

Aggies look to set more new records in postseason

By Jon Gilbert
THE BATTALION

The No. 17 Texas A&M women's tennis team finished the regular season with a 10-1 record in Big 12 conference matches, setting a new school record. Now, the Aggies will attempt to set more records as the post-season begins.

The Aggie lady netters begin their second season Friday as they compete in the Big 12 Tournament in Norman, Okla. A&M (19-7, 10-1 Big 12) will be the No. 2 seed and will begin its quest for the tournament crown at 6 p.m. Friday when it faces the winner of Thursday's Nebraska/Oklahoma State match.

"Our goal going in is to try and win the tournament," said A&M head coach Bobby Kleinecke. "To fulfill the goals we have set, we need to come out ready to play and take it one match at a time. We're excited about the tournament and we know what we have to do."

The Aggies enter the conference tournament coming off an impressive regular season that could be considered one of its best ever. After starting off the season 3-5, A&M won 16 of its last 18 matches and came a point away from beating the University of Texas for the Big 12 championship title.

"We had a minor setback to Texas, and we have to put that behind us," said senior Jessica Roland. "We hope to beat them in the tournament and win the championship. It just gives us more incentive and more motivation to do what we need to do."

Yet, Kleinecke wants to keep his team from looking ahead.

"We're going to take it one match at a time," Kleinecke said. "You have to play the quarterfi-



Sophomore Nicki Mechem returns a volley at a match against Baylor this month at the George P. Mitchell Center.

nals, then the semifinals, and play it all out. We obviously would like a rematch with Texas, but we have to focus first on the task at hand."

The immediate task will be facing either Nebraska or Oklahoma State for the second time this year. If A&M advances into the semifinals, as it is expected to do, it will more than likely take on the No. 3 tournament seed University of Oklahoma, who would be a formidable opponent with a 20-3 record.

Every Aggie would like to see a rematch with the Longhorns for the championship. Yet, University of Texas head coach Jeff Moore does not believe the two rivals have separated themselves from the rest of the conference.

"It's not just about A&M and

Texas," Moore said. "The teams in this league are so good you have to come out and play. Baylor, for example, improved a great deal and played them back at the end of conference. (Baylor's Joey) Scrivano has been playing excellent tennis."

Oklahoma is another team that recently wrapped up a season conference play and individual titles. Junior Laura Vieira, junior Lauren

sophomore Nicki Mechem, and freshman Anna Lubchansky finished the season at the top of Big 12 standings in their respective playing positions.

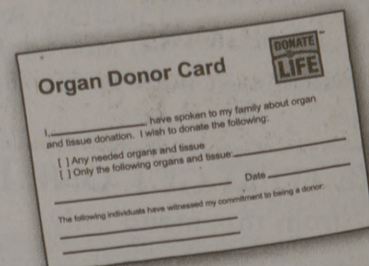
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