

Aggie netters make their move

By CLIFFORD BROYLES

After 10 dual matches, the Texas Aggie tennis team has won six and lost four. The four losses have been to Brigham Young, Oklahoma City, Corpus Christi and Trinity.

You'll find the names of those teams listed in the top 12 teams in the national rankings, and Trinity will be number two behind UCLA. There is some debate over whether that should be number one.

"We're just a fraction away from being a great team," A&M Coach Omar Smith said of his netters. "All we need is to win a few more key points and key matches."

Those key matches—such as against Corpus Christi last week and Trinity Wednesday—showed in favor of the clutch championship experience of the ranked teams and that's why there ranked.

Among the Aggie's six wins one was over ninth ranked Oral Roberts, and Smith said he felt his team is to the point that on a given day they can beat anybody.

The two main reasons for that statement are Dickie Fikes and Jon Ragland, Fikes and Ragland have alternated between the number one and two positions this year in singles play, a position they won by winning challenge matches.

Ragland started the year as the number one man but Fikes took over the spot with a tremendous show in the Corpus Christi tournament, winning three of four singles matches. It wasn't that Ragland was playing bad it was a matter of Fikes playing extremely well.

Ragland had a major upset just last Friday when he downed Jorge Andrew of UCC, the top player in Venezuela.

"Jon and Dickie can play with anybody and Hickey (Mike) and Connell (Tommy) aren't far behind," Smith said.

The Aggies have an extreme amount of depth and list 16 players on their roster. Smith said that there wasn't that much difference from some of the players who are playing now and those who aren't.

"Invariably Jon or Dickie always win despite playing against the toughest competition every time," Smith added.

Right now the Aggies have senior Mike Hickey and junior Tommy Connell behind Fikes and Ragland and then another veteran, sophomore Lawton Park, and freshman Dan Courson are listed in the top six.

All except Courson, who was busy winning the Class 4A state doubles championship last year, were main players on last year's team.

Ragland missed last season due to an injury after winning the SWC doubles crown two years ago.

Despite playing the top teams, the grind hasn't gotten the team down. Before its over, the Aggies will have faced six of the top ten teams in the nation and several more that are listed in the top twenty. One of their other wins came over 14th ranked Houston.

"They don't acknowledge defeat. They stay in there real well," Smith said and proof of this is that in the matches with BYU and Corpus four of the matches were decided in split sets. If the Aggies had been able to take more of those it would have been extremely close.

Even in the Trinity match Wednesday, Ragland and Fikes sent Bob McKinley and Pancho Walthall to split sets before losing.

"We haven't lost to anybody really bad," Smith pointed out, "and we've played the top teams well."

The Southwest Conference race is still over two weeks away and the Aggies will have defending champion Rice (number 3 in the country) and SMU, rated number two in the league in most circles, first off. Both will be at home and good showings in those could mean a banner year for the Ag netters, who have already showed their year will be an exciting one.



AGGIE SHORTSTOP Jimmy Langford arrives just a shade late in a play at first base in Saturday's doubleheader with St. Edwards. The Aggies won both of those games and split two with NAIA power Sam Houston Tuesday. They return to action Saturday when they host Lamar Tech for a doubleheader. (Photo by Mike Rice)

Powerful Trinity smashes Ags, 9-0

The nation's number two ranked tennis team, Trinity, put its mark on the Texas Aggies Wednesday, taking a 9-0 win and extending their streak of unbeaten dual matches to eight.

Trinity was runnerup to UCLA in the national championships last year and Bob McKinley, Pancho Walthall and Bohn Smith, three members of that team, were here.

In the number one singles match, Dickie Fikes had McKinley on the ropes for a time but the younger brother of former Wimbledon champ Chuck McKinley came back for a split set victory. Fikes nailed McKinley 6-3 in the first set but bowed 6-1 to send the match to a decisive third set, which McKinley took 7-5. The seventh and decisive point didn't go up against Fikes until six match points had been scored.

In the number two match, Jon Ragland also sent Walthall into split sets before losing.

Hepatitis fells James; may miss 1971 grid season

Lex James, who quarterbacked the Texas Aggies last year as a sophomore, is confined to his home in Houston with infectious hepatitis and will not be able to participate in spring training.

James became ill last week but the hepatitis wasn't confirmed until he visited a Houston hospital. He will be confined to bed for six to eight weeks and then will have a long recuperative period. James may not be available for the 1971 season.

Athletic Director Gene Stallings said that precautionary shots have been given to the other football players, coaches and others who may have been in contact with him.

Another sophomore of last season, defensive lineman Bruce Best, also will miss spring drills. He recently was operated on for a detached retina of the left eye and will be in Hermann Hospital in Houston for about a week.

Ag JV tops MCC

The Texas Aggie junior varsity baseball team grabbed a pair of wins Tuesday afternoon on Kyle Field over McLennon County Junior College to extend their winning streak to three without a loss.

Sam Camilli, younger brother of former Aggie baseball star Lou Camilli who is now with the Cleveland Indians of the American League, was the winning pitcher in the opener, as A&M topped the Waco school 9-3. In the second game, Wayne Vivial, a freshman from LaMarque hurled the JV to 7-3 win.

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Ag swim entrants

Coach Dennis Fosdick has announced a 19-man squad to represent A&M in the SWC Swimming Championship at Austin this weekend.

Entrants by event are:

Thursday
500-yard freestyle—Eric Wolff, Dan Sonnenberg, Mike Hicks, Martin Litteken, John Allred. 200-yard individual medley—Hicks, Steve Prentice, Litteken, Steve Sonnenberg, Doug Carson. 50-yard freestyle—Tom Sparks, John McCleary, Hicks, Bill Stewart, Mike McLellan. One-meter diving—Duncan Cooper, Greg Rippey. 400-yard medley relay—Prentice, Carson, Sparks, Bob Willoughby.

Friday
200-yard butterfly—Willoughby, Wolff, Hicks, McLellan, Litteken, Allred. 200-yard freestyle—

Wolff, Sparks, Gordon Taylor, D. Sonnenberg, Hicks, Allred. 100-yard breaststroke—Carson, McCleary, Fred Meyers, S. Sonnenberg, Barry Streusand. 100-yard backstroke—Prentice, Sparks, Hicks, D. Sonnenberg, Taylor, Sandy McPherson. 400-yard individual medley—Hicks, Prentice, Carson, Litteken. 800-yard freestyle relay—Hicks, D. Sonnenberg, Wolff, Taylor.

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