12 long jump champion Anderson Smith, who also qualified for regionals last week as part of the 4x400 relay team, echoed Alfier's sentiments.

"We are planning on competing hard as a team in the meet," Smith said. "It will be as a warm-up for the conference relays later in the season."

Smith said he is also looking to have an excellent performance after a disappointing performance at the same relays last year. He will be competing with sophomore Bryan Keller, redshirt freshman Dan Phillips and senior Jon Peterson in the 4x400 relay.

Nelson has been taking teams to compete in the Texas Relays since 1961 and said he feels that this meet has served as somewhat of an obstacle for his team in the past.

Junior discus and hammer thrower Jamie Riojas is attempting to put the team behind her and have an outstanding meet.

"We will be competing against the best of the best at the meet," Riojas said. "It will be great experience because of high caliber of the athletes."

## Moore

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Moore really loves playing in front of arguably the most ardent fans in college baseball.

"It's awesome," Moore said. "It's such a help when I'm out on the mound. We go places and we have fans everywhere. UCLA this year, there were more A&M fans than UCLA. There's just Aggies everywhere, and it's great having that support."

Playing a sport at A&M doesn't mean that you are totally shut out from a social life. It's not uncommon for a number of baseball players to go out with some girls from the soccer team. One of Moore's friends from high school, junior wide receiver Jesse Woods, gets to hang out with Moore quite a bit, mainly because they are both athletes.

"I see him at the Tap, in the weight room and in Cain Hall," Woods said. "We're both business majors and I'll see him some on West Campus. But, I don't see him as much in the spring because of baseball."

Finally, Moore admits that it's a little easier to meet girls because he's on the baseball team.

"I'm not sure if it's the right type of girls though," Moore said. "Some talk to you just because you play. It works more in your favor."

Regardless, student athletes have a stressing lifestyle. Moore, though, would not trade it for anything.

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