

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Tuesday, September 21, 2004

Page by: Jordan Meserole

Emma-nating talent

A&M's Emma Smith makes big moves on and off field

By Jon Gilbert
THE BATTALION

Whoever said an athlete could not be the proudest member of their Fightin' Texas Aggie class or be a typical college student has not met Emma Smith.

Then again, she is far from typical. The Texas A&M senior has many accomplishments and is possibly one of the most decorated soccer players to have played for A&M. Yet, it's the other areas of her life that make her a special athlete—it all starts with her family.

"I am really close to my family," Smith said. "They are so important to me. They can't come to every game, but my mom comes to almost every game. Last year, she missed only one home game the whole year. I have family all over the South. My grandparents live in Houston and they come to my games. It is really great to have the support from my family at the games."

It is remarkable that Smith's parents come to so many games because they still live in Oregon, where she was raised.

The Aggie roots run deep in the Smith family. Smith's parents met in the John R. Blocker building while her father was earning his doctorate from A&M in civil engineering. Emma's grandfather was a professor in the horticulture department and her step-grandfather received his masters degree and doctorate in electrical engineering at A&M.

"Yeah, I'm really the third generation," Smith said. "They were so excited to hear that I was coming here to play soccer. I know it's a thrill for them to watch my games. I took my parents to the football game last weekend and they absolutely loved it. It was their first Aggie football game to go to since they were here in college."

Smith said she never considered attending A&M while growing up in Beaverton, Ore. She grew up hearing her family talk about A&M, but didn't think anything of it.

"When I first came (to A&M), it was unbelievable," Smith said. "The minute I was here it felt like home. I immediately cancelled my other visits and I knew I wanted to be here."

Few athletes are able to balance a challenging course of study such as engineering and play a sport, much less earn a 3.0 GPA. Smith, however, is a consistent member of the Academic All-Big 12 team and last year was selected as a Texas A&M-Verizon Athletic Scholar.

"It's hard (being an electrical engineering major),"

Smith said. "The girls call me a nerd and like to make fun of me about it. I get home from practice at 7 and have to go to group projects. I have no social life. It's fine, though. I'm doing what I love to do and would not have it any other way."

Her social interaction comes from hours with the soccer team.

"They're my closest friends," Smith said. "We are so tight and have so much fun together. We pretty much have our own sorority. I'm going to miss the girls, the experiences, the laughing and the crying."

The first part of this season has not been easy for Smith. She suffered a concussion after a nasty collision in front of the net with Clemson goalie Ashley Phillips on Aug. 29. While she battled that injury, she began to lose some playing time to younger players.

In Friday's 3-0 win against UC-Irvine, Smith scored possibly the biggest goal of the game. Then, in a sudden twist of bad luck, she sprained her ankle and had to leave the game.

"When she scored, someone on the bench said we needed that goal," said A&M head coach G. Guerrieri. "I replied, Emma needed that, too. Emma has been working hard. She suffered a concussion against Clemson and fought back from that. She scores tonight and takes a smack to the ankle. She doesn't go at less than 100



JP BEATO III - THE BATTALION

Texas A&M senior forward **Emma Smith** prepares to launch a shot past UC-Irvine sophomore goalie **Marissa Welliver** in the second half of Friday's 3-0 A&M win.

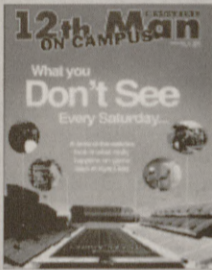
See Smith on page 8

SIDELINES

COMING WEDNESDAY

The A&M volleyball team heads to Kansas to face off against Kansas State, a team the Aggies have never beat at home before. Look for a complete preview of the matchup.

The A&M football team seems to be back on track after defeating Clemson, and Shawn Millender takes a minute to compare this team to teams of the past.



Look for the second edition of the 12th Man On Campus Magazine, which includes a behind-the-scenes look at gameday at Kyle Field.

BRIEFLY

The Oct. 2 A&M football game against Kansas State will be televised at 6 p.m. on TBS.

A&M cornerback Erik Mayes was named the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week.

The A&M men's golf team finished in seventh place at the Notre Dame Invitational. Freshman Bobby Gates tied for fourth individually.

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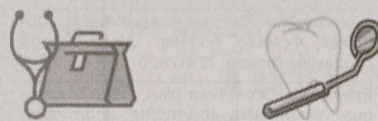
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