

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 1B • Thursday, September 23, 2004

On-par goals

A&M golfers have sight set on Big 12 championship trophy

By Ryan Irby
THE BATTALION

Before last spring's Big 12 championships, Texas A&M women's golf head coach Jeanne Sutherland said her team had vowed that "no one would outwork us."

That creed paid off as the Aggies went on to finish second at the conference championships and set a school record 1,211 score.

This season, the No. 12 Aggies look to capitalize on their efforts and improve their shortcomings. Sophomore Christa Spedding is already making a huge impact on the team. Spedding claimed the individual school record for 72 holes last spring with a 297 at the NCAA championships and is off to a blistering start in the first two tournaments of the year.

Last season, the Big 12 Newcomer of the Year, Oklahoma State University's Ashley Knoll, decided that College Station was more enticing than

Stillwater and transferred to A&M in a surprising, yet beneficial, move for the Aggies.

"We are thrilled to add a player of Ashley's caliber to our team," Sutherland said. "She's a good person, a good student and a good player. I recruited her out of high school, so I'm very familiar with her game and I'm excited she's decided to come here."

Knoll posted a strong showing at last week's Dick McGuire Invitational held at the University of New Mexico. She rallied to a two-under 71 after the first round to lead the Aggies to an opening round of 298; the second-best season opening in school history.

"We have already seen a positive impact on our program," Sutherland said. "Our players have worked hard to prepare themselves and they are ready to compete. We will have a game place for each player, and it will be up to them to follow it on the course."

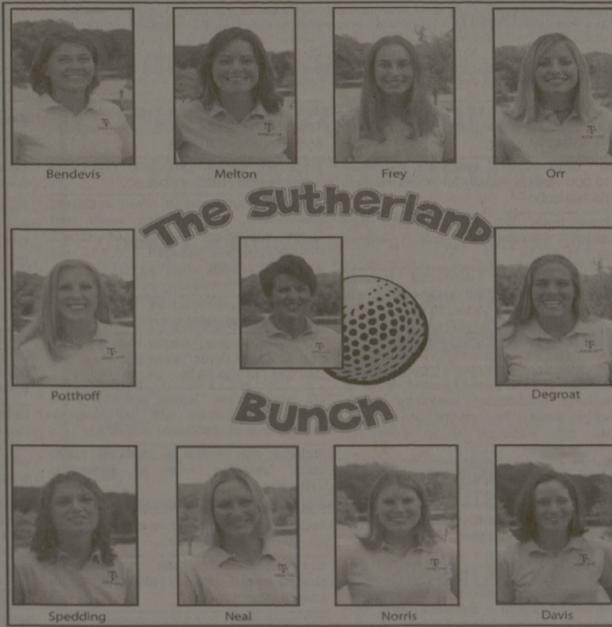
Having a game plan and

sticking with it is a philosophy that has paid solid dividends for Sutherland's teams of the past. Since 1992, she has transformed the A&M women's golf team into a perennial winner, winning a Big 12 title in 1998.

"My basic philosophy is to do anything I can to help my players succeed in whatever they want to do, whether it is going on to professional golf or going into the business world," Sutherland said. "My goal is to help them achieve their goals. At the same time, I want them to work together as a team. I have as much to learn from them as they do from me."

Seniors Nicole Melton and Kyla Neal provide the veteran leadership for this year's squad. Melton is one of the most decorated golfers in Aggie history and has posted solid rounds throughout her collegiate career. Melton and Neal

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GRACIE ARENAS - THE BATTALION

SIDELINES

On 3B

The weekly edition of the Big 12 notebook is back and this week Ryan Irby takes a look at the only three Big 12 teams in action this weekend.

Texas Rangers pitcher Frank Francisco, who threw a chair and hit a fan, dropped his appeal of the 15-game suspension handed down by the major league commissioner's office.

COMING FRIDAY

The A&M soccer team is packing its bags and heading north for weekend games against Baylor and Texas Tech. Look for a complete preview of the Aggies upcoming games.

The soccer team isn't the only team heading north this weekend - the volleyball team will be facing off against Nebraska. Look for a pre-game matchup of both teams.

BRIEFLY

The No. 11 A&M volleyball team is still searching for its first win at Manhattan, Kan. The Aggies lost 3-0 to No. 19 Kansas State and now have a 53 overall season record.

Texas Rangers pitcher Kenny Rogers won his 17th game with a 5-3 win over the Oakland Athletics. The A's remain four games ahead of Texas for the AL West lead.

The Chicago Cubs defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates 1-0.

Cowboys' Testaverde still impressing many

By Jaime Aron
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vinny Testaverde could be retired now, maybe even starting a second career in the high-paying, tackle-free world of broadcasting.

But he just couldn't imagine himself in a suit instead of pads, not when he thought he could still help an NFL team. So he reunited with his former coach Bill Parcells in Dallas to



TESTAVERDE

compete for the starting quarterback job.

Two games into the season, Testaverde is entrenched as the Cowboys' starter and he's the NFL's passing leader with 677 yards. Having already earned the admiration of teammates, fans and team owner Jerry Jones, next up is the chance to impress a national audience Monday night.

While Testaverde is leery of the Washington Redskins and their blitzing defense, there's another aspect of the game that concerns him.

"It's past my bedtime," he said Wednesday, smiling. With his 41st birthday looming, Testaverde is having

fun using his age as a punch line. He thinks it has been an asset on the field, too.

"We assume people are going to blitz us because we have an old quarterback," Testaverde said. "But if you're able to make plays when they blitz, then people will stop blitzing. I'd say we've hit probably 90 percent already ... I can only remember one incompleteness."

No, that last line wasn't a joke about a foggy memory. In fact, what Testaverde remembers from the last

See Vinny on page 4B

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