

A&M mauled by Tigers

Clemson serves up reality check to Aggies with 4-1 win

By Jon Gilbert
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M soccer team opened its 2004 season this past weekend on an up-and-down note. Yet, the down note will more than likely remain in the players' mouths much longer, after Clemson blasted the Aggies 4-1 Sunday night at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

The Tigers executed their game plan to near perfection as they survived an A&M onslaught in the beginning of the game, which included a goal by junior Becky Olson, but the goal was negated after the ball rolled slightly out of bounds before going into the net.

That proved to be a momentum change, and Clemson slowly took the crowd out of the game. The Tigers took the lead for good on senior Lindsay Browne's unassisted goal at 33:17 of the first period.

"Our players tactically executed our game plan well," said Clemson head coach Todd Bramble. "We wanted to weather the storm in the first 15 minutes and take the crowd out of the game."

The Tigers' efficiency in the first half set the tone. Clemson scored twice on just three shots, the second by junior Lydia Vandenberg on an assist from senior Paige Ledford. Vandenberg snuck through the middle of A&M's defense, caught the pass and blasted a shot into the net just left of the right cross bar. For the game, the Aggies outshot the Tigers 25-10.

"They were a great finishing team," said A&M head coach G. Guerrieri. "They broke at the right time and made the most of their opportunities. This is a wake-up call. If we're going to have a chance to win the Big 12 and contend for the National Championship, we have to bounce back. We need to take care of business. It will be good for this

team to go through this."

The Aggies came out in the second half with new energy and attempted to match the Tigers' intensity. Yet, almost halfway through the second half, a head-on collision between A&M senior Emma Smith and Clemson freshman Ashley Phillips silenced the crowd of 4,049. Both walked out on their own power, although Phillips suffered a concussion.

Clemson senior Paige Ledford, clearly the fastest player on the field, had her way with the Aggies' defense as she repeatedly penetrated it, setting up scoring chances.

"We just kept the crowd out of our heads," Ledford said. "The first 15 minutes we had to weather the storm. We kept our heads cool and made some good things happen. These are the two biggest road wins (University of Texas and Texas A&M) our program has ever had."

The Aggies know they have an uphill battle ahead of them.

"This is not the way we wanted to start the season," said A&M senior Christina Echavarry. "We're going to keep our heads up and bounce back. This is a good team, and we know what we can do."

On the upside, the Aggies opened the season Friday night with a 2-1 victory over No. 15 Michigan before a record crowd of 4,403. Echavarry again provided all the scoring for the Aggies' offense with a goal in each half.

After the capacity crowds that watched A&M the first two home games, Guerrieri promises Aggie fans that there will be better soccer to come.

"The fact that the crowd was there the whole time was great," Guerrieri said. "We are going to play much better in the future and repay them for their generosity."

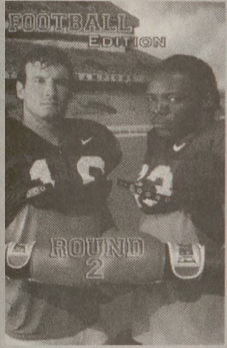


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A&M senior midfielder **Cristina Echavarry** chases after Clemson's **Jenny Anderson**. Echavarry scored A&M's only goal of the game.

SIDE NOTES

Section B



An 8-page, in-depth position-by-position preview of the 2004 A&M football team.

Coming Tuesday

A preview of the A&M men's golf team that finished 14th at the NCAA Championships last year and are determined to win it this year.

Briefly

The Baltimore Orioles snapped a 12-game losing streak with a 7-6 win over the Texas Rangers. The loss dropped the Rangers 35 games behind West division leader Oakland.

The Houston Astros are still clawing at a playoff spot after defeating the Chicago Cubs 10-3. With the win, the Astros are only four games behind wild-card leader Atlanta.

The Lamar National League team from Richmond, Texas, defeated the Linda Vista team from Guadalupe, Mexico, 5-0 in the consolation championship of the Little League World Series. Pabao Little League of Curacao took first place in the series.

Four walk-on members of the A&M football team received scholarships Friday. Recipients were: Blake Kendrick, Jacob Young, Ty Branyon and Marques Thornton.

A&M volleyball team in position to spike 2004 foes

By Jonathan Wall
THE BATTALION

When junior outside hitter Laura Jones was asked to describe this year's volleyball team in one word, Jones pondered the question for a second and then replied: "mysterious."

The Texas A&M volleyball team is ranked No. 15 in the coaches' poll and will be looking for veteran presence. The team returns only three starters and six others from last year's squad, and with the transfer of one player and the retirement of two-year starting setter Lexy Beers due to a back injury, the Aggies will look to bench players and newcomers for much needed support.

Coach Laurie Corbelli doesn't seem to mind the challenge that this year's team brings to the table.

"We've been looking very physical,"

Corbelli said. "We do have experienced players on this team, and that's why I feel confident that this team can succeed."

The Aggies will need to feed off their three returning starters from last year's team. Senior outside blocker/middle hitter Melissa Munsch will be called on this season to lead the squad and improve last season's stellar performance that earned her All-American second-team honors. Munsch believes that while this year's team isn't as seasoned as teams in the past, it has a special bond that a lot of people don't know about.

"We are all really close friends; we all

come in with a very positive attitude and strong work ethic each day," Munsch said. "I think we will do really well."

"...I have no doubts that this team can make a run at the Big 12 Championship..."

— Laurie Corbelli
A&M head volleyball coach

Munsch isn't the only player who is going to be called on to step up her play. Junior outside hitter Laura Jones and junior middle blocker Kendra Felder will need to play key roles for the Aggies. Jones has led the Aggies in kills over the last two seasons, and Felder was the teams leading blocker last season.

Without some of the key players from last year's team, the Aggies will look to a strong freshman class to provide some support. Meghan Kainz, a freshman setter from Austin will most likely see the most

time of the incoming group.

"Meghan is capable of attacking and being a blocker," Corbelli said. "She definitely has a chance to push some of the older players and see some time on the floor."

The Aggies will get a chance to see how battle-ready the team is when it meets pre-season No. 3 UCLA in the final game of the McDonald's Invitational Tournament. After the tournament, the team will hit the road for a West Coast swing that will pit the Aggies against two of the top 15 teams in the nation: UC-Santa Barbara and California.

This Aggie squad should be up to the task though, and Corbelli believes that this team could have what it takes to surpass last season's sweet 16 finish.

"We have the talent, team work and work ethic. If they can unite as a single cohesive group, then I have no doubts that this team can make a run at a Big 12 Championship and a Final Four berth," Corbelli said.

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