

Three teams chase Big 12 title

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Staff writer

This weekend, the Texas A&M soccer team will have to do something it has never done before in order to win the Big 12 Conference Tournament—win three games.



Guerreri

The last two seasons, the Aggies have been either the No. 1 or No. 2 team in the conference going into the tournament.

But when A&M Coach G. Guerreri looks at the Big 12 standings this week, his Aggies will be in third place after the close of the regular season.

That's because Baylor swept through the conference with a 9-0-1 record, good

for a No. 1 seed in this weekend's tournament in San Antonio, Texas.

"It may be the first time in the three years of the tournament that there are more than just two teams that can win this thing," Guerreri said.

The Bears knocked off both Big 12 powerhouses this season. Baylor beat Texas A&M 2-0 and knocked off NU 1-0. BU tied Texas Oct. 11.

Baylor is led by junior Courtney Saunders, who finished fourth in the Big 12 in scoring with 34 points.

"Baylor has had the same lineup for three years now," Guerreri said. "Everyone expected them to be in the hunt, but I don't think anyone expected them to outscore (A&M and Nebraska)."

If Baylor is going to win the tournament, they'll have to do it without starting goalkeeper Dawn Greathouse, who injured her knee in October and will be out for the rest of the season.

Freshman Megan Jones started for the Bears against Nebraska and will

have to shoulder the load this weekend.

"That is a huge loss," Missouri Coach Bryan Blitz said. "But they are talented all the way around."

The Tigers are the No. 5 seed and will play No. 4 Texas.

In the other half of the bracket, a semifinal showdown between Texas A&M and Nebraska could happen if the Aggies can beat Iowa State.

"We were trying to avoid Nebraska until the final," Guerreri said. "We have been positioning ourselves to beat Baylor for the past three weeks."

If A&M and Nebraska meet in the semifinals, it will be the third time in three years the two teams have met in the tournament.

Guerreri said this year's meeting could come with NU having a chip on its shoulder after the loss to Baylor.

"I talked to (NU Coach John Walker) and told him I felt sorry for whoever his team played next," Guerreri said. "Then I realized it was probably going to be me."

Buffaloes have 'no heart' in loss to No. 3 Nebraska

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Senior staff writer

Colorado Volleyball Coach Pi'i Aiu struggled to find a way to describe the Buffaloes' lop-sided three-game loss to No. 3 Nebraska on Wednesday night at the NU Coliseum. In fact, he struggled to say anything at all.

"I've got nothing to say," an unusually tight-lipped Aiu told reporters after the match. "If you have questions to answer, I'll answer them. If not, well, the sooner we get out of here, the better."

Nothing went well for CU in the 15-7, 15-5, 15-3 loss that both Aiu and the 13th-ranked Buffaloes would like to forget. Colorado, which has hit .274 against league opponents this season, mustered a .033 hitting percentage against the Cornhuskers.

And a school-record blocking night for NU—which broke the three-game mark with 38 block assists—contributed to the Buffaloes' 42 errors at the net.

Defensively, CU recorded just eight blocks. The Huskers posted a .326 hitting percentage with NU's outside hitters playing well at the net. Jaime

Krondak hit .414 and totaled 17 kills, while sophomore Nancy Meendering pounded a match-high 18 kills.

But Aiu insisted Nebraska did not surprise the Buffaloes with its game plan.

"They didn't do anything special," Aiu said. "We played very poorly. The way we played tonight we're not going to beat many teams in the Big 12, let alone the best team in the Big 12."

"And I don't want to take anything away from Nebraska. They've played a good match, and they're a solid team. But we are much better than we showed tonight."

CU outside hitter Sarah Lodge blamed the loss on the Buffaloes' seniors. Lodge, who leads the team with 3.59 kills per game, had nine for the entire match.

Senior captain Tegan Lynch, who averages three kills per contest, hit an uncharacteristic .133 percentage.

"We had no heart and no fight in us," Lodge said. "We had absolutely no senior leadership tonight. With four seniors on the team, that is going to hurt. I'm disappointed."

"I hope we have a better shot at them at home at the end of the season."

Nebraska starts off '98 season with new point guard, Holmes

From staff reports

The Nebraska men's basketball team will open its exhibition season tonight with one new face in the starting lineup.

Joe Holmes will attempt to fill the shoes of point guard Tyronn Lue, now with the Los Angeles Lakers, when the Cornhuskers play host to Pella Windows at 7:05 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

With the exception of Lue, Nebraska returns every player who started a game last season.

"We lost a great player in Tyronn Lue," NU Coach Danny Nee said, "but I know the players feel they have a lot to prove—that we can win without Tyronn."

Lue averaged a team-high 21.2

points per game in the Huskers' 32 contests last season. NU finished 20-12 after a loss to Arkansas in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

Along with Holmes, a transfer from Tyler (Texas) Junior College, the Huskers add guard Rodney Fields, also from Tyler Junior College, and three true freshmen.

"The new players have been brought in and nurtured by the older players and that's really refreshing," Nee said. "Usually there's a lot of competition—a lot of egos in basketball."

"With this team, it's really nice how they pull together. We have great senior leadership."

Nebraska returns four seniors, three of whom will start tonight along with junior guard Cookie Belcher.

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