Baseball star R. J. Englert thinks Aggies have a chance

By RICHARD M. BURATTI

A&M's All-America baseball candidate, R. J. Englert, believes the Aggies still have a good shot at the Southwest Conference baseball crown.

Englert, a senior majoring in finance, thinks the standings will look quite different after this coming weekend.

Friday and Saturday Texas and Texas Christian play a crucial three-game series. Front-running TCU has a one-game lead in the SWC race.

"I think there may be a three-way tie after their series," said Englert, A&M's center fielder, "because Texas somehow seems to win the big games."

This means A&M, Texas and TCU could be in this three-way tie. Of course, A&M would have to sweep its three-game series with the Rice Owls this weekend.

The Aggies haven't been playing up to their potential so far, but things are beginning to pick up.

"We've got the pitching and a good defense, but we haven't been hitting the ball," Englert explained. "We have good hitters, but it seems like everybody is having trouble."

Englert surely isn't including himself. He is hitting at a .450 clip for one of the best averages in the nation.

"Sandy Bate and Jim Hacker are hitting the ball real well and several others are beginning to get some wood on the ball," Englert said. "Butch Ghutzman had been having trouble with his hitting, mainly because he was trying too hard. He's breaking out of it now because he is playing more relaxed ball."

For the last three years, Englert has been one of the leading hitters in the nation. He hit .400 and .367, in his sophomore and junior years respectively, and is currently in a 24-game hitting streak.

Because of his fine batting average, his good defensive play in the outfield and his excellent speed, Englert is a prime candidate for All-America honors. It seems a certainty that Englert will be drafted in the professional baseball draft coming up June 20.

"I definitely want to play pro baseball, but I'll have to wait and see if someone drafts me," he said. "If I don't get drafted, then I'll try to sign as a free agent."

Englert says he has no preference of ball clubs. He just wants to play pro baseball.

"I had the opportunity to sign this past summer with the Detroit Tigers as a free agent," Englert explained, "but I turned them down because I wanted to come back and finish my bility with the Aggies. W a good ball club, and I ing a part of it."

Concerning this year's league race, Englert sa Astros are the team to For the World Series, he look for the Astros and th timore Orioles.

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