

sports GLANCE

Future Aggie Brown to play in all-star game

Texas A&M basketball recruit Jerald Brown, the Texas Class 5A Player of the Year, will be one of 22 players competing Sunday in the 20th Annual McDonald's All-American Game in Pittsburgh.

The game will be televised nationally by CBS at 1 p.m.

Brown, a 6-foot-8-inch forward, is rated among the top 30 players in the country by almost every recruiting publication. As a senior at Aldine High School in Houston, he averaged 23.9 points and 11.5 rebounds per game.

More than 97 percent of the past participants in the McDonald's All-American Game have played for Division I programs and more than 100, including current all-stars Michael Jordan, Patrick Ewing, Shaquille O'Neal and Grant Hill, have gone on to NBA careers.

Men's Golf Team climbs up in rankings

The Texas A&M men's golf team is ranked No. 21 in the Rolex Team Rankings released Thursday by the College Golf Foundation. The Aggies were No. 22 in the previous rankings.

A&M's Dru Fenimore, a senior from Fort Worth, is ranked No. 18 in the Rolex Individual Rankings.

Aggies, Longhorns duel in dual meet

For only the third time in 22 years, the Texas A&M Men's Track Team will battle Texas in a dual meet on Saturday at Anderson Track and Field Complex.

Field events will begin at 6:30 p.m. with running events starting at 7 p.m. All events will be finals. The meet will conclude with the 1,600-meter relay at 8:45 p.m.

Waterski meet this Saturday in Iola

More than 100 water skiers from at least a dozen schools will come to compete in the Texas A&M University's annual club sport water ski tournament Saturday and Sunday.

The tournament will be held — rain or shine — at Century Ski Lake in Iola. Competition begins at 8 a.m. both days and should conclude around 5:30 p.m.

Participants from schools in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Mississippi will compete in three events: slalom, trick and jump. Admission is free and concessions will be available.

Women's Track Team to compete in Classic

The Texas A&M Women's Track Team will compete at the Rice University Bayou Classic today and Saturday at Rice Track Stadium in Houston.

The meet includes high school and university divisions. On Friday, field events begin at 2 p.m. and running events start at 2:30 p.m. On Saturday, field events begin at 12:30 p.m. and running events begin at 1 p.m.

Several Lady Aggies will be chasing NCAA qualifying marks. Junior Rosa Jolivet provisionally qualified for the national meet in the 100-meter hurdles at the Baylor Invitational last week with a time of 13.48, just off the automatic standard of 13.35. Jolivet also is closing in on the qualifying time in the 400-meter hurdles.

Golf Team hops up a spot in latest poll

The Texas A&M Women's Golf Team moved up one spot to No. 21 in the latest women's Rolex/Nickalus Collegiate Rankings released today.

The Aggies also gained one spot in the district compilations for the West Region, taking fourth behind Tulsa, Texas and Oklahoma State and moving past former No. 4 New Mexico State. In addition, two Aggies are listed among the nation's top 100 golfers. Sophomore Isabele Rosenberg, fell back to No. 28 after climbing as high as No. 19. Senior Kristina Edfors, dropped to No. 95.

SCORES

NBA

Chicago 111, Atlanta 80
Portland 94, Golden State 89
Denver 92, Vancouver 88
Cleveland 83, L.A. Clippers 81

WEST TEXAS SHOOTOUT

The top two SWC teams, No. 2 Texas Tech and No. 15 Texas A&M, face off in a four-game series this weekend in Lubbock.

By Lisa Nance
THE BATTALION

After taking three of four games from Houston last weekend, the Texas A&M Baseball team continues its Southwest Conference play in Lubbock this weekend as they take on the No. 2 Texas Tech Red Raiders in what could prove to be their toughest test this season.

The Aggies are currently ranked No. 15 in the nation and have compiled a 24-8 overall and 5-3 SWC record.

Tech, which has been in the top 10 for most of the season, has compiled a 31-3 overall and 6-2 SWC record. Despite Tech's high ranking, A&M junior outfielder Chad Allen said that the two teams are a good match-up.

"I think we're pretty evenly-matched teams," Allen said. "We split with each other last year and you know, they've lost some and we've lost some. With the guys that they lost and the guys

that we lost, we're coming back as the same teams. We've got a lot of confidence in ourselves that we can go in there and hopefully win three.

If we win four that's great, if we win two that's not so great but at least we split with them."

A sweep is not going to be easy, though. The Aggies know that they will be facing one of, if not the, toughest team that they have faced all year.

"They're really an aggressive team that really has a lot of confidence in themselves," Allen said. "They go out every day when they have a game and they think they're going to win the game. I think that's really what puts them above most of the teams because they go out and they know that they're going to win the game. They're a really great team that has a lot of confidence in themselves."

The Aggies have reason to be confident as well. In last weekend's game against Houston,

they pounded the Cougars for a total of 40 runs in four games. But for the Aggies to sweep the Red Raiders, they are going to have to not only click at the plate, but on the mound as well. Sophomore pitcher Matt Blank said that as long as they can put everything together, they've got a good shot at winning the series.

"Our hitting has come alive the past couple of games," Blank said. "We're hitting the ball really well and our defense has played solid almost all year. Our pitching staff has also been throwing well. I think our team is coming together a little bit and if we can get our pitching and hitting together at the same time we can have a good shot. The last couple of weeks, the hitting has been good or the pitching has been good, we just haven't clicked at all.

Allen agreed that it is going to take both good hitting and

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Aggie left fielder Chad Allen hustles into first base against The University of Houston last weekend at Olsen Field.

Super sophomore has batters firing Blanks

Matt Blank transferred to A&M after mowing down Junior College batters with a 12-0 record and an 0.83 ERA.

By Philip Leone
THE BATTALION

Most of the time it takes the "new guy" a while to make his mark on a team, perhaps a season or two to "cut his teeth."

But don't tell this to sophomore A&M pitcher Matt Blank.

Though Blank has worn maroon and white for only half a season, he has already made an impact in Aggieland.

In fact, the transfer left-hander out of Galveston Junior College has already pitched his way into the Aggie record books.

On Feb. 16, Blank took to the hill at Olsen Field against the University of Texas-Pan American in his second start as an Aggie and walked away with a piece

of the no-hit pressure until the final inning.

"I came out and threw the ball real well and got into a rhythm," Blank said. "My teammates did a pretty good job of staying away and leaving me alone, and I didn't get nervous until going into the ninth."

"At the end, I just took a deep breath with every pitch before I'd let it go. Everything sort of went my way that day."

Not a bad way to pick up your first Division I victory.

"It was a big deal for me because it was my first start at home here at A&M and my first win at this level," Blank said. "It was important for us to start off the season in front of the home crowd on a successful note."

Blank is no stranger to success. A standout at Martin High School in Arlington, Blank was an All-State performer in his junior campaign and helped lead the Warriors to the 5A State Championship in 1993 along with current Aggie outfielder Johnny Hunter.

So impressive was Blank in high school that radar guns from college scouts tracking the blue-chip's pitches were soon joined by those from the professional ranks.

The New York Yankees selected Blank in the late rounds of the 1994 draft; however, instead of hitting the minor league trails immediately upon graduation, Blank opted for a little extra seasoning at Galveston Junior College — a program that has earned a reputation as a pipeline to major colleges throughout the

Southwest.

Blank was the ace of the Whitecaps' staff last season, finishing 12-0 with a pocket-sized 0.83 ERA en route to JC All-American honors.

After such a superb season, Blank decided to take his game to the next level, and major college coaches from around the nation came calling for his services.

A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson was one of the first in line and said he was impressed not only with Blank's lively left arm, but also for his work ethic and winning approach to the game.

"Matt has a winning personality — the type of guy who has been successful all his life," Johnson said. "He likes to have the ball in his hand and likes a challenge out on the mound."

"Matt's also dedicated to being the best player he can be and is willing to do what it takes to achieve that."

Ironically, Blank nearly signed with the University of Texas before rethinking his decision to pitch for Longhorn Head Coach Cliff Gustafson, who some believe overworks young arms.

"I decided that I really didn't want to go to Texas because I figured I might have to throw quite frequently and use my arm up," Blank said. "I knew some guys here at A&M and thought they had a good caliber ballclub and chance to go to the (College) World Series."

After opening the season on the road with a 6-1 loss to the University of Arizona, Blank rolled off four straight wins, including victories over Maine and Michigan, before losing to Baylor in the Southwest Conference First-

Pitch Tournament on March 15.

Heading into this weekend's start in Lubbock against defending SWC champion Texas Tech, Blank has a 4-2 record and a respectable 4.17 ERA. He is also the Aggie leader in strikeouts with 37.

Though Johnson said Blank's last few outings

have been less than spectacular, he is confident that Blank will rebound with a solid outing against Texas Tech. "He's had a couple of off-weeks here lately because he's had problems with the location of his fastball," Johnson

said. "But he'll work out of it, and we expect to see some good things from him this weekend."

Texas A&M No-Hitters

On Feb. 16, Matt Blank entered Aggie history when he threw a no-hitter, just the 8th in school history.

1907: George Smith vs. Texas
1973: Bobby Wittkamp vs. TCU
1978: Mark Thurmond vs. Tech
1982: Rick Luecken vs. Delta State
1983: Rick Luecken vs. St. Mary's
1987: Darryl Fry vs. La. Tech
1988: Fred Riscen vs. Rice
1996: Matt Blank vs. UT-Arlington

BY THE NUMBERS

Men's Final Four matchup	
Syracuse (22-9)	Mississippi St. (22-7)
74.5	72.2
68.4	62.2
46.5	47.9
40.8	38.3
184-230	203-250
194-675	226-729
72.3	76.0
62.3	69.9
38.7	38.9
37.0	33.0
17.4	18.1
14.3	11.3

Men's Final Four matchup	
Massachusetts (22-1)	Kentucky (22-2)
74.8	62.2
61.8	69.3
45.4	48.9
38.4	41.1
187-246	211-264
160-596	182-645
68.0	67.6
68.7	67.6
40.2	41.9
34.3	36.8
15.0	21.8
10.3	16.4



THE BATTALION Sports Desk Final Four Staff Picks

What It Is	Georgandis	Day	Leone	Nance	Smith	Winder	Buffin	Swift
MSU vs. Syracuse	Syracuse	MSU	MSU	Syracuse	Syracuse	MSU	MSU	MSU
Kentucky vs. UMass	UMass	UMass	Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	UMass
Tournament MVP	Travieso	Walters	Delk	Delk	Delk	Jones	Pitino	Camby

National Champion Why?	UMass	MSU	Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	MSU	Kentucky	UMass
	Look! I didn't pick the Oilers!	Sherrill castrated a Minuteman!	The Family says it's a lock	I have this strange feeling	Is this deja vu?	The man who took Oklahoma State last year	Uh, Kristy, he doesn't play anymore	They ain't No. 1 for nothing

Saturday: Mississippi State vs. Syracuse, 4:42 p.m.
Kentucky vs. UMass, 30 minutes after conclusion.
Monday: National Championship Game, 8:22 p.m.

