

Sports

Reflections

by Richard Oliver



Fall sports review

Ah, a long semester is drawing to an end, and relief is in sight for one tired sports editor and one tired staff.

This semester has been exciting to say the least, some negative excitement and a lot of positive excitement.

We Aggies suffered through a long season with the football team — from the lows of a drug investigation and several heartbreaking losses to the high of an upset win over Texas to end the season.

We watched as a would-be benchwarmer quarterback named David Beal came off his wooden perch to lead the Aggies to an impressive late season surge. With David at the helm, the Aggies were 3-2, with the only losses being a 17-13 one to Houston (Beal didn't play the second half) and a three-point defeat at the hands of Arkansas on a last-gasp field goal by Ish Ordonez.

My nomination for Team of the Semester (I'm open to suggestions) would have to be the women's softball team, who swept through its fall schedule to finish 26-1, winning an incredible 96 percent of its games. In the process, the women took their first state title.

There are too many heroines to name in this story of championship play, but one standout was Lori Stoll, who pitched herself a perfect game and had a 15-0 record this fall. She was therefore named Texas Player of the Year in softball by the state coaches of that sport.

The women's teams have made their marks in many ways this semester, and are now becoming a vital part of the University sports scene.

The women's soccer team once again had a fine semester, taking fourth place in the prestigious Austin Tournament in October, and fifth in the national tournament in Colorado. In the process, Aggie Adele Fairman was named to the first ever women's All-America women's soccer team.

The men's team, on the other hand, was making major strides toward becoming a state power, knocking off perennial strongman Baylor in a close match and taking third place in the SWC 1980 race, its highest finish ever. The 7-3-3 record for the Aggies (Conference and non-conference) also was their best ever.

In other sports, the Aggies were full of surprises.

Tennis player Liliana Fernandez has continued her consistent play for the women's tennis team, defeating North Texas State's wonder kid Gwenn Summell in November, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1. Summell has played in professional open tournaments in Europe and South Africa. A&M Head Coach David Kent called that victory "the finest win the women's program has ever had."

The men's team was led all semester by sophomore Brian Joelson. Joelson won the Northwest Sectional Grand Prix Title earlier in the semester, and claimed several singles titles for the Aggies. Individually, Brian got to the finals of the qualifying round for the NCAA National Indoor Championships last weekend before losing. Joelson will be back in the spring.

And these are only a few of the accomplishments at the University that occurred over the fall. In the backlands of A&M sports, I'm sure there is even more happening, but some teams do not report their major victories or individual stars, thus we don't know about it.

Looking ahead to the spring, there will be twice as much sports to report than this semester.

The men's baseball team is tuning up again for the SWC race. Last year, the Aggies finished a surprising second in the Conference, and the 1981 edition of the team looks powerful, with returnees such as Robert Slavens, Rodney Hodde, J. P. Bramhall and Joey Szekely joining recent additions Clint Heard, Terry Lawrence, Grant Priest and Billy Cannon Jr. on the diamond.

The nationally ranked men's basketball team is already tearing up the courts of the country, and will more than likely be in the thick of things all spring.

Track also gears up in early spring. Back for another year will be such sterling performers as Olympian high jumper Jim Howard, NCAA champion pole vaulter Randy Hall, and speedsters Vernon Pittman and SWC champion Leslie Kerr. That race looks bright.

The women's teams — softball, track, basketball, swimming, etc. — will also be after respective goals.

So, all in all, sports at A&M is alive and well and we're here to report it.

The Battalion will bring you all the sports we can, but we still need more information from some of the smaller club sports, and if those sports can appoint a media chairman specifically in charge of letting us know of upcoming events and results, it would be greatly appreciated, and would expand our coverage immensely.

Astros acquire Roberts

United Press International
DALLAS — The Houston Astros, seeking to improve their bench strength, Wednesday signed free agent catcher-infielder Dave Roberts to a five-year contract valued at \$1.9 million.

Roberts, drafted more than any other player in the November re-entry draft, played last season for the Texas Rangers and batted .278 in 151 games. However, he is capable of playing seven positions and the Astros are in dire need of reserve infield help since trading of third baseman Enos Cabell to San Francisco last Monday.

The Astros won Roberts' services over 12 other teams that had drafted him in November and Houston Manager Bill Virdon said it was Roberts' versatility that made him so attractive in the draft.

"It is important that he can play three infield positions and catch," Virdon said. "I think his value is his versatility and soundness. He is a durable player and can fit in with almost any club in baseball. He can do something most players can't. He has even played the outfield some."

"I think the fact we traded Cabell made this much more important. We are much more stable now. We can afford an injury now."

One of the sidelites of the news conference announcing the signing of Roberts was General Manager Al Rosen's candidness about how much money Houston was paying Roberts.

"I know you guys are going to get

this anyway so I'm saving you a phone call," said Rosen. "It's \$1.1 million for five years. Instead of upsetting anyone by having his salary estimated too high, we went ahead and announced it."

Some writers were inquisitive of Rosen if he had told Roberts' agent, Jerry Kapstein, that he was going to announce the salary terms.

"Yes, I did," said Rosen. "His (Kapstein's) reaction was that we're running the ball club."

Roberts became the fifth free agent to sign since the start of the winter meetings last Sunday. Darrell Porter (St. Louis), Tug McGraw (Philadelphia), Dan Spillner (Cleveland) and Lee May (Kansas City) also signed contracts this week.

Since the November re-entry draft, 10 free agents have signed con-

tracts. Twenty-one players who were selected by two or more teams in the draft remain unsigned.

Roberts broke into the major leagues with San Diego in 1972 and played with the Padres until 1978 when he was traded to Texas with outfielder Oscar Gamble for first baseman Mike Hargrove, infielder Kurt Bevacqua and catcher Bill Fahey.

An All-America player in college, Roberts hit 21 home runs and drove in 64 runs for San Diego in 1973 and seemed on his way to becoming one of the National League's top prospects. However, he never developed into the hitter that baseball scouts thought he would and spent most of the last five seasons alternating between the majors and the minors.

Ladies entertain 17th-ranked SFA

BY JON HEIDTKE

Battalion Staff
Texas A&M women's basketball team, playing its third Top 20 team in four games, will host the 17th-ranked Stephen F. Austin Lady Jacks at 7:30 p.m. tonight in Bryan High's Gymnasium.

The Aggie Ladies just returned from a disappointing three-game West Coast swing, which included losses to 12th-ranked USC, 14th-ranked UCLA and unranked Pepperdine.

"It is hard to lose three games on the road," said Head Coach Cherri

Rapp, summing up her team's problem, "but it is also hard to take a team that is out-sized and of little experience and expect to beat good teams on their home courts."

But despite losing three games on the trip, and extending their losing streak to five games, Rapp said the trip was beneficial. "It was beneficial in that our freshman and sophomores were able to play a lot," she said. "We were also able to see the best teams in the country and realize they are not unbeatable."



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