

David Kent

# Kent: Tennis team 'one big family'

## A&M head coach believes Aggs are headed for Top 10

By CAROLYN BARNES  
Battalion Reporter

David Kent, in his third year as head coach of the Texas A&M University tennis team, said that "tennis is my vocation and my avocation in one."

Kent, who has coached the Aggies to some of their best seasons ever the past few years, said he enjoys coaching college students.

"I don't think I'd want to do anything but teach. You don't stay in coaching for the money," he said.

Kent was attracted to the University because "the gorgeous weather down here is the best weather ever for playing tennis" and the tennis facilities are some of the best in the Southwest. He added that Athletic Director Marvin Tate is "all you can ask for in a boss."

Coaching college players, however, isn't all cake, Kent said. The job involves watching the players' grades and health, as well as their tennis game.

But he said he seems to have a knack for getting along while getting things accomplished.

Kent said he believes this year's schedule of strong national competition for the men's team is "the best we've ever had." The team is working hard to accomplish the goals he set before

the season — to have the men finish in the Top 10 in the NCAA ratings and the women in the Top 20 of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women standings.

"If you have some goals you don't mind working hard," he said. "If we don't win it'll just be our own fault. What you want to do is at least compete, have a chance at it."

The coach said he considers the Aggie netters to be "one big family." The team is first before the individual, and one person's win is a win by the team.

Kent said permanence is "the key to any program," adding he feels this is one of his reasons for recruiting athletes who realize that education comes first.

The University is easy to recruit for because "it sells itself" because of its academic excellence, traditions and friendly people, he said. Kent recruits everyday because it is "like shaving. Don't do it everyday; (and) you look like a bum."

One of the ways he is able to recruit is the successful Texas A&M tennis camp during the summer. Kent, who developed the West Texas Tennis Camp into the most successful tennis camp in the Southwest, said he wants "to make this the hub of tennis activity in this area."

Kent, a native of Amarillo, is a 1958 graduate of Texas Tech, which he attended under a four-year tennis scholarship. He

won 15 straight singles matches during his senior year. At 41, he is still active in tournament play and has won Junior Veteran singles titles in the last year and a half. These were the state TAFF singles title held yearly in West Texas and the state TAFF doubles title held yearly in the University of Texas in the finals of a tournament.

Kent's achievements are not limited to the tennis court. In 1976, he was the recipient of the Texas Educational Award while coaching at West Texas State University. His teams developed a reputation for hard, aggressive play while showing good sportsmanship and casting a good light on the school. All but one of his players finished up their degree.

Kent completed his master's degree at West Texas State in 1969. He is married to the former Eileen Jacobson, has three children: Tanya, 22; Todd, 19; and Trey, 16. Trey is a tennis scholarship at Utah State University, and Trey was a member of Bryan High School tennis team.

On the wall of Kent's office, though, is the newest member of the Kent clan. His granddaughter, who is just over a year old, is pictured with a tennis racket in her hands.

Kent said the youngster already is showing potential in the game, and he hopes to coach her tennis game some day.

# Rangers hire Don Zimmer

United Press International

ARLINGTON — The Texas Rangers, whose nine-year history has been marked by almost continuous frustration, Wednesday hired Don Zimmer in hopes of creating a pennant winner out of a team that was one of the major league's biggest disappointments in 1980.

Zimmer, fired in September by the Boston Red Sox, succeeds Pat Corrales, who was dismissed by the Rangers shortly after the end of the season. Zimmer was given a one-year contract, whose terms were not disclosed.

It will be the third managerial job for the short, rotund Zimmer, who guided the San Diego Padres for two seasons before his tenure with the Red Sox.

His hiring ended a strange managerial search that typifies the history of the Rangers, a team that has had three owners and has been a revolving door for players of both high and low quality.

Zimmer was one of the leading candidates from the start, but Rangers General Manager Eddie Robinson and owner Eddie Chiles delayed hiring a manager because of the possibility they might be able to acquire the New York Yankees' Dick Howser.

A post-season spat between Howser and New York owner George Steinbrenner appeared to open up the chance of Howser leaving that club and if he did so the Rangers wanted him.

Finally, after gaining permission from Steinbrenner to talk to Howser, the Yankees' manager told Robinson Monday night that he had not yet made up his mind on whether to leave New York.

That was enough for Robinson, who then grabbed Zimmer.

"I have spoken with all knowledgeable baseball people who have known Don," said Robinson, "and he received nothing but the highest marks from all of them. I am convinced we have the finest manager available in baseball today."

After serving as third-base coach with the Red Sox, Zimmer took over the top spot with that club in July 1976 when Darrell Johnson was fired. Boston went 42-34 for the remainder of that season. The Red Sox won 97, 99 and 91 games from 1977 through 1979 and Boston had posted a record of 83-73 when Zimmer was fired this year.

Zimmer takes over a team with a checkered past. He follows a managerial roster that has included Ted Williams, Whitey Herzog, Billy Martin, Frank Lucchesi, Eddie Stanky, Billy Hunter and Corrales.

Although the Rangers have had their troubles on and off the field throughout their stay in Texas, the 1977 season stands as the high water mark for disaster. That was the year in which Lucchesi, who had his jaw broken by Len Randle before the season even began, was dismissed in a firing botched by the Rangers' front office.

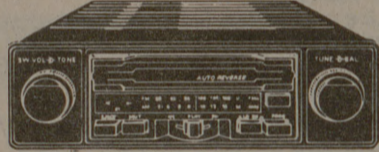
Lucchesi, as it turned out, was one of the last to know he was being fired. Stanky took over the club, managed one day, decided it wasn't for him and went home to Alabama.

That left the red-faced Rangers having to scramble for a manager and they came up with Hunter, who led a surprising rally during the second-half of the season that threatened to bring Texas a pennant.

Texas appeared to have turned the corner, but Hunter lost control of his team in 1978, received no backing from management and was fired on the last day of the season. That led to the hiring of Corrales, but in two years as Texas manager he could not get the job done. He was not helped by the fact the Rangers' front office mishandled a trade that wound up costing them Oscar Gamble.



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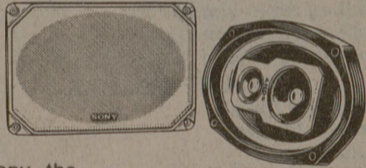


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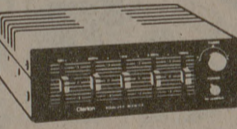
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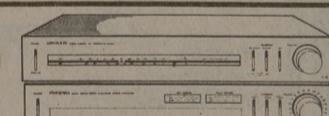
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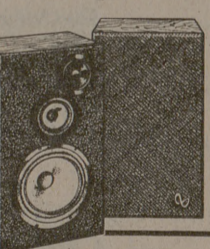
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