

sports

# Aggie Ladies start regionals

By JON HEIDTKE  
Sports Reporter

Texas A&M's women's basketball team travels to Baton Rouge this week to participate in what head coach Cherri Rapp calls "the strongest of the AIAW regional tournaments."

Three of the 12 teams involved are ranked in the nation's top five country: Louisiana Tech (2), Texas (3) Stephen F. Austin (5). The winner of the four-day tournament will advance to the national championship in Mount Pleasant, Mich., March 21-23.

The eighth-seeded Aggie Ladies, 18-11 on the year, open tournament action today with a rematch with Houston at 9 p.m. The Aggies eased by Houston earlier in the year 75-64, but the Cougars knocked the Ags out of the state tournament last week with a 66-61 overtime victory, setting up Wednesday's rubber game.

"The girls were very excited about playing Houston," Rapp said. "After all, it is not very often you get a second chance like this. We don't want to end the season with them (Houston) beating us twice in a row. Besides it would

give us another shot at Louisiana Tech."

The winner of the Texas A&M-Houston game will play Louisiana Tech at 9 p.m. Thursday. Tech downed the Ags earlier in the year.

Lori Foreman continues to lead the Aggies in scoring with a 16.4 average. The 6-2 sophomore also leads the team in rebounding, averaging 7.2 per game. Senior Peggy Pope is next scoring and rebounding with averages of 14.7 and 6.9. Rapp has also been aided by the improved play of Trigg Crawford. The College Station junior has been averaging 14.4 points over the last five games.

The Cougars, who bring a 17-12 record into the tourney, rely on a physical inside game and the shooting and passing of Kip Anderson. In their overtime win over the Aggies, the Cougars won the game at the free throw line, hitting 24 out of 34, compared to the Ags' 7 of 11 from the line.

The rest of the field includes Arkansas, Texas Tech, Wayland Baptist, LSU, Oral Roberts, McNeese State and Southeast Louisiana.



Aggie Ladies' senior Lori Foreman goes for a shot against SMU in early season action. The Aggie Ladies open Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women regional tournament play tonight against Houston in Baton Rouge, La.

# Astros may be team to beat in the NL West

By RICHARD OLIVER  
Staff Writer

It's baseball time again, and the Houston Astros have hit the ballfield with a new look and an old burden.

Full spring training begins this week, and critics are looking keenly at an Astros team (plus a couple of new faces) that nearly pulled off the Cinderella story of the 1979 season, finishing a mere 1 1/2 games behind the Cincinnati Reds in the western division of the National League.

Long labeled the "Lastros" by the media, the organization has slowly but surely built up a team that has become respectable and even envied in some parts.

The purchase of the team by John Mullen has injected something the Astros have never before experienced — big bucks. Over-the-winter acquisitions of Nolan Ryan and Joe Morgan via the free agent market signify the end of a "hands-off" attitude usually held by the team management.

Historically, the Astros' management, led by since-departed "Spec" Richardson, had avoided the free agent market, choosing instead to rely on minor league hopefuls and trades to build a contending team. Not until Joe Sambito, Jeff Leonard, Terry Puhl and Craig Reynolds lifted the Astros out of the baseball slums

last year have these attitudes paid off.

Thus the Houston Astros now are under the watchful eye of the media and baseball buffs who have supported the team through several "this is the year" seasons, only to watch as the team slipped dimly and unnoticed through the season.

The rise or fall of the Astros this year hinges largely on the success of newly-acquired Ryan, the fastball

and Rusty Staub during his stint as general manager.

Smith is responsible for bringing in present manager Bill Virdon, All-Star shortstop Craig Reynolds, reliable catcher Alan Ashby, and now Ryan, among others.

Despite the brilliant pitching corps of the Astros, the season's success lies mainly in the bats of highly capable but equally erratic regulars.

The Astros' repeated efforts over the winter to trade Joaquin Andujar for some power came up empty-handed.

The power is there in the present lineup, however silent the bats were last year. The addition of Morgan to the lineup should add some punch, and his playoff experience can only be a positive factor.

The low-key Virdon, long-known for his baseball smarts and ability to extract great play out of mediocre players, has expressed great hope for the coming season, saying, "If we get good overall offensive production, the pitching we're capable of and consistency, I feel the Houston Astros will be legitimate contenders in 1980."

Coming off their strongest year ever in 1979, and with the addition of Morgan and Ryan, the Astros may have just what it takes to pull it off. It'll be about time.

## Commentary

artist. Ryan, who led the American League in strikeouts, now teams up with National League strikeout leader J.R. Richard, Cy Young-nominee Joe Niekro, and Ken Forsch, who no-hit the Atlanta Braves last season. This staff should be one of the finest in the major leagues this season, depending largely on Ryan's oft-injured arm and Richard's consistency.

The gambles of Tal Smith, a highly-respected baseball mind and the Astros' current general manager, have paid off thus far for the Astros.

Smith has pulled off some remarkable and shrewd trades despite the past stumblings of Richardson, who traded off names such as Morgan, Cesar Geronimo, John Mayberry

# Ags take fifth place in A&M Invitational

By KATHLEEN McELROY  
Sports Staff

Southern Methodist, the defending women's national collegiate champion, fought bad weather and a tough course to win the Texas A&M Invitational Golf Tournament played this week at the Briarcrest Country Club Golf Course in Bryan.

SMU finished with a three-day total of 952 for the 54-hole tournament played Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Host Texas A&M finished two shots behind second-place Houston Baptist, which posted 981. The two lowest individual scores belonged to SMU's Missie McGeorge, who finished with 230 — 24 shots above par — and her teammate Kyle O'Brien who ended with 239. Junior Kim Bauer was the lowest Texas A&M golfer, finishing fourth with a total of 242.

Texas A&M junior Rita Aguilar had the lowest individual round of the tournament Tuesday, finishing with a 73, one above par. She finished seventh in the tournament.

Texas A&M coach Kitty Holly said her whole six-member team played consistently. The other Texas A&M golfers were senior Carol Berry (248), freshman Jackie Bertram (252), Shiela Oldfield (259) and sophomore Monica Welsh (259).

Holly said the weather for the first two days of the tournament — cold and windy — wasn't exactly perfect or golf.

"It was lousy," she said. "We had a little bit of everything. On Sunday, we were supposed to have a pro-am with some of the local players and the girls, but that was weathered out completely.

The second day was warmer, but was windy and that ruined the holes," she continued. By Tuesday, the weather had cleared up, and the scores for the Texas A&M team improved.

"I guess we're not a cold team — we're a hot team," Holly laughed. "And if the weather wasn't enough, the course wasn't an easy one.

"They (the club) have an excellent course," said the five-year coach. "It's tough, as the scores indicate. It's what golfers called a tight

course." That's a course that demands outstanding fairway shots, or else, Holly said the golfer is in trouble.

Now that she's finished hosting the thirteen-team tournament, Holly is going to concentrate on getting her team back into last year's form. "The last three years we have

qualified a team for the nationals," she said. "We just need some more experience."

Next week, the Aggies will compete in the Betsy Ross Tournament hosted by the University of Texas, which finished fourth in the Texas A&M tournament.

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