

Smith says Rice loss due to attitude

By TONY GALLUCCI
Staff Sports Writer

HOUSTON — A lack of winning attitude, said coach Omar Smith, cost the A&M tennis team its second straight match in conference play. Host Rice University demolished the Aggies in singles play en route to a 5-2 victory.

Smith was sorely disappointed at the outcome of the match, es-

pecially in singles where the Aggies won only one set. "There was just a lack of winning attitude, no determination."

The loss, echoing Saturday's shutout loss to Houston, is quite a turnabout from the first half of the season which saw the Ags dispose of nationally-ranked opponents right and left.

In the No. 1 singles match, Bill Wright began with two double

faults and before regaining his composure found himself behind 2-0. Wright battled back and broke highly-touted Emilio Montano's service twice to forge ahead, 4-2.

Montano broke back and forced the set into a tie-breaker which he won for Rice.

Wright then fell apart and failed to hold serve in the second set as Montano shut him out, 6-0.

Dan Courson took on Rice's Alan Boss in the No. 2 match, but Boss took Courson to lunch to the tune of 7-6, 6-3. Courson battled Boss in the first set but lost the tie-breaker.

Smith was semi-complimentary of Courson, "Dan is probably the most consistent player we have, but even he has lost the desire in the close ones."

Courson explains, "Everybody's gotten a little stale, we've gotten

In the No. 1 doubles match, Courson teamed with Hoover to meet Rice's Montano and Boss. The Owls took the first set 7-5 producing a turnabout in Aggie play. Courson and Hoover retaliated with a barrage of shots just out of the reach of the shorter Montano and Boss and took the second and third sets both at 6-4 to win the match.

Hoover facing double match point in the last set, pasted his first serve into the upper reaches of the net. Nonplussed by the chances of a double fault, he aced the second serve along the middle stripe to finish the match.

Wright and Emley just missed the first set of the second doubles with Silverthorn and Alexander in the tie-breaker but returned to take the match in the final sets, 7-5, 6-4.

The Aggies will be hosting North Texas State Thursday at the varsity courts at 1:30 p.m.

Smith indicated that the Ags should be favored over NTSU but with the players in their current slump he doesn't know what the results might be.

Smith did say that he would scramble the lineup some though. "We'll be trying some new faces. We're gonna get some guys who really want to play like Kermit Smith or Scooter McMeans.

"Our trademark was courage at the beginning of the season and I can't explain the lack of it now. We need some determination."

The NTSU match begins a long series of matches for the Aggies which sees dual matches and a tournament in ten days including trips to Oklahoma and Dallas.

The team then has a two-day layoff before competing in four straight matches followed by the conference meet.

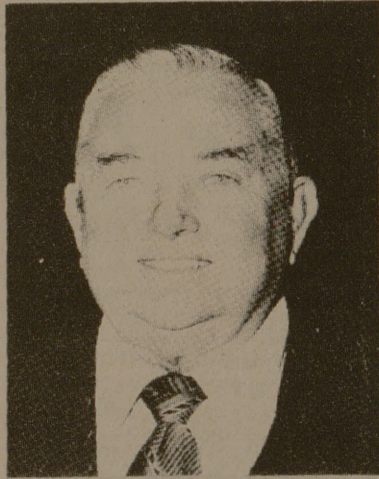


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Coach Omar Smith

into a groove. Playing is just a habit now."

Bill Hoover was smashed 6-2, 6-2 in the third match. "Today I don't think it was the desire," said Hoover. "I didn't have the mechanics and when the mechanics don't work, you don't play, you can't win."

Charles Emley, in the fourth singles match, was the only Aggie to win a set in singles competition. Emley knocked off Rice's Swede, Anders Johansson, in the first set, 6-2. Johansson came back to overtake Emley in the second set, 6-4, and before Emley could get untracked Johansson had him for the match, 6-1.

Looking back at the match, Smith said, "Charles (Emley) played a very courageous match, he showed a lot of character. He buckled down in a tight situation.

"I think Charles is the key to the team just now and if he can start pulling out the close matches we may start winning again."

In the fifth match, John Kirwan was defeated by Rich Silverthorn, 6-1, 6-1.

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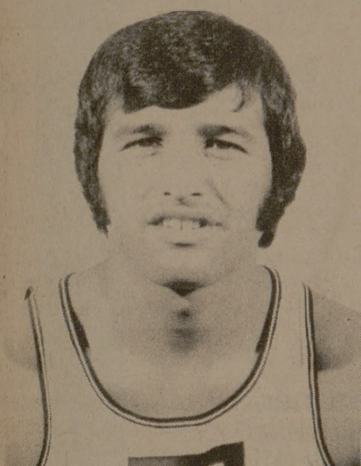
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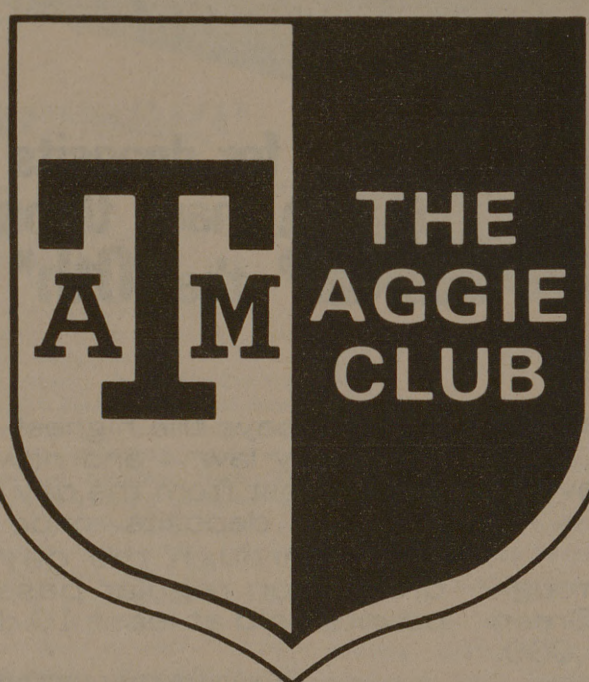
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