

Ags Mesh Maroon With Orange For SWC Baseball Lead

By Clifford Broyles
Battalion Sports Writer

The Texas Aggie pitching staff extended its string to 31 consecutive innings without allowing a run this weekend by shutting out the SMU Mustangs in a three game series on the scoreboard as well as in the win column.

Doug Rau, Dave Benesh and Bruce Katt took turns blanking

the Mustangs as the Aggies moved into a first place tie with the Texas Longhorns in the Southwest Conference race.

Katt started the streak with six scoreless frames against Missouri Tuesday.

A&M and Texas have 5-0 records and Rice is a step back with a 5-1 mark. The Aggies play Rice in a three game series here this weekend and host Baylor today at 3:00.

Rau pitched a three-hitter in the opener of the series and the first game of a Friday double-header. The junior southpaw hurled his second shutout in a row and lowered his earned run average to 0.26.

He aided his own cause by starting a two run rally in the third inning with a single.

Butch Ghutzman walked moving Rau to second. Dave Elmendorf's grounder was mishandled by third baseman Dave Laughlin allowing Rau to score. Laughlin then cleanly fielded Billy Hodge's grounder but overthrew first and Ghutzman scored.

The Aggies added two more runs, to the 5-0 win, with a pair of runs in the fourth.

R. J. Englert, Boyd Hadaway

and Chris Sans singled to produce the first run and when the Pony left fielder let the ball go through his legs Hadaway scored the second run.

The fifth Aggie run scored in the seventh when Elmendorf walked stole second and scored on a double by Hadaway.

Benesh zipped the Mustangs 7-0 with a six hitter in the second game lowering his era to an outstanding 1.05.

Englert started the Aggies in the second game with a single leading off the fourth and when pitcher Pete Stare overthrew first he journeyed to third. Hadaway's single knocked in the run.

Hodge tripled to begin a two-run outburst in the sixth. He scored when the Mustang shortstop let Sans' grounder get away. Sans stole second and scored on a double by Jim Raley.

The Aggies added three runs in the eighth with Hodge leading off and being hit by a pitch. Hadaway sacrificed moving him to second and he scored on Sans' single. Ragland's grounder went through the firstbaseman and Sans scored when the throw to the plate was dropped by the catcher. Ragland scored on an-

other of the Mustangs eight errors.

Hodge led off the ninth with a repeat performance as he was hit by a pitch. Hadaway's single advanced him to third and Jim Sampson's single sent the Aggie catcher across the plate.

The most outstanding performance came Saturday, however, as Bruce Katt broke a Southwest Conference record by striking out 19 batters while pitching the Aggies to an 11-0 win.

Katt's performance was two better than the old mark of 17 whiffs by Larry Hardy of the University of Texas at Austin.

A&M scored the only run they needed in the second as Sans singled but was forced at second by Jim Raley. Ragland was hit by a pitch and Ghutzman walked loading the bases. The Ponies second baseman Sam Cangelasi bobbled Englert's grounder and Raley scored the Aggies' first run.

Randy Moseley put the halter on the Aggies until they scored twice in the fifth and was relieved after allowing two runs in the seventh.

Englert started the A&M fifth with a single and stole second. Hodge reached first on an error

and Hadaway singled driving in Englert. Sans single scored Hodge.

Hadaway and Sans hit back-to-back home runs for the Aggies in the seventh as they kayoed Moseley.

Elmendorf singled to open the eighth, moved to third on an error and scored on a sacrifice fly by Hodge.

The Aggies saved their best for

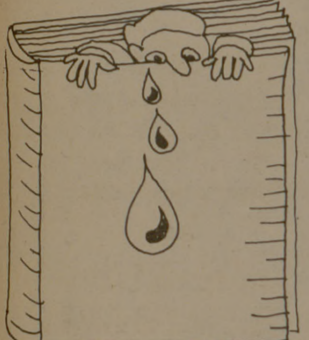
last scoring five runs in the ninth. Raley and Ragland singled to lead off and Katt was safe on an error that allowed Raley to score. Ghutzman doubled scoring Ragland and Englert's fourth single scored Katt.

Elmendorf walked loading bases and Hodge grounded out as Ghutzman scored from third. Englert scored on a similar play by Hadaway.

Englert, Hadaway and Sans led the Aggie hitters who seem to be in the groove after a slow start.

Englert collected 7 hits, Hadaway 6 hits and 6 runs batted in and Sans 5 hits and 3 RBI's in the series.

A&M plays Baylor today at 3 p.m., in a makeup of the game postponed from Tuesday March 21 because of the death of President Rudder.



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Katt Fans 19 To Lead A&M

When Texas A&M baseball coach Tom Chandler nominated sophomore lefty Bruce Katt to start the third game against Southern Methodist, he admitted to a certain uneasiness.

After all, the 6-2, 195-pound rookie from New Braunfels had pitched only 15 innings of varsity ball and was yet to face his first league competition.

Katt himself confessed to a little uncertainty. "I was scared to death," the bespectacled youngster said after setting a Southwest Conference record by striking out an incredible 19 SMU batters while pitching a four-hit shutout.

Such a stunning debut would be too fantastic for even the most melodramatic fiction, but Katt made it happen in real life, thanks to a hopping fastball and a sharp-breaking curve.

Dave Benesh, the senior right-hander who blanked SMU on six

hits in the second game of the series, had an idea that Katt would have a good game. "I watched him warming up and his fastball was really doing tricks. I figured if he could get it over the plate he would be real tough," Benesh said.

Adding to the brilliant performance was the fact that Katt's longest mound stint this spring was only six innings way back on Mar. 14 against St. Mary's in

San Antonio. But the rookie didn't get tired. Ten of the last 11 putouts were via the whiff route.

The SWC record was 17 strikeouts by Larry Hardy of Texas against Rice in 1967. For the record, Katt fanned one in the first inning, one in the second, two in the third, two in the fourth, three in the fifth, two in the sixth, three in the seventh, three in the eighth, and two in the ninth.



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