Slavens 'rookie of the year' for Ags



Six-foot, eight-inch Aggie freshman pitcher Robert Slavens, presents an imposing sight on the mound. He has racked up 11 wins against no defeats this season while only allowing slightly nore than two runs per game.

Staff photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

Sports Staff
What a difference a year makes. At this time last year, Texas A&M University pitchers Robert Slavens and Rick Luecken were on opposite sides when Westbury High School faced Spring Woods High School in bidistrict action.

Slavens and Luecken, who now are roommates, anchor the pitching chores along with another freshman, David Flores, as the Aggies prepare for the Southwest Conference Tour-nament to be held at Olsen Field May 16-18.

Last year, Luecken was highly recruited by everybody and was the 18th player chosen in the June draft by San Francisco before he signed with Texas A&M.

Slavens was also drafted, but not until the Cincinnati Reds picked him in the 26th round, and even the Reds organization wanted him to go to colege. Even high school teammate Charlie Guinn, who also signed with the Aggies, was more highly touted than Slavens.

Luecken has done everything expected of him, compiling a 9-3 record and posting a team-leading ERA of 2.00, but Slavens has been

the big story.

The tall, lanky right-hander has a team-leading 11 victories against a team-low no losses. He leads the Aggies in innings pitched with 871/3 and has an ERA of 2.37.

"He has been a very pleasant surprise for us," said head coach Tom Chandler. "When I gave him the scholarship, I projected him to help us as a sophomore, but he has picked up a let of experience in a hurry." up a lot of experience in a hurry.

Even Slavens, who is 6-8 and weighs 185 pounds, is surprised about his excellent start.

There is so much difference between pitching in high school and in college," he said, "that I anticipated my freshman year to be a learning experience. Coming in, I hoped to get a chance to pitch, but everything worked out and I started winning early and coach Chandler stuck with

"He had a good fall practice," said Chandler about Slavens, "and we didn't have many returning pitchers. He showed a lot of control and poise and really put it together in a hurry.

Slavens, who grew 10 inches be-tween 9th and 12th grades, said he has had his best control this year.

"I finally stopped growing and I am now beginning to put on some

ing on the weights this year and said he has gotten much stronger. His fastball, which was timed at 83 mph in high school, was clocked at 87 mph this fall.

Slavens, who was all-district in both baseball and basketball at West-bury, said he felt no added pressure being a freshman with an unble-mished pitching record. Commenting on his spotless won-loss record he said, "It is a day-to-day thing. I will lose sooner or later, but I always take the mound with the idea that I'm going to win

On being a freshman and proving himself to the team, he said, "If you are good enough to make it this far along, they (team) expect you to be good. But I believe I really proved myself to the team when I made my first conference start and beat

The highlight of the season for Slavens, who had a 7-0 record in SWC action, came when he threw a shutout against SMU.

"I felt real good against SMU, but then I felt good against Rice and they got five runs off me," he said

A big reason for Slavens' success this year has been what Chandler calls an "outstanding curveball."

"He gets it over the plate when he is behind the hitters, and not many college players are good breaking ball hitters," he said.

Slavens attributes his success to Chandler, catcher Joey Szekely and the infield, especially the double-play combination of shortstop Twig Little and second baseman Randy Woodruff, which he calls the best in

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"I can't say enough about coach Chandler," he said. "His confidence and moral support have been a big

plus in my development."
Slavens also had nothing but praise for Szekely, who was catcher in 10 of the 11 games he won.

'He can read my mind," he said, which makes my job easier." The battery has been a winning combina-tion and Chandler plans to stick with

"Slavens is one of the top pitchers at A&M right now," said Chandler, "and he can't get anything but

Injury will keep Staub out of action

United Press International
DETROIT—Texas Ranger designated hitter Rusty Staub fractured his index finger Wednesday in a game against the Detroit Tigers, the Rangers disclose Thursday

Staub, currently fourth in the American League in batting, is expected to be out for at least four

The Rangers have thus far split in two games with the Tigers to remain in fourth place in the American League Western Division.

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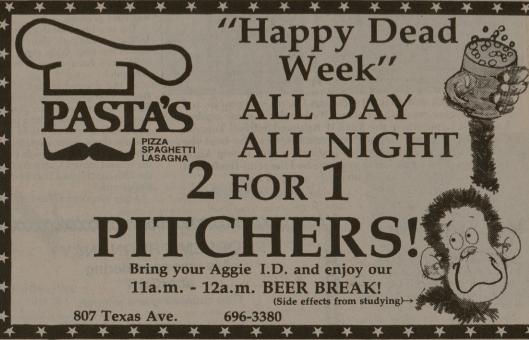
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Morgan homers again for Astros as Niekro six-hits Cincinnati, 9-3

INCINNATI — Errors by Junior dy and Dave Concepcion ened the Houston Astros to score unearned runs in the sixth in-Thursday night and coast to a ictory and a three-game sweep he Cincinnati Reds.

e Morgan drove in three runs a homer and a single to pace a itattack for the Astros. Joe Niek-3-1, surrendered six hits and four and struck out six in his third mplete-game victory of the

organ's two-run homer in the off starter and loser Mike LaAstros blew the game open in the sixth when Enos Cabell led off with a Cesar Cedeno doubled and Kennedy dropped Luis Pujols' line

the bases, Concepcion let a Craig Reynolds roller slip through his legs for a two-run error. Dennis Walling and Morgan followed with RBI singles.

The Reds scored their three runs

with two out in the third when Niekro, in a fit of wildness, walked Ken Griffey, Cesar Geronimo and Concepcion before a three-run double by Ray Knight.

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their lead over the Reds in the National League Western Division to 11/2 games. Entering the three-game drive.

After a sacrifice by Niekro and an intentional walk to Terry Puhl filled series, the Astros trailed Cincinnati

Banquet set for Saturday

The women athletes of Texas A&M University will be honored Saturday at 7 p.m. at the Women's All-Sports Banquet at the Memorial Student Center.

The banquet will honor athletes from all nine varsity sports, with each team coach giving a synopsis of the team's season and honoring seniors and four-year players.

The banquet will feature a buffet, and athletes may bring their parents, dates or spouses.





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