

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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A&M equestrian travels to National Championships

By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

Hotel and motel owners are rejoicing in Murfreesboro, Tenn., this weekend as 107 colleges come into town to participate in the Intercollegiate Horse Show National Championships.

The Texas A&M equestrian team is included in that group, but carries a little different distinction from the rest of the teams.

A&M is one of only five colleges that will have both squads of equestrian competition, western and English, riding for the national championship. The last team to win both trophies was the University of Findlay of Ohio, which accomplished the feat in 2000.

"I'm excited to have both teams going there," said A&M English coach Pam Breummer. "That's an accomplishment in itself almost. Kind of an icing on the cake before competition even starts."

And if being involved in a district group wasn't enough, the A&M western team enters the competition with the possibility of being the second team in collegiate history to win three consecutive national championships.

"It's a big accomplishment to win a championship, but it adds a lot of pressure," said A&M head coach Tana Rawson. "Anytime you win one, everyone expects you to do well, and other teams set their sights on you." A&M will see tough competition from all parts of the



EVAN O'CONNELL • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M senior English rider **Meredith Houx** practices jumping fences with her horse **Houdini** at the Dick Freeman Arena in College Station. A&M will travel to Tennessee for the IHSA Nationals this weekend.

United States, but will see the strongest competition from four parts of the country.

Cazenovia College of New York, California State University-Fresno, Findlay and Oklahoma State University will bring almost as

many riders as A&M into the four-day competition. Cazenovia and Findlay have been regulars at the championships, while Fresno and OSU have recently been showing they are schools to be reckoned with as well.

Rawson said practices leading up to this weekend's competition have been focusing less on technique and more on the mental aspects.

"When you get to this stage,

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U.S. debates on sending team to Athens Olympics

By Tim Dahlberg
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The question hasn't come up since President Carter angered the world and his nation's athletes by keeping the U.S. Olympic team home from Moscow. Even now, there are just whispers and speculation, though they grow louder with every bombing and passing day.

Would the United States dare pull out of the Athens Games because of safety concerns?

Unlikely, but not entirely out of the question anymore, either. "It would mean things have spiraled totally out of control," said Walter Purdy, a director of the Terrorism Research Center outside Washington.

Barely three months from opening ceremonies, U.S. officials say they are committed to going to Greece and remain confident Olympic organizers can protect the 500-plus Americans who will compete in the games.

Others, though, are beginning to wonder if that could change as the Summer Olympics draw closer.

"I think it's going to come down to the wire in making a huge decision whether they send the U.S. to Athens," said Stacy Dragila, who won gold in the pole vault at the 2000 Sydney Games. "It's unfortunate to the athletes because we've worked so hard in training."

The bombings Wednesday in Athens highlighted the dangers that face the Olympics despite a security plan with a price tag over \$1 billion, four times the cost in Sydney. Greek officials have revised the plan dramatically in the last few months to try to ease concerns, and they have called in NATO countries to help.

Athens organizers say all athletes will be protected, and that all countries remain resolute in their intention to come.

Americans have a right to feel more jittery than most. Some experts say the Olympics will be tough for terrorists to resist in a country with strong anti-American sentiment.

"This Olympics has the potential of enormous symbolic appeal to terrorists," said Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert at RAND, a think tank that often does work for the Pentagon.

Hoffman said the latest

bombings, a series of timed blasts that caused no injuries, indicated that Greece has not been entirely successful in wiping out its homegrown terrorist groups. Those groups don't kill on a widespread basis, he said, but the fact they are still active is troubling.

"From al-Qaida's point of view it's manna from heaven because you now have another group the Greeks have to be concerned with," Hoffman said. "It increases the attraction for the really more serious terrorists to take advantage of this opportunity."

Top U.S. officials have repeatedly expressed concerns that Greece is moving too slowly in implementing security measures, although they say much

"We're going. We're not going to rob our athletes of the chance they've worked for years to earn.

— Bill Martin
USOC President

progress has been made in recent months. But delays in construction will make guarding Olympic venues even more difficult.

Most security experts say the real threat is not to athletes or Olympic sites. Terrorists could attack a hotel filled

with tourists and still achieve the desired effect, Purdy said. "Nobody remembers that in Atlanta the bombing wasn't at an Olympic venue," Purdy said. "They just remember there was an Olympic bombing."

Still, the U.S. Olympic Committee says no one in the government has mentioned anything about the possibility of not sending a team.

"We're going. We're not going to rob our athletes of the chance they've worked for years to earn," said Bill Martin, acting USOC president.

The International Olympic Committee doesn't seem quite as confident about the success of the games. Last month, the IOC for the first time took out a \$170 million policy to protect against the cancellation of the games because of war, terrorism or earthquakes.

And on Tuesday, a Senate subcommittee heard testimony before two senators met behind closed doors with terrorism officials and the U.S. Ambassador to Greece.

"We were beginning to hear a lot of concerns about the preparations and whether we should go," said Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore.

Some of those concerns

See Olympics on page 4B

A&M lady netters on hot streak entering NCAA Championships

The No. 13 Texas A&M women's tennis team found out its seeding for the NCAA women's tennis championship. Now, it's time for the Aggies to make a run at the title against the nation's best.



JON GILBERT

The Aggies are seeded No. 12 in the 64-team field. The top 16 teams host the first two rounds in their home turf. A&M will host the first and second rounds May 14 to 16 at the George P. Mitchell Tennis Center. The Aggies will begin by playing Southern University followed by Texas Christian University or Southern Methodist University

in the second round.

This A&M team has achieved much this season. It won 20-plus matches for the fifth time. The team posted its best conference record ever, 10-1. And last weekend, the Aggies won the Big 12 Tournament Championship for the first time.

Four Aggies tabbed individual conference championships for their positions.

Furthermore, senior Jessica Roland and junior Helga Vieira were named first-team all-Big 12 and Vieira earned Newcomer of the Year honors.

With the Aggies' current streak they should steamroll their way into the Sweet 16 and probably further.

This team is extremely deep, and can compete with any team in the nation from No. 1 to No. 6 singles. Senior Nikki Mechem and

freshman Anna Lubinsky, A&M's No. 5 and No. 6 players, are a combined 45-8 in dual matches this season. In other words, Mechem and Lubinsky dominate.

Furthermore, Roland, playing at No. 1, is 18-7 and Vieira is 22-6 at No. 2. Yet, there are teams in the national top five that also have the type of depth the Aggies enjoy.

The strength of schedule factor is another reason A&M will garner success in the NCAA Championships. Of the top 21 teams in the nation, the Aggies have faced nine of them, including the No. 12 University of Texas twice. Even with the 4-6 record against them, the experiences the Aggies have gained from playing those powerhouses will benefit them when they are playing solid teams at the NCAA's.

Thus, if the Aggies are able to

advance to the Sweet 16 they will more than likely be playing the fifth best team in the nation, since they are seeded No. 12. A&M has had success against fifth-ranked teams thus far this season. The Aggies upset then-No. 5 University of Southern California, 4-3, at the National Team Indoors in Madison, Wis., on Feb. 5.

Finally, this A&M team is one of the most mentally tough teams around. Time and time again, the Aggies have displayed superior mental strength compared to their opponents. Head coach Bobby Kleinecke has ingrained this toughness in his team since the first day of practice, and it has helped the Aggies achieve this great season.

A&M will now see how much longer its season will last. It'd be a good bet to see the team advance far into the tournament in Athens.

Texas A&M Basketball and The Aggie Angels Present... The Wells Fargo \$1000 Fans

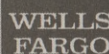


Aggie Angels Kristin Compton, Niki Janecka, and Tracy Devillier award a \$1000 check to the Wells Fargo Grand Prize Winners, Phi Beta Sigma.

At each men's basketball home game this season, Wells Fargo awarded \$100 to a student organization showing support and school spirit. Each winning organization was later eligible to win the \$1000 Grand Prize at the end of the season. Congratulations to this season's \$100 winners:

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