

Softball team tries for national title

Stoll, McDonald back to spearhead efforts

By RICHARD OLIVER
Sports Editor

When one looks back over the last three years of Texas A&M University sports, many names crop up — David Beal, Curtis Dickey, Peggy Pope and Mike Hurdle to name a few.

The average Aggie sports addict can tick off these players' accomplishments in an instant.

But when names such as Shan McDonald, Lori Stoll and Carrie Austgen are introduced, usually nothing will click.

After this spring, however, these three members of the Texas A&M fast pitch women's softball team and their teammates may be pretty popular. The Aggie women come back after a 26-1 fall campaign which saw them win the state championship to start a spring schedule that will hopefully end at the national championship in Norman, Okla. in May.

In the last three years, the Aggies have compiled a 156-37 record, making them by far the most successful team representing the University. Last year, after being ranked No. 1 nationally most of the year, the team was third in the nation behind Utah State and Indiana. It also won the regional championship, held last May in College Station.

Yet, judging by fan turnout, the squad's accomplishments go unnoticed by most Aggies. Last year at Bee Creek Park in College Station, the team performed for an average of only 200 fans a game.

This spring that may be different, as the Aggies return with essentially the same lineup as last year's squad, and will undoubtedly be ranked high in national polls again. Because of that, Head Coach Bill Galloway has assembled the toughest schedule Texas A&M has ever had.

The spring action includes home games against such powerhouses as UCLA, Arizona State, Cal State-Fullerton and Indiana. Galloway said the tough schedule is just his way of doing things.

The coach has been behind the team's success of the last three years, and he's hoping this year will bring Texas A&M that long-awaited national championship.

"I'm a little apprehensive as the season begins," he said. "The team is looking forward to facing many of these teams, especially teams like Arizona State and UCLA; both are known for their pitching and defensive squads. If we beat them, we'll have a shot at a possible at-large birth (in the national tournament) if we don't win our region."

Galloway said conceivably half the teams the Aggies will be facing were ranked in the top 10 last year at one time or another.

Texas A&M opens the season against Texas Woman's College Feb. 27 for a doubleheader. TWC was the Ags' main rival last season in the chase for the regional title.

"Obviously, the way you begin the season will be a great indicator of how it will go," said Galloway. "We start off with TWU, and then play the University of Texas at Arlington, which is not a bad ballteam at all."

The Aggies are paced by 1980 Texas Player of the Year, pitcher Lori Stoll, who hurled a perfect game and three one-hitters on the way to a 15-0 record. Stoll's lifetime record at Texas A&M is an incredible 50-6.

Along with the left-handed Stoll is her right-handed counterpart on the mound, Shan McDonald, who had an 11-1 fall record.

The Aggies have the same starting lineup that they had in the spring, which includes Shannon Murray at first base, Carrie Austgen at second, Maria Resendez at third, Nancy Sullivan at shortstop, Melody Pritchard in left field, Mary Lou Wargo Youngblood in center, Patti Holthaus in right, Rhonda Reese catching, and McDonald and Stoll on the mound.

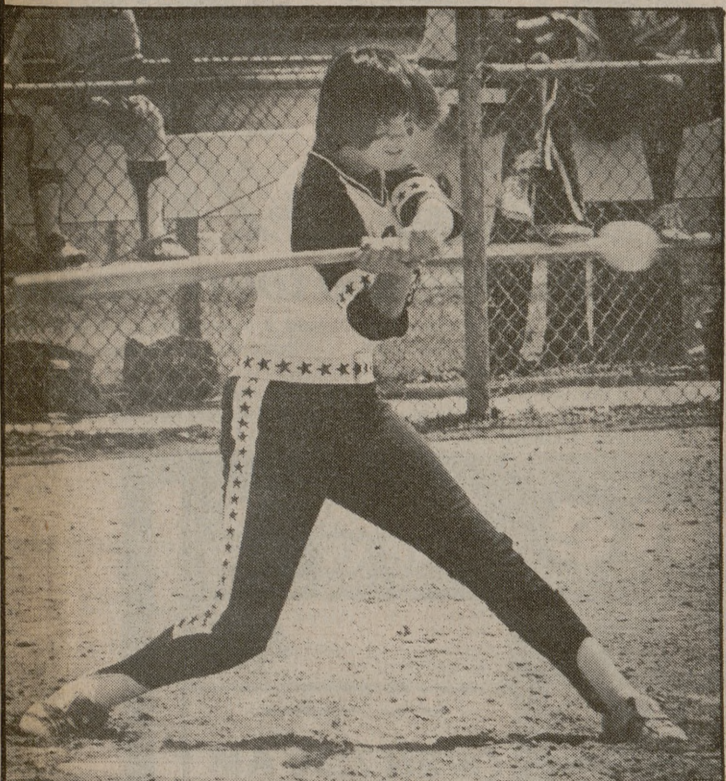


Photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

Nancy Sullivan, a member of the Texas A&M women's softball team, concentrates as she swings in action in last year's Southwest Regionals at Bee Creek Park in College Station. The Ags won the title over Texas Woman's College. Texas A&M starts the spring schedule Feb. 27 against TWC at Bee Creek.

Tennis tourney full of surprises

TORONTO — The \$500,000 Tennis Challenge kept twisting expectations until it came as no surprise that Vitas Gerulaitis upset Jimmy McEnroe and then announced he has decided to act the role of gentleman on the courts.

No surprise since that statement came moments after Bjorn Borg defaulted with the flu from his consolation match with Jimmy Connors and a few more moments after McEnroe stopped play 12 times to talk to officials, kicked his racket, knocked a tennis ball 200 feet into the stands, and escaped with only a warning.

In the interview arena after the match it was suggested that these occurrences were fitting culmination to a special eight-man event that was essentially exhibition tennis and did not count in the world rankings.

"I don't think of it as exhibition, I think of it as a big tournament with big money at stake," said Gerulaitis, who used an overhauled serve that netted eight aces and allowed but one break to dispatch an errant McEnroe 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Money this event had. It had more than Wimbledon, more than the U.S. Open, and only about \$300,000 more than the purse at this year's Richmond Open — an official Grand Prix event which affected the rankings but did not otherwise impress the millionaires of tennis.

The winner's purse combined with the \$15,000 bonus for the most aces in the tournament — 30 — netted the seventh-ranked Gerulaitis \$190,000 or about \$300 a minute for his efforts over the past week.

The tournament ended with a flourish of outrage from McEnroe's indecision by officials, roars of catcall from the crowd of some 15,000 who seemed to be booing almost everyone on court except Gerulaitis, who remained stoic and determined.

Gerulaitis said that after several years as one of the misbehaving stars in tennis he has decided to emulate longtime friend Bjorn Borg. "Discipline, I think that had a lot to do with me winning this match," he said. "I felt that after Flushing Meadows (site of the U.S. Open last year) I was getting way out of control — just really teed off with a benefit."

"I know I've seen Bjorn when he just was on the verge of letting a racket sail, but held back. When he plays tennis, he's only thinking about tennis. He doesn't go to movies, he doesn't go to parties — everything is tennis."

McEnroe's angry serve into the stands came in the third game of the fourth set after a line call that was either too muted to be heard or made at all.

McEnroe claimed that a linesman failed to make any call at all on a serve by Gerulaitis with the score tied 30-30. McEnroe got no response to repeated requests for ruling from the linesman.

Eventually tournament referee Ken Allard went onto the court and initiated a discussion with both players and umpire.

"I couldn't believe it," said Gerulaitis. "He asked me to play a bit and I said, 'No way.'"

Eventually, the point was allowed to stand. McEnroe gave up on the next point, allowing Gerulaitis to take the game.

"I did that to make a point," said McEnroe. "The officiating was terrible, and after that I just couldn't get back into the match."

Gerulaitis' serve was challenged but once in the first set when McEnroe stretched him to deuce, but then lost the game by doing an easy forehand out of the backcourt.

Both players fought out repeated cross-court rallies, but McEnroe's usually effective aggression at the net broke down as he hit soft drop shots into the net, pounded forehands into the net and clubbed put-aways out of bounds.

Kilmer to head AFA

WASHINGTON — Former Washington Redskins quarterback Billy Kilmer has been named the first commissioner of the American Football Association, AFA officials said Monday.

Kilmer will begin his job immediately and be based in Dallas.

The AFA has 10 teams in its eastern and western divisions, and begins its season May 30.

The Virginia Hunters in Roanoke is the newest team in the AFA. Other teams are in West Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Texas and Illinois.



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