



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 of TCU.

Astros hit the road

United Press International
HOUSTON — Free baseball caps still appear to be more popular than the Houston Astros, but that may change if the first-place team plays well on its first road trip of the season.

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 season.

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 three-game, season-opening series against Atlanta when free Astros baseball caps were given away.

Whether wearing a freebee cap or not, local fans saw six quality ball games from a team notorious for slow starts. Houston fielders committed only three errors in the six games. Houston batters, although only hitting a composite .223, came through with many clutch hits.

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 is 1.00. The composite batting average 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

start of a season since I've been here."

Bob Watson snapped an 0-for-16 batting slump Wednesday with a run-scoring single. He got the first hit just in time for the West Coast trip where the Los Angeles native annually boosts his batting average.

Aggies fall to Frogs

The Texas A&M women's tennis team fell to TCU Thursday 9-0. The match was played in Fort Worth. The Aggies' Pam Hill was winning her singles match when she pulled a ligament in her foot and had to retire.

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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