

Texas v A&M Under Lights Friday

Written by Alex Goff

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Texas versus Texas A&M is always a heated rivalry in any sport, and it gets rekindled in rugby under the lights Friday night in a clash of two undefeated teams.



“We’re going to get a good crowd,” said Texas captain and club president Skylar Talley. “Usually we get around 200 to a game, but we could get as many as 500, even though Spring Break starts this weekend.”

Texas has been working on a new pattern of play this year, one that focuses more on using space and putting players into space. It’s an enjoyable type of game, said Talley, but that doesn’t mean they’ve been perfect.

“We’ve been able to score some tries, but we’re not perfect,” said Talley. “I think the areas where we need improvement is just in execution. We’re able to run the pattern through the first or second phase, but after that, guys have been hitting rucks, and it breaks down a little. So what we’d like to see is better execution through more phases.”

Neither team is in first place despite being 2-0, as Texas Tech (who lost to the Longhorns last week 27-22) and Oklahoma (edged by Texas 39-38 two weeks ago) are both 2-1 and have the bonus points to put them in 1st and 2nd.

Still, the winner of this A&M v. Texas match will have the inside track to winning the Allied Rugby Conference.

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Texas needed some late-game help to down Tech last week, with Tommy Gilmore scoring with two minutes left to secure the 27-22 victory. The same was true against the Sooners, where Fernando Assing's try with a minute to go edged Oklahoma.

A&M has had an easier time of it so far, putting 105 on Sam Houston State and 82 on Baylor. Phil Hanson has scored multiple times for the Aggies in both games, while Connor Mills has been ruthless with his goalkicking, recording 45 points from three tries and 15 conversions in their first two league games.

So the teams come into this game traveling very different roads – one with two blowouts to their credit, one with two tense comeback wins.

Meanwhile, Texas Tech will face Oklahoma on Saturday, with the winner at 3-1 and still in the hunt. The loser drops to 2-2 and could be looking at 4th place.