

Astros hit the road

United Press International
HOUSTON — Free baseball caps
still appear to be more popular than

The Astros traveled to San Francisco Thursday to begin a string of 20 games in 24 days away from the cozy confines of the Astrodome where they swept Atlanta and took two from Los Angeles to open the

Manager Bill Virdon predictably was cautious. His 1978 team lost 57 of 81 road games. His 1977 team lost eight straight after starting the season with a record (5-1) identical to their present mark.

'What we've been able to do these first six games is a good indication that we've got a better club than last year," Virdon said. "I want to reserve judgment until we see what we do on the road."

Houston took over first place with its two wins in three games against the Dodgers, but attendance for the Dodgers series was 41,582. More than 70,000 showed up for a threegame, season-opening series against Atlanta when free Astros baseball caps were given away.

Whether wearing a freebee cap or start of a season since I've been not, local fans saw six quality ball here games from a team notorious for the Houston Astros, but that may change if the first-place team plays well on its first road trip of the seagames. Houston batters, although only hitting a composite .223, came through with many clutch hits.

Rejuvenated center follows:

Bob Watson snapped an 0-for-16 batting slump Wednesday with a

Rejuvenated center fielder Cesar Cedeno (.391) collected three game-winning hits, four doubles and a three-run home run. Enos Cabell (.381) and catcher Alan Ashby (.375) each knocked in six runs. Jose Cruz stole four bases.
"What's our magic number now?"

Ashby said.

Houston's pitching has been spectacular. In the first week of the season Houston fans saw a no-hitter (Ken Forsch), another shutout (Joe Niekro), four complete games and 47 strike outs in 54 innings. They also witnessed J.R. Richard set a National League single-game record for wild pitches (6) and remain in

the game long enough to win.
"The staff's combined ERA s 1.00. The composite batting iverage of their opponents is .169.
Said third-year Manager Virdon:

"Our defense is better. Our pitching has been consistently better. This is just the best we've played at the

Aggies fall to Frogs

The Aggies are now 9-6 on the season. They will play in the state tournament at Lamar next weekend. Texas A&M will be seeded either fifth or sixth in that tournament.

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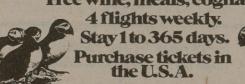
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Aggies host Mustangs

The Texas A&M baseball team will host Southern Methodist University in a Southwest Conference

series at Olsen Field this weekend. The Aggies and the Mustangs will meet in the series opener this afternoon beginning at 3 p.m. Mark Ross (2-2 in SWC) is expected to be the starting pitcher for the Aggies.

Saturday's double-header will begin at 1 p.m. Mark Thurmond (3-1 in SWC) and John Pockrus (0-1 in SWC) are probable starters for the Aggies.

Texas A&M (7-4) is currently in third place in the conference race. SMU (4-10) is in eighth place ahead

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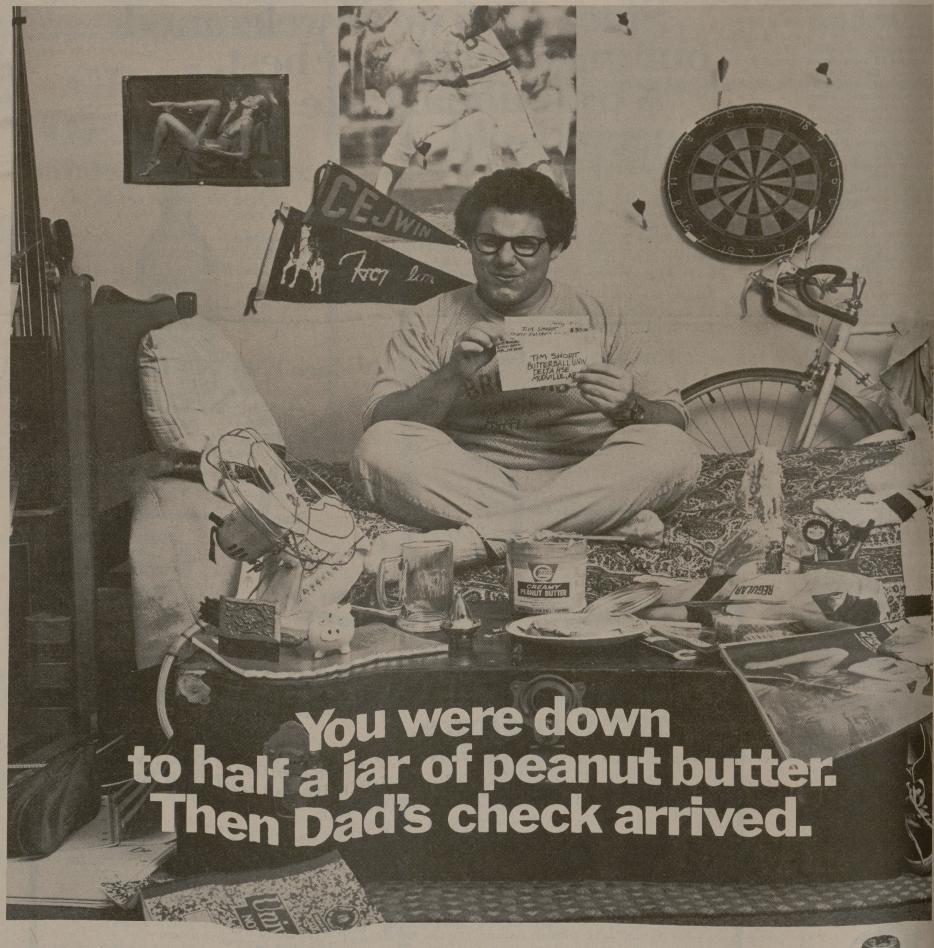
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