

A&M baseball hopes to rebound against Missouri

By Jordan Meserole
 THE BATTALION

The No. 17 Texas A&M baseball team faces off against the University of Missouri (24-14-1, 8-8 Big 12) in a three-game series this weekend at Olsen Field starting Friday at 7 p.m., and the Aggies will have one thing on their minds: winning.

It's a given that all teams want to win, but the Aggies (31-12, 7-8 Big 12) are especially determined to make every win count with only 10 games remaining after this weekend. A&M has lost four of its last six games and currently sits in sixth place in the Big 12 standings.

"It's frustrating the little mistakes we've made, but that's the way baseball is," said A&M freshman infielder Austin Boggs. "We just need to stay together as a team and try to get ourselves out of this slump."

A&M is coming off an especially tough 5-4 loss to the University of Texas-Arlington on Tuesday night.

The Aggies, led by senior Cory Patton on the mound, held the Mavericks to no runs through seven innings. UTA added two runs in the eighth inning and three more in the ninth to clinch the game. All three of the runs in the ninth inning came as a result of errors made by the Aggies, two of those being attributed to a pitcher.

A&M pitching has been experiencing the same sort of problems during recent games, losing



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Texas A&M freshman third baseman **Austin Boggs** tags out Arkansas junior third baseman **Clay Goodwin** in the second inning of A&M's 7-5 win on Feb. 27. A&M will play Missouri in a three-game series this weekend at Olsen Field.

games to the University of Oklahoma and the University of Kansas both on pitching mistakes.

"We kind of have a pitching disease right now," Johnson said. "We have a bunch of guys that are having problems right now. It's harder to say that if one guy is having problems we'll go get another one because then that guy doesn't have it either."

Missouri enters the weekend series as a heavy-hitting team

that lost its most recent contest against Southwest Missouri State Tuesday by a score of 5-4. Much like the Aggies' loss to UTA, the Tigers entered the seventh inning tied 4-4 with SMS and lost the game on a pitching mistake. Unlike the Aggies, however, Missouri's pitching problems have not been rampant, winning three of its last five games.

The Tigers bring three hitters who, in 12 conference games, have tagged opponents for 36

runs batted in, nine home runs and a batting average of .374. A&M pitching will be especially concerned with Tiger senior infielder, Cody Ehlers, who has collected a .369 average with 12 homers and 46 RBIs on the season.

"They've been a good hitting ballclub and they certainly have a little more pop than we do," Johnson said. "They're playing with a lot of confidence right now. We just need some good things to happen to us."

Win streak on the line as A&M faces Missouri

By Nikki Knight
 THE BATTALION

Coming in on a nine-game winning streak, the Texas A&M softball team will host the University of Missouri in a crucial two-game series this weekend in College Station. This will be the Aggies' last weekend at home this season.

After a two-game sweep of No. 20 Baylor, the Tigers (21-21, 8-2 Big 12) have momentum that will rival the Aggies' (29-16, 11-1 Big 12).

While Missouri's scheduled mid-week conference game against Pittsburgh State University had to be cancelled, A&M beat Oklahoma State University, 3-2, Wednesday night in Stillwater, Okla. This put the Aggies one game out of first place in the Big 12 behind Nebraska. A&M will be looking to gain first place with a win over Missouri, which is holding on to third.

"We have to play well in every game in order for our goal of a Big 12 championship to come true," said A&M junior infielder Adrian Gregory. "But we have to take one game at a time."

Missouri, however, will prove to be stiff competition as its sweep over Baylor made seven for the season, with three in Big 12 play.

"The team is really showing that they're capable of playing

in this highly competitive conference," said Missouri head coach Ty Singleton. "It's fun to see the inexperienced becoming more experienced."

A&M head coach Jo Evans was just as excited about her team after last weekend's win over Texas Tech.

"I thought that our kids really swung the bat well," Evans said. "We showed really good patience at the plate."

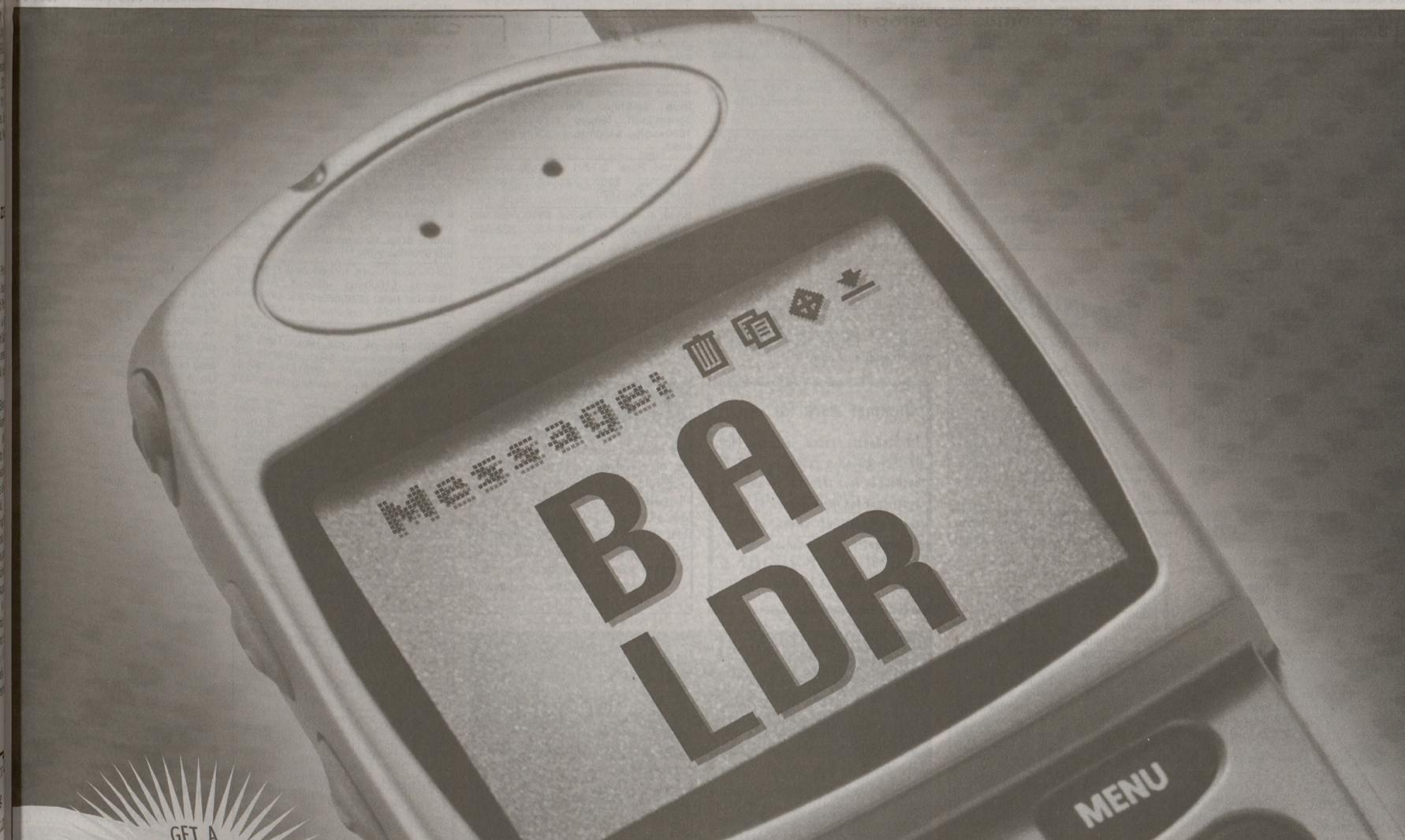
The Tigers will bring junior pitcher Erin Kalka (8-2 Big 12, 0.83 ERA) to face the Aggies. The total batting average on the season for Tigers' opponents is .216.

A&M senior pitcher Jessica Kapchinski (14-5, 10-1 Big 12), who currently holds the league's lowest ERA at 0.32 with eight complete games, will come to the mound for A&M with a nine-game win streak of her own.

After splitting the series last season in Columbia, Miss., the teams again seem evenly matched.

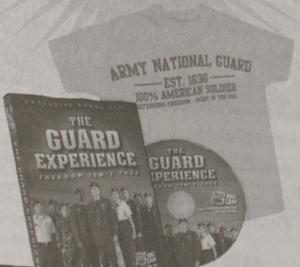
The Aggies will bat a lineup with a season batting average of .271 while the Tigers will bring a current average of .246.

The team's three 2004 seniors, second baseman Sherah Atkins and pitchers Jessica Kapchinski and Lindsay Wilhelmson will be honored Sunday for Senior Day. First pitch is set for noon Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at the Aggie Softball Complex.



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