

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Friday, September 10, 2004

Win or bust

A&M football looks to get on feet after tough season opener

By Shawn C. Millender
THE BATTALION

The University of Wyoming and Texas A&M enter Saturday afternoon's tilt at Kyle Field with opposite mind sets. The Aggies are looking to erase doubts about their squad after a sometimes shaky, sometimes downright atrocious, start to the season at the hands of the University of Utah.

The Wyoming Cowboys (1-0) bring to the table a chance to prove that they can compete with a B-CS-conference team, looking to play the Buster Douglas to A&M's Mike Tyson.

Perhaps the biggest story coming out of last week into Saturday is the status of a couple of key Aggie players. After having minor surgery on his left (non-throwing) hand, junior quarterback Reggie McNeal's health is an issue.

Head coach Dennis Franchione said he expects McNeal to be ready to go for the game. Wyoming head coach Joe Glenn said he expects the same.

"We're planning on seeing McNeal," Glenn said. "If it's not him, then we'll have to adjust on the fly."

A&M sophomore running back Courtney Lewis' status is also up in the air. A leg injury slowed him down in Utah and may hold him out of this week's game. Lewis' backups, Jay Lucas and Samson Taylor, are both true freshmen.

The best player for the Cowboys on defense is sophomore cornerback Derrick Martin, who will most likely be called upon to shut down star Aggie wideout Terrence Murphy.

"(Martin's) got athleticism, toughness, and he makes plays," Glenn said. "He's the guy we have that can match up. He'll get the litmus test Saturday."

The Aggie defense still has question marks after last week's performance in Salt Lake City. Questions like how to stop Wyoming's spread offense, fueled by the three-headed monster of quarterback Corey Bramlet, wide receiver Jovon Bouknight and running back Joseph Harris.

"They can't expect to win if they play like they did last week," said Dallas Morning News reporter Rachel Cohen. "Wyoming is a pretty balanced team. Their quarterback has only played one game last week (a 53-7 win over 1-AA Appalachian State), but he can definitely pass the ball well."

The key for Wyoming's defense is to put pressure on McNeal, said Robert Gagliardi of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle.

"They're going to have to find a way to get a push up front," Gagliardi said. "That might be hard because A&M is just so much bigger than them. The d-line has to also keep Reggie in front of them."

Wyoming hasn't traditionally fared well against the Aggies. In two games



Joshua Hobson • THE BATTALION
Texas A&M senior wide receiver Jason Carter dodges a tackle attempt by Utah freshman Ryan Smith. A&M is set to kick off its home opener this weekend against Wyoming.

(2000 and 2001), the Aggies thumped the 2001 game is still on the team," Gagliardi "Pokes" by a combined score of 78-23. "Only one player who played in that

See FOOTBALL on page 7

SIDE NOTES



COMING MONDAY

Complete coverage of all the Aggies weekend events, including game wrap-ups of the football and soccer games.

BRIEFLY

The A&M tennis center will officially be dedicated Saturday as the George P. Mitchell Tennis Center. The dedication ceremony is planned for 11 a.m.

Pitcher Oliver Perez and the Pittsburgh Pirates ended the Houston Astros 12-game winning streak with a 3-1 win. Perez struck out 14 in the win of the first game of a double-header.

The Chicago White Sox defeated the Rangers 7-3, handing the Rangers its ninth loss in 11 games. Texas dropped to six games back of AL West leader Oakland.

ON THIS DAY

1966 — Muhammad Ali knocks out Karl Mildengerger in the 12th round to retain his world heavyweight title.

1972 — The U.S. men's basketball team loses its first game in Olympic competition. The Soviet Union wins 51-50 due to a controversial call.

1997 — Mark McGwire joins Babe Ruth as the only player in major league history with consecutive 50-homer seasons.

2000 — Randy Johnson becomes the 12th player to reach 3,000 strikeouts.

Soccer team prepared for Longhorns in Lone Star Showdown

By Jonathan Wall
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M fans will want to make sure they get to the Aggie Soccer Complex early on Friday, because those who are lucky enough to get in are going to witness Aggie history as the Aggies and the University of Texas square off.

While the rivalry between the two schools will be as fierce as ever, the soccer match begins a new era in the storied sports rivalry between the two schools.

This season the Aggies and Longhorns will not only play for pride, but for the new "Lone Star Showdown" title. The deal was made between both school's athletic directors as a way to increase interest in the rivalry and to give the winning school a chance for bragging rights. The Aggie soccer game just happens to be the first game in the battle, which will feature 25 games between the

two schools various sports teams this season.

The Lone Star Showdown won't be the only history happening at the match; a record crowd is expected, adding to the intensity that this conference opener will have on both squads.

The Aggies were riding high going into the start of the season, but a tough opening schedule and a young squad have left the team at 2-2 and with mixed feelings going into the game.

"We're not where we want to be yet," said A&M head coach G. Guerrieri. "The new environment and new players has made the adjustment a little harder, but I think we're gradually making the change."

The Aggies will look to senior goal leader Cristina Echavarry to head the scor-

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SOCCER

(2-2)

(3-1)

LONE STAR SHOWDOWN

Aggie Soccer Complex

Friday, Sept. 10 @ 6:30 p.m.

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