

sports

It's conference time for A&M

BY DERRICK GRUBBS

The Texas Aggies begin defense of their Southwest Conference baseball championship when they host Houston in a three-game series at Travis Park in Bryan.

The games were originally scheduled to be played at A&M's new Olsen Field, but University officials and A&M coach Tom Chandler agreed Wednesday afternoon that the facility would not be ready in time for the SWC opener on Friday.

The Aggies and the Cougars will play a single nine-inning game Friday at 3 p.m. and a doubleheader at 1 p.m. Saturday. Twinbill will consist of a seven-inning first game followed by a nine-inning nightcap.

UH comes to town with a 6-4 record and a four-game winning streak. Last year they were 27-17-1 on the season and finished sixth in the SWC with a 11-12-1 league mark.

The Ags set themselves up for the SWC championship with a three-game sweep of their series with the Cougars last year, winning by scores of 2-1, 7-1 and 3-0.

"We're an awfully young team this year," says UH assistant baseball coach Butch Glutzman. "We've had two or three freshmen in our lineup most of the time, but we've also made a lot of progress the past few days."

"Just like a lot of teams, we've been plagued by the bad weather and haven't gotten in as much work as we would have liked. Right now our pitching situation is up in the air. We don't have our top three starters from last year returning like A&M does."

Still, the Cougars are not without their share of talent. Their starting

rotation will likely include senior Billy Blum, who is 2-0 with a 0.58 ERA. He has yielded only one earned run in 15 innings on the mound.

Another probable starter is sophomore Tom Lukish, who is 0-1 with a 4.41 ERA, but leads the team in strikeouts with 16. The third starter could be either junior Greg Shoemaker (1-0) or senior Lonnie McKinney (0-0).

Contrary to Glutzman's assessment, UH also has a fair amount of experience in their lineup. The team they will likely field against the Aggies includes four seniors and four juniors, with freshmen only at third base and designated hitter.

The probable Cougar lineup with their season batting averages will have junior Jay Beard (.324) in centerfield, senior Gary Weiss (.167) at second base, junior Donnie Randall (.222) in leftfield, senior Donny Lopez (.357) in rightfield, freshman Mike Breslin (.321) at third base, freshman Terry Byrum (.174) the designated hitter, senior Steve Kovar (.408) at shortstop, junior Bobby Hollas (.167) at first base, and junior Jeff Copeland (.313) at catcher.

Beard currently leads the Cougs in home runs (three) and RBI's (10), while both Lopez and Kovar have hit safely in every one of Houston's games so far this year.

A&M will come into the series 6-2 after splitting a doubleheader with St. Mary's last Tuesday.

"Our pitching against St. Mary's was very impressive," Chandler said Wednesday. "A team is no better than its pitching and we'll need it against Houston. UH is a hit and run type of team with good speed.

They've got the best double play combination in the conference in Weiss and Kovar. They'll be aggressive and come in ready to play."

The rotation the Aggies will use against Houston will have junior Mark Ross (0-1) starting the nine-inning game Friday, with junior Mark Thurmond (2-0) and senior David Pieczynski (1-0) slated to be the starters in the doubleheader.

Chandler said he will use junior John Pockrus in short relief, and senior Jim McWilliams and freshman Perry Swanson in long relief if needed.

The rest of the A&M lineup with their season averages will have senior Robert Bonner (.310) at shortstop, junior Mark Warriner (.300) at third base, sophomore Mike Hurdle (.296) in centerfield, junior Kyle Hawthorne (.500) at first base, senior Robert Verde (.167) in leftfield, either senior Tim Feickert (.316) or freshman Rodney Hodde (.267) the designated hitter, junior Shelton McMath (.150) in rightfield, junior Buster Turner (.188) at catcher, and junior Steve Robinson (.200) at second base.

Hawthorne, besides leading the team in hitting, also leads in home runs (five), RBI's (13) and total bases (28). He is also heading up the Aggies in another less publicized statistic, on-base-average. Hawthorne has gotten on base 26 of the 32 times he has come to the plate.

Houston is one of the teams Chandler believes will be in the battle for the SWC crown.

"There's no doubt they'll be a top contender. Beard is swinging a hot bat and Blum and Lukish are two of the better pitchers in the league. They may have a couple of freshman



A&M catcher Buster Turner beats out an infield hit. The junior from Texarkanna is currently batting .188. A&M opens its SWC

season against the Houston Cougars this weekend at Travis Park.

Battalion photo by Dean Clemens

in their starting lineup, but overall, they're a veteran ball club."

The A&M-UH series might lack the modern surroundings of Olsen Field, but when it comes down to the primary issue, the bases at Travis Park are 90 feet apart also.

SMU favored in swim meet

With one of the fastest pools in America serving as center stage, the 47th annual Southwest Conference Swimming and Diving Championships open a three-day run this weekend with defending champion SMU expected to defend its perennial title.

Swimmers from eight schools dive into competition Thursday at the Olympic Center pool on the campus of the University of Texas, the site of last year's meet which saw SWC records broken in 12 of the 13 individual events and all three relays. Only Baylor will be missing among the hopefuls as the Bears do not field a swim team.

SMU, winner of 21 consecutive swim championships, on paper looks to be the pre-meet favorite, having already won one meet over its top rivals, Texas and Houston. Mustang coach George McMillion agrees his team probably should be favored, but not because of the lopsided scores by which his team has been winning.

"We are awfully strong in the relays and when you swim relays in a dual meet, they count much more than in the conference meet," he explained. "A team that might finish second to us in the conference meet will not lose nearly as many points as had it been a dual meet."

Mustang tankers have turned in the best times in all three relay classes to date this season, well as claiming top times in seven of the 13 individual groupings.

Sprinters Kim Davis, Mark Chenier and Andy Veris will lead the SMU assault on the SWC record book at this year's meet which, according to McMillion, may see every conference record broken again. Davis has already swum to a time of 20.86 in the 50 freestyle, below his SWC record of 20.88. Veris, who leads both the 200 freestyle and 500 freestyle rankings has posted a best of 1:38.29 in the 200 freestyle, lower than his loop record of 1:39.47.

Other top Mustang entrants include Ken Brenton, whose time of

53.06 in the 100 backstroke is the league's top time to date, and Bill Glasstetter in both the 100 and 200 butterfly. Glasstetter's clocking of 1:49.06 in recent 200 fly competition tied his SWC record.

SMU's top challenges for the title are expected to come from Texas and Houston. The Longhorns hold five individual leads and the Cougars two, but both are stong in the distance and medley races, which are generally thought to be the Mustangs' weakest.

Top Longhorn hopefuls include SWC record-holder John McMahon in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke events, as well as distance man Jeff Krumwiede and all-around performer Darrell Fick. McMahon has posted top times of 58.76 and 2:07.60 in his respective events to lead the league, while Krumwiede will challenge for the 1650 freestyle championship. Fick's best 4:04.30 in the 400 individual medley is a top time and his time of 4:35.43 is second to Veris in 500 freestyle competition.

Houston hopes are carried by distance swimmer Simon Gray, another SWC record-holder, and Peter Dawson, whose time of 1:55.86 leads the participants in the 200 individual medley category. Gray has swam to a 15:50.71 in the 1650 competition in 1978, after tying for high-point honors in last year's meet.

Other top entrants include Mustang sprinters Bill Redinger, Greg Kraus and Hunter Richmond; Texas Doug Harlow whose time of 1:55.60 leads the 200 backstroke entries; Texas A&M's Bob Leland, second to McMahon in the 100 breaststroke with a 59.44, and Texas Tech's Eric Muehlberger, runner-up to Brenton with a clocking of 53.20 in the 100 backstroke.

Diving competition is wide open as last year's winner, SMU's Scott Reich, has departed, as has runners-up Keith Ranney and Pat Bieker of the Mustangs. Longhorn sophomore Tony Scott will challenge for the title in both one-meter and three-meter competition.

KNOCK KNOCK
Who's There?
Appetite and pocketbook well-answered with our CHILI KNOCK. Chili & Beans, grilled knockwurst, toasted bun and grated American cheese...
ONLY \$1.99
iHOP
Welcome back to the Restaurant!
GOOD 2 P.M.-10 P.M.
2/23/78
103 COLLEGE

KIWI
March 3 & 4 8:00 p.m. \$1.00 at the door.
Basement Coffeehouse
Outdoor Concert Friday March 3 1:00 p.m.
Music Workshop - Saturday: March 4 3:00 p.m.
in the Coffeehouse - Rm. 208-MSC

EARN EXTRA CASH
as a Blood Plasma Donor at Plasma Products Inc. of Texas
313 College Main in Northgate College Station
Relax or study in our comfortable beds while you donate — great atmosphere.
Bring this coupon & receive a \$2 Bonus on your first donation. Effective til Mar. 15, 1978.
Call for more information 846-4611

GREAT ISSUES AND CAMAC
present
LEONEL J. CASTILLO — commissioner of immigration and naturalization service. speaking on —
"Aliens and their economic impact"
Thursday, March 2 8 p.m.
Room 206, M.S.C.
Students, free
Others, 50c

SUPER JEANS SALE
2 BIG DAYS FRIDAY & SATURDAY ONLY
March 3 and 4
Wrangler or Levi Small Bells
\$10⁸⁸
Hurry! While They Last Both Locations
TOP DRAWER
1705 Texas Ave. S./Gulpepper Plaza
3733 E. 29th St./Town & Country Center