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Turmoil won't affect Houston, says Ryan

AUSTIN — Houston Astros pitcher Nolan Ryan said Thursday the front office turmoil of the ballclub has experienced during the off season will not filter down to the playing field.

Shortly after the Astros lost a close playoff series to the Philadelphia Phillies for the National League title, general manager Tal Smith was fired by managing partner John McMullen. Smith, chosen the baseball executive of the year, was credited with building the Astros into a championship caliber team.

"I don't think it's going to affect us once spring training begins. We're professional athletes and we do our talking on the field," said Ryan, who along with shortstop Craig Reynolds and batting coach Deacon Jones were in the Capitol to accept a resolution from the Legislature honoring the Astros successful 1980 season.

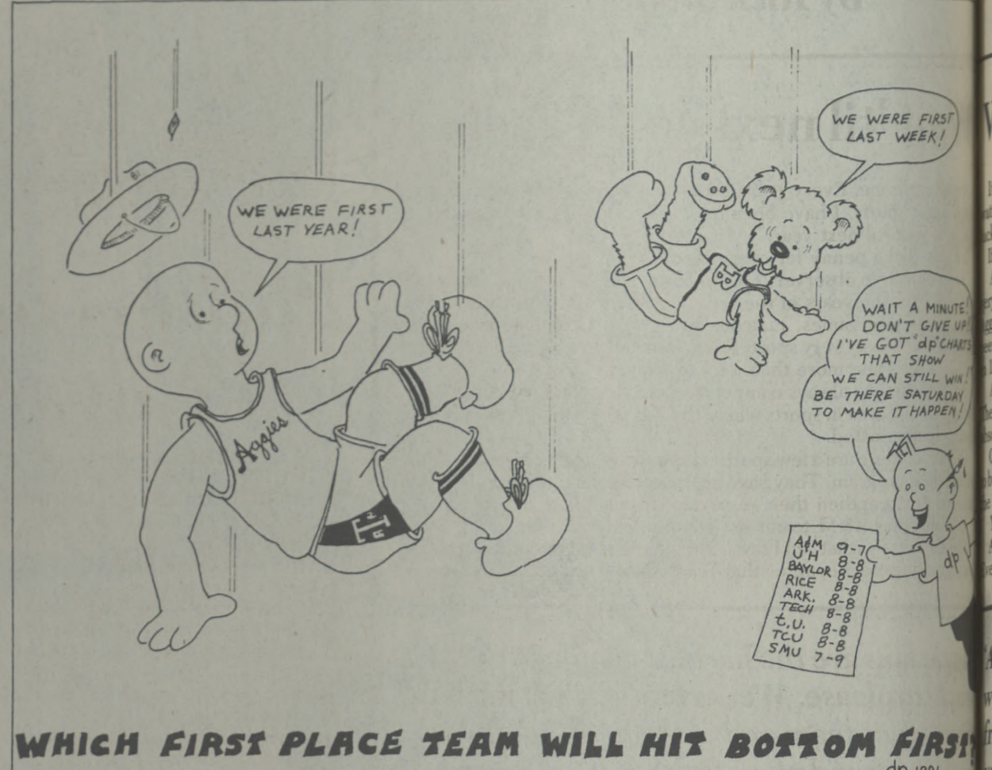
Reynolds, who hit .258 and was Houston's top defensive infielder, agreed that the front office shakeup would not affect the team's desire to win on the field.

Jones said the acquisition of free agent pitcher Don Sutton and the signing of Vern Ruhle Thursday would further solidify a pitching corps that is one of the best in baseball, even without J.R. Richard, who is recovering from a stroke suffered halfway through the season.

Spurs beat Nets by 14

SAN ANTONIO — George Gervin scored 26 points to lead six Spurs in double figures as San Antonio broke a three-game losing streak with a 122-108 victory over the New Jersey Nets Thursday.

The Spurs raced to a 67-51 half-time lead and upped the margin to 97-74 at the end of three quarters in an easy win over the hapless Nets, who fell to their 13th loss in their last 16 games.



WHICH FIRST PLACE TEAM WILL HIT BOTTOM FIRST? dp 1981

Aggies start '81 season

By RICK STOLLE
Battalion Staff
The nationally ranked Texas A&M University men's tennis team got another surprise this week before its season opener against Hardin-Simmons University Saturday at the Omar Smith Tennis Center. The doubles team of Ron Kowal

and Tom Judson have been ranked second in the nation by the College and Junior Tennis Magazine for the 21-and-under age division.

As an added bonus, Judson was ranked No. 27 nationally in the division.

"We were very surprised they were ranked so highly," said coach David Kent, "but we're also excited."

Kent said the duo deserve praise for their play. They have hustled, worked and fought for everything they've received, he said.

"I thought we would be at least ranked," said a mildly surprised Kowal, "but I didn't think we would be ranked so high."

The duo won two doubles tournaments in Houston and New Iberia, La., and went into the semifinals in another in the summer.

"We played some tough people over the summer," said Kowal.

"That's not bad for someone who had to talk his way onto the campus, is it?" said Kent. He was referring to the ordeal Judson went through to come to Texas A&M. Judson had to talk his way into school and then had to persuade Kent to give him a try-out.

He has been playing and improving ever since, said Kent.

"Tom just gets better every day,"

he said. "He works hard to improve. He has gotten stronger, faster, has learned a lot."

The men's team begins its season Saturday as they take on Hardin-Simmons at 1:30 p.m. at the Omar Smith Tennis Center on the campus.

The singles lineup for the match: Brian Joelson, Reid Freeman, Schutz, Max King, Judson and Kowal.

The doubles teams are: Freeman-Joelson, Kowal-Judson and Schutz-King.

With the schedule the team this year, said Kent, none of teams are going to be easy.

The Ags play six teams ranked this season's Top 20, one that ranked in last year's Top 20 and team that received votes in the year's poll.

There are five conference tournaments ahead of the 20th ranked Aggies in the polls — Arkansas, Houston SMU, TCU and Texas. Trinity ranked No. 9 and Wichita State No. 20 in the final poll last season.

It will be a challenge, said Kent, but the team is ready and looking forward to it.

"I think it is the toughest schedule Texas A&M has ever had," said Kent. "But I think the players are only ready to play someone other than themselves."

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