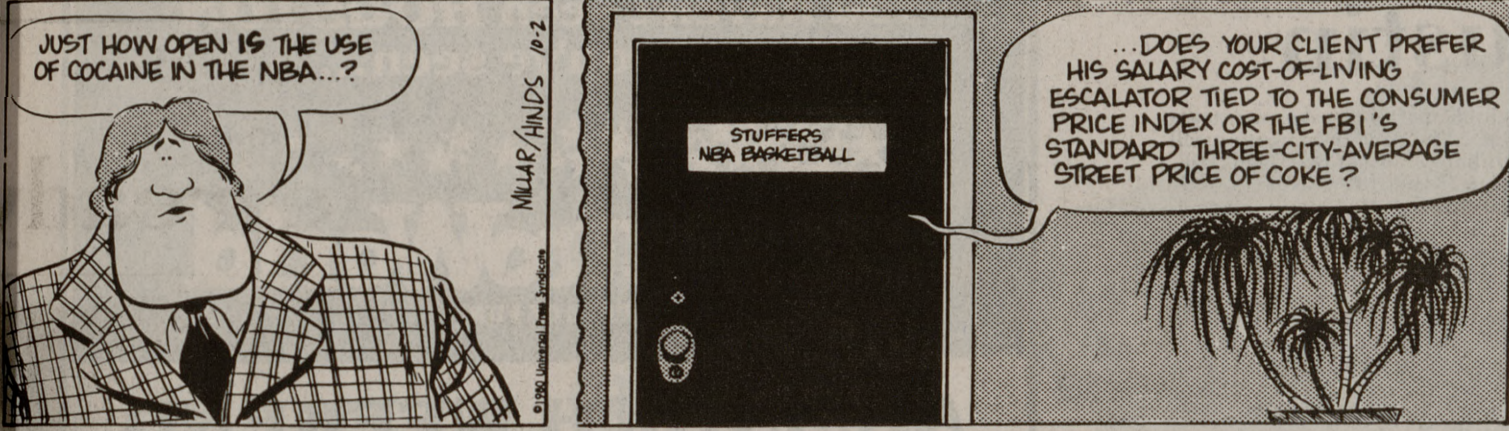


TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Softball team has great start

By RICHARD OLIVER
Sports Editor

The Texas A&M women's softball team has waded through its competition rather easily this season, racking up 17 wins against no defeats thus far.

But the team may be reaching deeper water this weekend, as they will face a few teams that might offer a little stiffer resistance than what they've faced thus far.

But, even this stiffer resistance may be no match for the Aggie hitters, and a few statistics tell why.

Four of the Aggies' incredible 17 wins this fall have come against teams in the Top 10 rankings, while the other half of the remaining games, and more against the states' tougher teams, such as Baylor, Texas Tech, the University of Arkansas, and Sam Houston State.

The Aggies' pitching staff, consisting of Lori Stoll and Shan McDowell, have shut out 10 of the 17 opponents faced thus far.

Their hitting has been perhaps the most pleasant surprise for Head Coach Bill Galloway.

led by the potent bat of Rhonda Reese, the Aggies have four players hitting over .300, and have piled up offense that sometimes failed them last year, especially in the national tournament in late spring.

In that tournament, the Aggies finished third in the nation, losing to Sam Houston State by a 1-0 score. They earned the event ranked No. 1 in the nation.

The pitching has never been in question. The duo of McDonald and Stoll had a fine season last year, and this year has been no different. Stoll is currently 9-0 with an Earned Run Average of 0.44, and McDonald 8-0 with an ERA of 0.45.

On defense, the Aggies are also vitally strong.

"It's looking very good on defense," said Galloway. "We haven't been pressed as of yet. We've only been behind twice in 17 games, so I'm not sure how tough we are."

Defensively, the Aggies are fielding at a .960 clip, with only 10 errors in 17 games.

On Friday, the Aggies will take off for Killeen to participate in the Sam Houston Invitational. The tourna-

ment will be especially important because many of the teams the Aggies will face in the state tournament in October will be there.

Maria Resendez enters the Killeen event with a hefty .409 batting average to lead Texas A&M. Right behind her is second baseman Carrie Austgen, who Galloway labels the best all-around player he has ever coached. Austgen currently carries a .367 average.

Reese leads the team in runs batted in with 16, and .296 hitter Melody Pritchard follows with 12.

The 17 wins in a row for the Aggies this season closes them to within eight of the season record for regular season consecutive wins (24), which was set last year before the national tournament. Going back to last year, the Ags have won 35 regular season games in a row. The last loss was to

the University of Texas-Arlington on March 29.

Highlights of the fall season so far include a perfect game pitched by Stoll against UT-A in the San Antonio Tournament. Earlier this year, she struck out 13 batters against Baylor.

Mary Lou Wargo became the first player to go 4-for-4 in a game since fall of 1979, when she turned the trick against Oklahoma. Austgen last did it.

The Ags are currently only 11 stolen bases away from setting a school fall record with 35 so far. Forty-five is the record.

"Having a 17-0 record is almost unthinkable," said Galloway. "I'm really pleased with the attitude and work of the team this year. Especially Shannon Murray and Carrie Austgen."

Galloway said he is pleased with the work of Lori Stoll so far.

"She looks almost unbelievable at times," he said, "but she has yet to stay consistent. But, she's already matched her strikeout total for all of last fall (76)."

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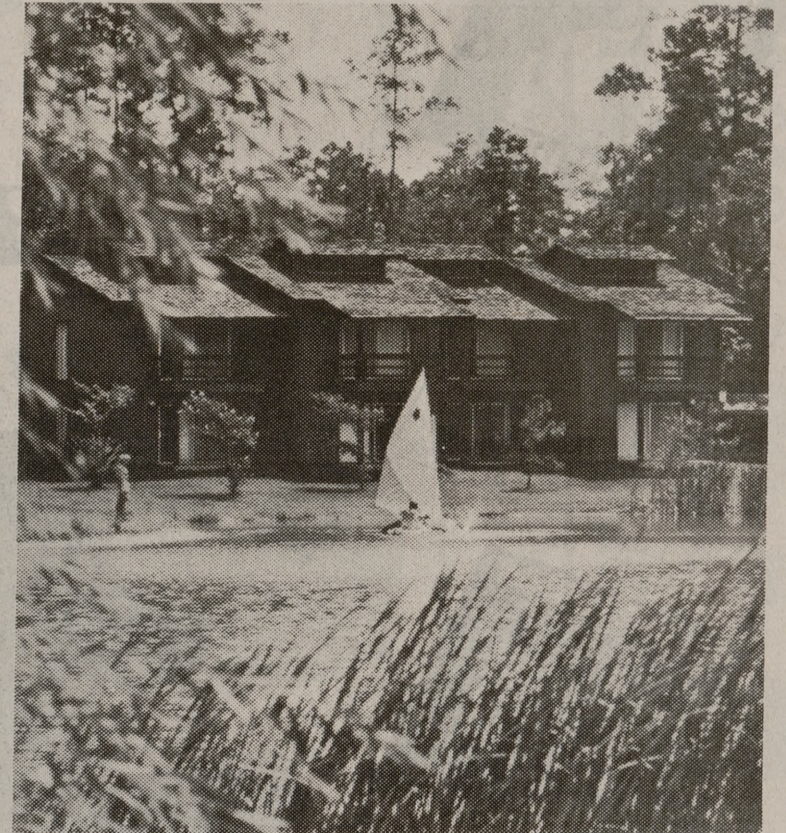
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