

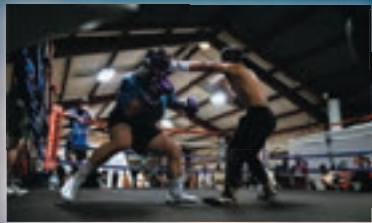
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THURSDAY, MARCH 21

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CAMPUS

Student organization to host first-ever boxing fight night in Reed Arena for local charity. **B1**



CAMPUS

What's it like to fly the president? Former Marine One pilot shares life as an aviator. **B1**

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL

No. 8 Nebraska
No. 9 Texas A&M
Fri, March 22
5:50 P.M.

NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

No. 6 Nebraska
No. 11 Texas A&M
Fri, March 22
9:30 P.M.

Let's Dance

Aggies vs Cornhuskers



Aggies square off against 8-seed Nebraska Cornhuskers in first round in Memphis

By Hunter Mitchell
@HunterM1001

It's tournament time. No more worries about Quad-1 wins and losses, NET rankings, strength of schedule or conference record. The fates of each college basketball team has been decided, and for Texas A&M men's basketball, it is one of the lucky few who get to play for a chance at a national title in March.

The Aggies were living on the bubble for the latter half of the season thanks to a five-game losing streak that stretched the entirety of February, which included Quad-3 losses to Vanderbilt and Arkansas.

However, the Maroon and White willed themselves back into the tournament with a strong close to the season, going on a five-game winning streak, beating Georgia, Mississippi State and Ole Miss twice.

The final win in that stretch came against Kentucky in the SEC Tournament quarterfinals — the first time A&M has beaten the Wildcats twice in a season — and seemingly clinched the Aggies berth in the NCAA Tournament for the second straight year. This is the first time A&M has made the NCAA Tournament in consecutive years since 2010-11.

The Maroon and White may not have had to worry about reaching the Big Dance as much as initially

projected, as A&M's No. 9 seeding put them an entire seed line above the play-in tournament, where they will face off against the 8-seed in the South Region, the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

Both teams have history playing against one another in the old Big 12, where the Cornhuskers hold the all-time 12-8 record against the Aggies, but neither have met on the hardwood since 2011.

Nebraska emerged as a surprise in the Big 10 this season, as the Cornhuskers were picked to finish 12 out of 14 teams. Instead, Nebraska finished third, tallying a 12-8 record with wins over tournament teams like Michigan State, Northwestern Wisconsin and Purdue along the way.

In last year's NCAA Tournament, the Maroon and White had the unfortunate privilege of playing a red-hot Penn State team that took advantage of A&M's biggest defensive weakness under coach Buzz Williams: 3-point shooting.

The Nittany Lions came into the game No. 3 in the country in 3-pointers per game and points from beyond the arch, No. 12 in 3-pointers attempted per game and No. 7 in 3-point percentage. Penn State routed the Aggies 76-59, sinking 13 3s on just 22 attempts to send A&M home early.

In a similar fashion to last season, the Maroon and White will have to face their demons once again, as — though maybe not at as high of a clip as Penn State — the Cornhuskers make their living from downtown.

Nebraska is No. 29 in 3-pointers attempted per game and No. 21 in 3s made per game, all led by its break-

MEN'S ON PG. A2

A&M women's basketball returns to NCAA Tournament in Year 2 of Joni Taylor era

By Shanielle Veazie
@shanielleveazie

It's all gas, no breaks for Joni Taylor and Texas A&M women's basketball postseason.

The 11-seed Aggies will take on 6-seed Nebraska Cornhuskers women's basketball team in the first round of the 2024 NCAA tournament on Friday, March 22 at 9:30 p.m. in Corvallis, Oregon.

A&M heads into Gill Coliseum for the Big Dance with much to prove, having lost four of its last five games, but ultimately improving from last year's 9-20 campaign.

"Joni is relentless," junior forward MJ Johnson said. "She told us last year when we had seven people that this is not the team that we will be next year and she spoke that life into us last year so we are so grateful to have our name called."

Taylor has said that her team struggles to come out aggressively and put four quarters together. In SEC play against the Arkansas Razorbacks, the Aggies scored only 20 points in the first half — just 5 in the second quarter. However, the Aggies rallied and scored 53 points in the second half to send the Razorbacks back to Fayetteville with a 73-67 loss.

Ten Aggies owning the hardwood in scoring is what it took to get the job done, with double-digit scoring from senior guards Aicha

Coulibaly and Sahara Jones, sophomore F Janiah Barker and freshman G Solé Williams. This type of production will be needed for the Aggies against the Cornhuskers.

Getting Coulibaly going early will also be key for the Aggies. The Auburn transfer did not back down in the battle against No. 1 South Carolina during the SEC tournament, dropping a career-high 32 points with six rebounds, two assists and three steals.

"We always harp on letting everyone touch the ball," Jones said. "When we have a high number of assists, we win games."

Managing the glass will also give the Maroon and White an edge. A&M is the No. 18 ranked rebounding team in the nation, notching 42.3 rebounds a contest, and are 14-1 this season when out-rebounding teams by 10 or more.

Last time the Aggies matched up against the Cornhuskers, it was the Huskers that took home a 74-63 win at Reed Arena in the second round of the 2013 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship.

The Cornhuskers are 22-11 overall and 11-7 in Big Ten play for their highest seed since 2014. This season, they managed wins over Purdue and NCAA qualifiers Michigan State and Maryland at the Big Ten Tournament before falling short, 89-94, in overtime to No. 1 seed Iowa in the championship game.

Big Ten Freshman of the Year and F Natalie Potts had led the way, owning five double-doubles, including 15 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks in the Big Ten quarterfinal win over Michigan State.

WOMEN'S ON PG. A2

Trev Alberts departs from Nebraska, takes helm of Aggie athletic department

By Luke White
@LukeWhite03

It takes a lot of convincing to get someone to leave a university where they're ingrained in history.

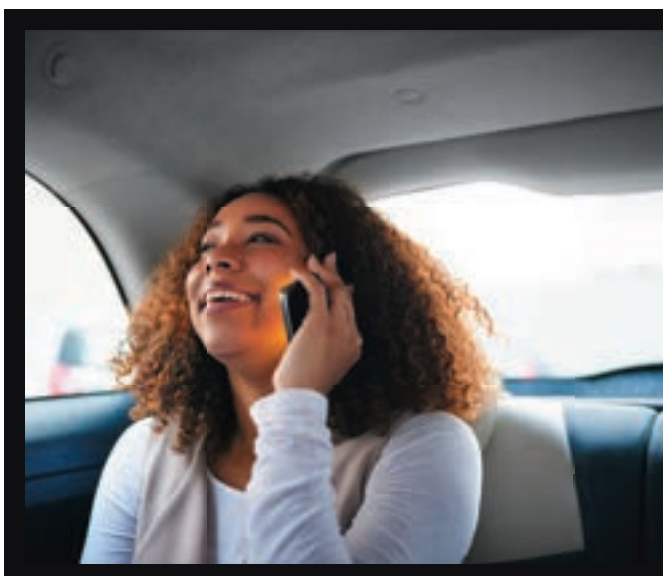
For many years, Trev Alberts was Nebraska football. He was a star linebacker for the Cornhuskers in their prime in the early 1990s, earning the Butkus Award and unanimous All-American honors in 1993. Under legendary coach Tom Osborne, Alberts went from walking beans and detasseling corn on an Iowa farm to being the No. 5 pick of the 1994 NFL Draft.

That year, Alberts' No. 34 was immortalized in Cornhusker lore with a speedy jersey retirement. Things came full circle in 2021 when Alberts, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame, returned to Nebraska as the university's athletic director and prodigal son.

Yet Alberts' return to Lincoln, Nebraska didn't last long, as Texas A&M came calling. The university leadership sought him out as the successor to athletic director Ross Bjork, and an introduction ceremony on Monday, March 18 kicked off his tenure as an Aggie.

"I just can't begin to tell you how honored that our family is to be standing here," Alberts said. "This is an elite institution that has unlimited potential. And the more I dug into

ALBERTS ON PG. A2



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