



Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

Aggie right fielder Shelton McMath flies into second to break up double play against Oklahoma City earlier in the year. But the Aggies

are not flying so high this season as tough breaks have knocked the defending SWC champs out of contention for the title.

Legends of golf play again

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Legends of Golf, a nostalgia-filled tournament which produced a thrilling finish in its inaugural year, will be conducted next week for the second time over the rolling, scenic Onion Creek Club course.

Club officials have been concerned for the past two weeks about the condition of Onion Creek's greens, some of which were infected by a fungus brought on by persistent spring rains.

The 12th green, which has often been underwater this spring, was closed to play by members last week, but tournament chairman Mike Campbell said the greens have survived the threat.

"The greens are all fine now," Campbell said. "The 12th hole was the one that was the worst, but we will be able to play it. The only thing that would hurt would be to get a lot more rain."

Sam Snead, 66, and Gardner Dickinson, 51, will be back to defend their title, won last year when Snead birdied the final three holes. That birdie binge allowed Snead and Dickinson to finish a shot ahead of Kel Nagle and Peter Thompson.

A player must be at least 50 years of age and must have won a major championship or been a member of the Ryder Cup team in order to receive an invitation to the nationally televised tournament.

Among the likely challengers to Snead and Dickinson this year will

be the teams of Julius Boros-Roberto DeVicenzo (which finished third last year) and Art Wall-Tommy Bolt.

Wall, winner of the 1959 Masters, is making his first appearance in the tourney. Bolt teamed with Mike Souchak last year.

Other pairings this year will include Gene Sarazen and Bob Goalby, Cary Middlecoff and Bob Rosburg, Chick Harbert and Bob Toski, Paul Runyan and Lou Worsham, Jimmy Demaret and George Fazio, Souchak and Jackie Burke

Jr., Jerry Barber and Jack Fleck, brothers Jay and Lionel Hebert, Nagle and Walter Burkemo, Ralph Guldahl and Christy O'Conner, Doug Ford and Bob Hamilton, Dick Mayer and Jim Ferrier, and amateurs Keith Compton and John Klein.

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Ags 'not getting the breaks'

Aggies having rough year

By DAVID BOGGAN
Battalion Sports Staff

What's wrong? That is a question that plagued Dallas and the State of Texas when the defending world champion Cowboys were struggling with a 6-4 record in the middle of last season. Dan Devine and the Fighting Irish surely got tired of answering the question after Notre Dame lost two home games in a row last year. And no doubt, some people are wondering what's wrong with the Houston Astros, who are uncharacteristically ahead in the National League West this late in the season.

The Texas A&M University baseball team, while not having to worry about being on top in its league, is faced with that pesky little question — what's wrong?

This year the Aggies, who won back-to-back Southwest Conference championships in 1977 and 1978, returned six starters from the '77 team and seven starters from last year's team. A third consecutive championship was envisioned by players, coaches, fans and even opponents.

And there was good reason for the Aggies' optimism prior to the opening of the 1979 season. Mark Thurmond, who had 1.90 and 2.12 ERAs the two previous seasons, would return to the mound. Mark Ross, Texas A&M's all-SWC tournament pitcher in 1978, had another season left. Kyle Hawthorne, who hit .310 with 14 home runs and 53 RBIs, would be back. And of the three new players in the Aggies' starting line-up, two were experienced junior college transfers and one, Mark Warriner, started at third base for the Aggies in '78 before a knee injury limited him to designated hitter duties.

So what went wrong? Well, the Aggies' first SWC loss came at the right hand of Rice's Allan Ramirez, which is nothing to be ashamed of. Then Baylor took a double-header from Texas A&M. And TCU beat the Aggies once. Finally, when Thurmond lost the opening game of last Saturday's double-header with Texas Tech, the Aggies knew that there would be no third SWC championship. They knew that something had gone wrong. But what?

Robert Verde is in a unique position on the Texas A&M team. Last year, as a senior, he played third base for the champions. This year he is an assistant to Coach Tom Chandler. He has had the chance to examine the differences between this season and previous seasons.

"We've lost a lot of close ball games," Verde said. "The only thing that's really wrong is that we're not getting the breaks this year. Baseball is a game of breaks and we're just not getting the breaks. That's the whole difference between the last two seasons and this season."

Thurmond agrees that a drop-in hit here and a fly-out there could have made the difference for the Aggies this year.

"Last year we were able to win a lot of the close games," Thurmond said. "This year we've lost a lot of the close games. We've made little mistakes that senior ball clubs shouldn't make."

Indeed, last year the Aggies won 11 conference games by two runs or less while losing two close contests. This year they have already lost five games by two runs or less.

"We haven't been able to do the things in the late part of the game

that it takes to win games," Chandler said. "For example, we haven't been executing our bunting or we've had some faulty base running. In order to be a great team you must be able to do those things."

Could attitude possibly be a problem for the Aggies?

"We expected a better season," Thurmond said of the Aggies, who are presently in third place with an 11-6 conference record. "But I think everybody knew we had to work hard to win. I don't think we became complacent. I don't think we were over confident."

Verde said that he sees no difference in the Aggies' desire to win.

"Once you've won, there's no way you're not going to want to win again," he said. "I've heard people say, 'They're too overconfident. They're too cocky.' Everybody on that field knows that we can get beat any day of the week. No, I don't think they're over confident."

Concern was voiced before the season began as to whether or not the Aggies could replace some of the players they lost last season.

"We've got the people," Verde

said. "In my opinion we've got more talent than last year. We've got a lot of people back from the last year. We've got two junior transfers (Bryan Little at shortstop and Simon Glenn in center field) who don't see any way you can say the talent is not here."

And while Chandler admits the Aggies' pitching staff is "the best" Thurmond points out that something cannot be blamed on the spot in the pitching rotation.

"Look at Ross and me," the left-hander said. "He's already had one more conference game than I did last year and I've lost more conference games last year."

It is hard to pinpoint exactly what went wrong this season for the Aggies. As Thurmond said, "We're just a lot of ifs and buts and things we can't do anything about."

"If everybody who was pitched to win won, sports wouldn't be sports."

The Aggies travel to Houston to play a double-header with Houston State University this 1:30 p.m.

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