

sports

Raiders come to College Station

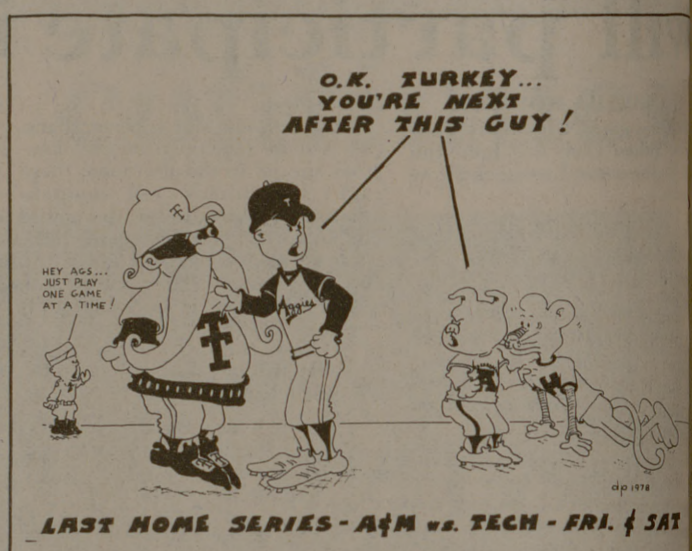
By DERRICK CRUBBS
As it stands now, the deciding blow for the SWC championship will probably be dealt in less than two weeks when A&M travels to Fayetteville for the final league series of the season.
But before that scene can materialize, the Aggies must knock off Texas Tech in a pivotal series this weekend at Olsen Field.

The Ags currently trail the Razorbacks by a game in the SWC standings and a sweep of the Red Raiders would mathematically assure them of a place in the SWC post season tournament in Austin May 12-15.
Should A&M take all three games this weekend and Arkansas lose just one game to the Cougars in that series down in Houston, then the Ags

and the Porkers would be tied for the league lead going into that final series in the Ozarks.
Might there be a tendency this week for the Aggies to be looking a week ahead?
"We can't afford to look past Texas Tech," says A&M coach Tom Chandler. "We have to have all three games. They are important for us regardless of what happens against Arkansas. Texas Tech has a fresh, young ballclub with a lot of hustle and desire. We have to play every game this weekend as if it were for the conference championship."
The Red Raiders will come into College Station with a 22-20 season record and a 7-11 SWC mark. They returned just three starters from a team that finished fifth in the conference last year with a 12-12 league slate.
The trio of returners includes junior rightfielder John Keller, who is hitting .270 this year and is tied for the team lead in home runs with three; sophomore shortstop Brooks

Wallace, hitting .317; and junior second baseman Johnny Vestal, hitting .295 and leading the team in stolen bases with 13. Vestal gave the Aggies fits in last year's series in Lubbock as he went 7-for-12 in the three games.
A couple of other Raiders to watch are sophomore leftfielder Larry Selby and junior centerfielder Randy Newton. Selby currently leads the Raiders in hitting at .354 while Newton is the club leader in RBI's with 32, and doubles with 12. Those dozen two-baggers are a new Tech season record.
The probable pitching rotation the Aggies will face has freshman Gary Moyer starting Friday's contest with another freshman, Rick Hall, and junior David Bolton working the Saturday doubleheader.
Moyer is 4-3 on the season with a 3.33 ERA, Hall is 6-4 and 3.67, and Bolton is 4-3 and 4.38. Hall currently leads the Raider staff in strikeouts with 36. All three are righthanders.
Chandler, hoping that last weekend's poor offensive showing against SMU will not recur, plans to

use the same lineup he has started with the past four series.
A&M scratched out just five hits in each of the three games against the Mustangs, whose pitching staff had allowed well over a hit per inning going into their series with the Aggies.
Shortstop Robert Bonner holds a slight edge over first baseman Kyle Hawthorne and centerfielder Mike Hurdle for team batting lead. Bonner is at .326 while Hawthorne and Hurdle are tied at .325.
Hurdle will probably be back in the A&M lineup after sitting out last Saturday's twinbill with SMU due to a sprained ankle. Catcher Buster Turner, who suffered heat prostration in the second game against the Pones, will be back behind the plate Friday.
The Ags' pitching rotation will be the same also. Mark Ross, who has recorded six straight wins after getting off to an 0-3 start this season, will be on the mound Friday with Mark Thurmond and David Pieczynski pitching Saturday's doubleheader.
Ross has a 3.26 ERA to go with his



LAST HOME SERIES - A&M vs. TECH - FRI. & SAT

6-3 record while Thurmond, with a 1.96 ERA, is still undefeated at 9-0. The ace lefthander will also be going after his seventh SWC win in the first game Saturday, which would tie an A&M record held by James "Hoot" Gibson. Pieczynski comes in with a 4-4 season mark and a 3.43 ERA.
The Tech series is the last regularly-scheduled home series of the year for A&M. Friday's contest will begin an hour early at 2 p.m. because of Aggie Muster. The doubleheader Saturday will start at 1 p.m.
Last year's A&M-Tech series nightmare for the Aggies edged out a 5-3 win in the first but lost both ends of the doubleheader by one run, 7-6 and 3-2. The Ags left 31 men on base in that three-game series played in Lubbock.
Since the 1971 series, there have been six one-run games played between A&M and Texas Tech, team winning three. The overall record during that time is 10-11 in favor of the Aggies.

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