

sports

# Astros visit Aggieland to play Chandler's crew

By DERRICK GRUBBS  
Major league baseball comes to Texas A&M Wednesday afternoon as the Houston Astros stop in College Station to play the Texas Aggies on their way to their season opener in Cincinnati.  
Tickets for the 1:30 p.m. contest at Olsen Field have been on sale since Monday and any remaining tickets will go on sale at the stadium Wednesday prior to the game.  
Prices are \$3 for non-students and \$1.50 for students.  
The Astros finished the 1977 campaign with an even 81-81 mark and came in third in the National League's Western Division.  
Injuries have plagued Houston

somewhat through its spring training period, but the front-line starters should all be ready to go by opening day.  
In all probability, Aggie fans will see the same lineup Astro manager Bill Virdon plans to use against the Reds Thursday.  
That list will include, with their 1977 season batting averages, Bob Watson (.289) at first base, Art Howe (.264) at second base, Enos Cabell (.282) at third base, Roger Metzger (.186) at shortstop, Terry Puhl (.301) in leftfield, Cesar Cedeno (.279) in centerfield, Jose Cruz (.299) in rightfield, and Joe Ferguson (.257) at catcher.  
The starting pitcher scheduled to

work against A&M will be second-year man Floyd Bannister, who was 8-9 for the Astros last year with a 4.03 ERA.  
Other players who have had good springs and will likely see action Wednesday are first baseman Dave Bergman, who was acquired from the New York Yankees in a trade that sent Cliff Johnson to the Big Apple last June; Denny Walling, who played in six games and hit .286 for Houston last year, will likely play some in the outfield; and Jimmy Sexton, who came to the Astros from Seattle in a trade last December, will see some duty at shortstop.  
The Aggies, currently 22-10 on the season and in second place in the SWC standings, will use primarily the same lineup they fielded in their last two SWC series against Rice and Baylor.

That order will include Robert Bonner (.339) at shortstop, Robert Verde (.266) at third base, Gary Bryant (.294) in rightfield, Kyle Hawthorne (.324) at first base, Mark Warriner (.317) the designated hitter, Mike Hurdle (.317) in centerfield, Tim Feickert (.263) in leftfield, Buster Turner (.266) at catcher, and Randy Woodruff (.273) at second base.  
A&M coach Tom Chandler plans to use five pitchers during the nine-inning contest. Starting will be Mark Thurmond (7-0, 2.13 ERA) who will work the first two innings. Following him will be David Pieczynski (3-3, 3.33), Mark Ross (4-3, 3.63) and Jim McWilliams (2-1, 1.71), all of whom are slated to pitch two innings.  
John Pockrus (3-1, 3.00) is scheduled to hurl the final inning for the Aggies.



A&M shortstop Robert Bonner tries to complete the second half of a double play. But Rice second baseman Kenny Baldwin had other ideas. The junior from San Antonio broke up Bonner's attempt. The Aggies host the pros from Houston today at 1:30.

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**Is three better than two**  
By PAT EDMONDSON  
Since 1915, all Southwest Conference basketball games have been called by two league officials. Three officials, however, were used in a conference game Feb. 15. The response was positive, and the addition of a third official will be a major topic of discussion at the league's annual spring meeting in late April.  
The death of two officials in a Feb. 10 plane crash resulted in an assignment mix-up from the SWC office and three officials were assigned to cover the Texas A&M-TCU game Feb. 15.  
"We had to make a substitution," said Dan Spika, SWC Supervisor of Officials. "In order to make all parties happy, we decided to appoint three men to the game."  
Allen Winter, Robert Straface and Arlan Straub were the officials who called the game, which was won by Texas A&M 88-72 at G. Rolie White Coliseum.  
The use of three basketball officials has been successful in other major college conferences. The Big 10 Conference introduced a third official in non-conference games in 1967. Three officials were used for the first time in the Atlantic Coast Conference this year. The Southeastern and Metro conferences will use three in league games next season.  
"I just don't believe two men can provide the coverage necessary in today's basketball," said Herm Rohrig, supervisor of officials for the Big 10 Conference. "There are so many screens set away from the ball. Three men are almost a necessity."  
Rohrig said safety was a major factor in the addition of a third official. "In 1967, when we voted to add another official, it was the athletic directors' concern for the safety of the players," he said. "They stationed a man on the baseline and worked the remainder of the court with two officials. This was because of the concern for injury on a quick outlet or quick turnover."  
The next year, Rohrig said, the additional man was moved up to the division line to make calls. In 1969, the league decided to allow him to make calls over the entire court, as he does now.  
"With three men," Rohrig added, "you get coverage on all sidelines."  
"I think it's the next significant thing for the sport of basketball," said Spika, from his SWC office. "We are 100 percent for it," he added. "It's nothing new. It's something the conference (SWC) has been looking at for a long time."  
Winters pinpointed another plus. "There's such a variety of officials in every league," he said, "that it allows a younger official to get more experience working with the older ones." Winters added that it was not confusing working with an extra official; that at one time or another, all members of the crew had prior experience with two other men.  
"You're not crowded or running and trying to get somewhere constantly," Winters said. "With two, you're constantly moving to try and get in position, whereas with three, you're already there."  
Texas A&M's Shelby Metcalf voiced the opinion of both the player and coach.  
"I think it's worth taking a longer look at," he said. "Most of the players thought it went real smooth. I think it has a tendency to make the players play under more control because psychologically they know they're under closer surveillance."

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