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Ray Hutchison

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sports

Aggies take two from Texas

BY DERRICK GRUBBS

The Texas Aggies solidified their position in the SWC championship race this past weekend by taking two-out-of-three from Texas at Disch-Falk Field in Austin.

A&M used the unstoppable combination of timely hitting and clutch pitching to claim a 5-4 win in the first game Friday. Mark Thurmond hurled a six-hit shutout as the Ags won the front end of the Saturday doubleheader 1-0, but were denied a sweep of the series when the Horns took advantage of ten bases on balls by A&M pitching to take a 5-2 win in the nightcap.

In Friday's game, junior Mark Ross turned in six innings of superb mound work before running into trouble in the ninth. After leading the team in victories last year, Ross had been struggling through most of the early part of the '78 season and came into Austin with the worst record on the Aggie staff at 1-3.

Against UT, however, he looked like the Ross of a year ago and had allowed only one unearned run on just four hits until the Longhorns came alive in the final frame.

After giving up singles to the first two batters, A&M coach Tom Chandler lifted Ross and brought in John Pockrus to try to get the final three outs.

Pockrus hit the first batter he faced to load the bases. A sacrifice fly scored one run and after a ground out, Pockrus walked another batter to once again load the bases. A bloop single into left field by UT centerfielder Joe Bruno brought in two more runs and the Horns were within a run at 5-4.

Pockrus, as he did on several occasions last year, came through in the tight situation to get the final out when second baseman Randy

Woodruff fielded a high bouncer off the bat of leftfielder Bobby Thompson and threw to first baseman Kyle Hawthorne for the putout and end the game.

For Pockrus, it was his third save of the season and allowed Ross to raise his record to 2-3 on the year.

The Aggies banged out 11 hits in the game, led by centerfielder Mike Hurdle, who was 3-for-4 with three RBI's, two of them coming on a bases-loaded double that bounced off the Disch-Falk AstroTurf and over the rightfield fence.

The losing pitcher for Texas was junior Kem Wright, who dropped to 3-2 on the year.

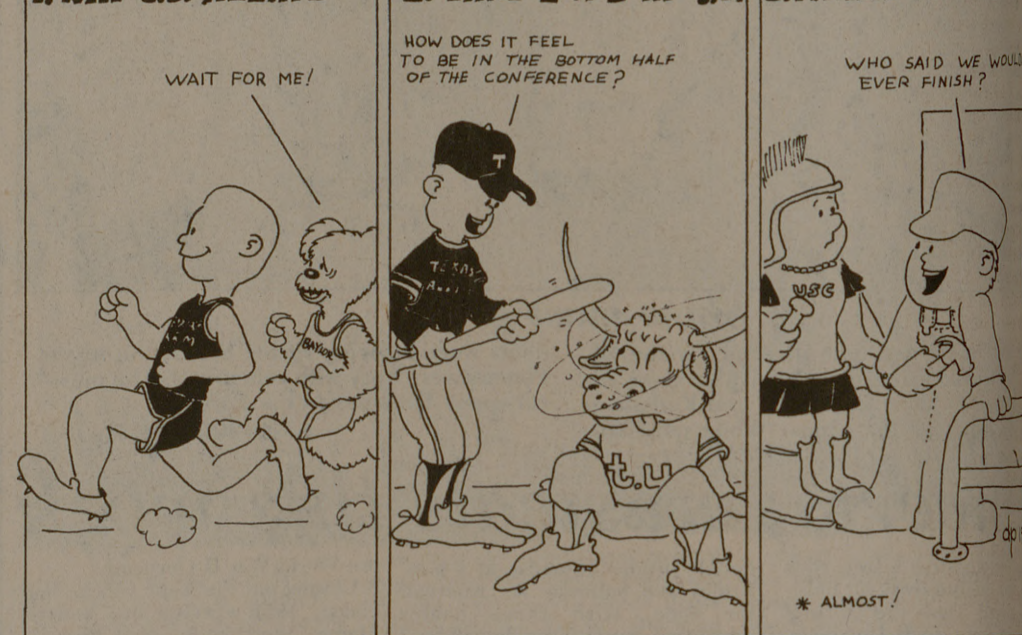
The Ags faced another Wright in the first game Saturday — freshman Ricky Wright, younger brother of Kem. The tall lefthander dueled A&M's Mark Thurmond through six scoreless innings until A&M pushed across the winning run in the top of the seventh.

Rightfielder Shelton McMath led off the inning with a single up the middle. After catcher Buster Turner sacrificed him to second, shortstop Robert Bonner lined a shot off Wright's left shin for an infield hit, sending McMath to third. After second baseman Steve Robinson lied out to shallow centerfield, leftfielder Robert Verde stepped up with a chance to repeat his performance of last year when he singled home the winning run in the sixth inning to give the Ags a 1-0 win over UT.

Verde didn't get a chance to stage an encore, however, as Wright's first pitch to him glanced off catcher Dan Moody's shinguard for a passed ball, allowing McMath to score and put A&M ahead 1-0.

Thurmond held off the Longhorns in the final inning to pick up his fifth win of the year without a loss. It was

A BUSY SPRING BREAK FOR THE AGGIES



also Thurmond's eighth straight complete game victory in SWC play dating back to last year, and also was the junior lefthander's fifth shutout of his Aggie career. He struck out seven, walked only three and hit one batter.

Wright's record dropped to 3-2 on the year, despite a good performance in which he struck out seven and walked only two. The run off him in the seventh inning was unearned as it scored on the passed ball by Moody.

A&M collected nine hits in the game, led by a pain-ridden Bonner

who was 2-for-3. Bonner had bruised his left shoulder in the Friday game on a play at second base. Although he could barely raise his arm Saturday morning, he refused to be taken out of the lineup and played all 16 innings of the Saturday twinbill.

The Longhorns denied A&M a sweep of the series as bases on balls by Aggie pitching allowed Texas to "walk" away with a 5-2 win.

A&M took a quick 1-0 lead in the first inning when Bonner hit the first pitch of the game from UT freshman starter Keith Creel into the rightfield corner for a double. Bonner went to third on a ground out by Verde and scored on a single by leftfielder Gary Bryant.

Starter David Pieczynski got into early trouble as he issued five free passes through one-plus innings of work. He was relieved in the second by roommate Jim McWilliams, who came in with the bases loaded and no one out. Pieczynski had already walked in one run and McWilliams did the same to the first batter he faced to put UT up 3-1 at that point. McWilliams retired the next three batters to get out of the jam.

McWilliams held the Horns scoreless for the next four frames but ran into trouble in the seventh. After retiring the first two batters, he gave up a pair of singles, a double, walked a man and hit a batter to

allow UT to go up by a 5-1 lead. Pockrus once again was upon to end the rally which began when he got the first batter out to line out to Woodruff in the base.

The Ags staged a comeback in the eighth when Verde stepped with a single, was safe at second, advanced to third on a ground out by pinch hitter Rodney Hollis scored on a wild pitch by Creel.

The rally fell short, however, as Texas came away with the victory.

Both teams collected eight runs in the game. A&M was led by Bonner who was 2-for-4 with a triple. Pieczynski was the losing pitcher to bring his record to 2-2. He went the distance and picked up a fifth win of the year without a loss.

"I thought it was a good series," commented Chandler Saturday's twinbill. "We could have swept then but we gave up too many walks in the game. Still, anytime you take a 3-3 from Texas at Disch-Falk you've done something." Pieczynski was pleased with the pitching of Thurmond in the first game of the doubleheader and McWilliams came in relief in the second game used that tantalizing curve to the Texas hitters off balance of the time. I really think we turned the corner now."

A&M is now 16-7 on the year and an even 3-3 in SWC play. Texas went to 18-7 on the year and dropped into a tie for next place in the conference with league mark.

The next action for the Aggies is this Tuesday when they play their new \$2 million stadium. Dedication ceremonies for Olsen Field begin at 2 p.m. followed by a game between A&M and the Southern Cal Trojans at 7:30 p.m. The game will be played at 20, and close March 28. Play will begin April 3.

In three-man volleyball a regular size volleyball court is covered by three team members. There are no front or back row player designations and all members can spike or block. Play will be in Rollie White. Games are played 15 points.

Teams will be men's, women's and co-rec. A co-rec team must have at least one female member. Play options are class A powerball which goes by strict USVBA rules and class B jungleball which goes by overhand serves.

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Revisions to the
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Regular Representative
Meeting
5:30 p.m., March 20
Room 216 MSC
Conference Room

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