

Sports

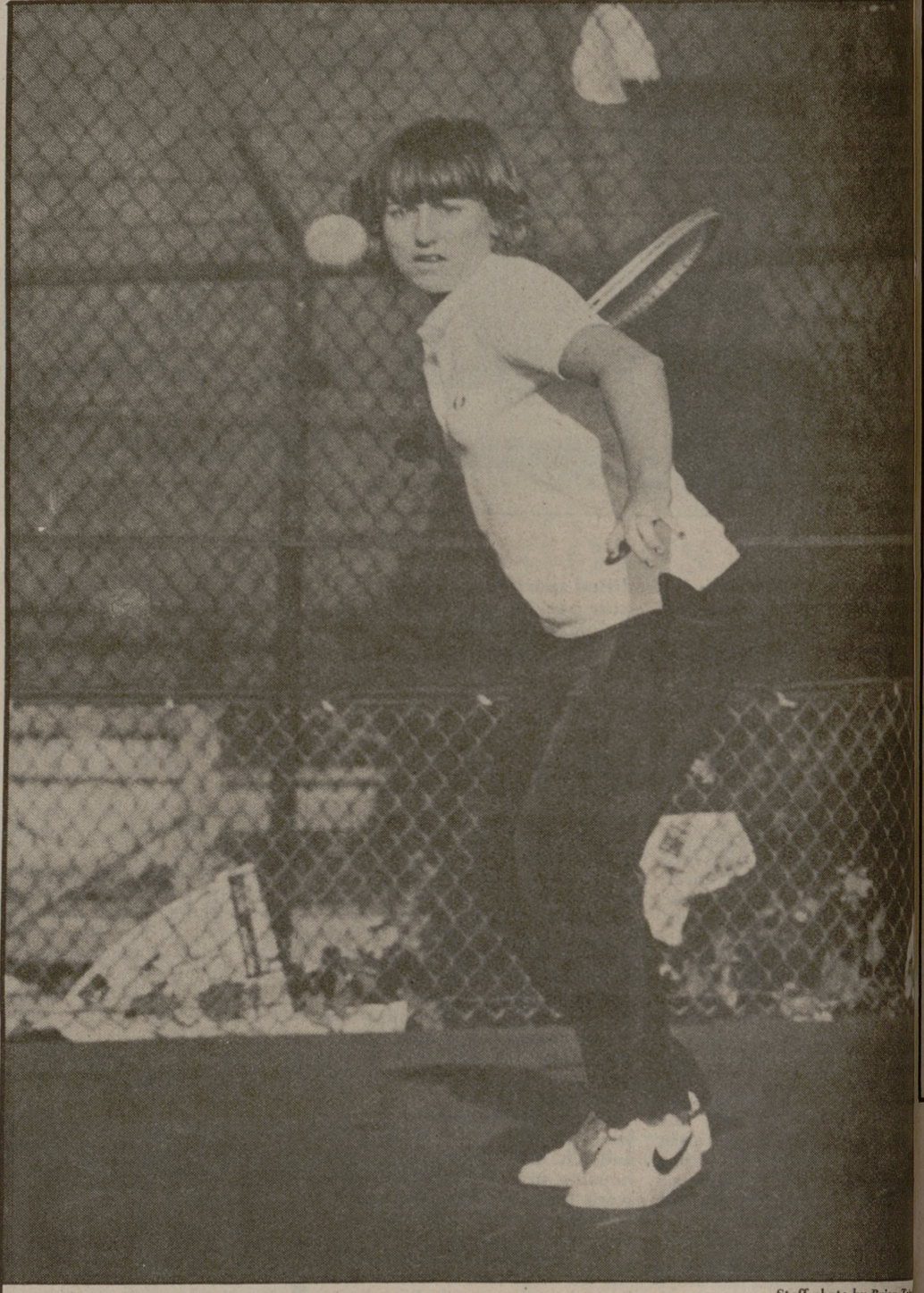
Hutcherson's love of tennis pays off for A&M

By CAROLYN BARNES
Battalion Staff
Changes and challenges have been a part of Sonja Hutcherson's first year on Texas A&M University's tennis team.
During high school she was a high achiever in both tennis and basketball.
"It's a big change playing tennis all year (instead of basketball and tennis), but I choose tennis," Hutcherson said. "It's more of a challenge."
Hutcherson, 18, is a freshman physical education major from Memphis, Texas.
She was on her high school all-District basketball team for three years. She played forward in six-

man basketball games and guard in five-man games.
But, basketball is not her only love.
She is one of the few athletes around to have won the state tennis singles championship four years in a row.
Self-motivation, practice, dedication and her parent's encouragement were the reasons why she went to state competition four years in a row, Hutcherson said.
She picked up a tennis racquet when she was 11, but she didn't begin playing tennis seriously until she was 14.
She said that she is basically self-taught: "God gave me a gift to play."

When she was 12 she attended the West Texas Tennis Club which was run at that time by David Kent, current tennis coach at A&M. Hutcherson said that Kent kept up with her achievements in tennis and offered her a scholarship at A&M.
"I devoted all my time to it (tennis) and still do," she said. "You have to here (at A&M)."
Hutcherson said that she has a full schedule with classes and tennis practice, but once every two weeks she competes in a co-rec intramural basketball game. Her teammates on the basketball team are all on the tennis team, too. Hutcherson said the change of pace, and courts, gives her a chance to relax and have a good time.
This past summer, Hutcherson was one of the top five 17-to-18-year-olds in Texas on the Junior Whiteman's Cup Team. The team

won third in intersectionals at nationals which Hutcherson said was the best a Texas team has ever done.
This is the third year in a row that Hutcherson has been chosen as Tennis Player of the Year by the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce and the Y's Club. The Texas-shaped plaque is awarded to the tennis player from the Panhandle area who has accomplished the most.
Among her many accomplishments, Hutcherson said that "probably the biggest," which she didn't expect to win, came in 1979 when she was voted the Outstanding Tennis Player of the Year for the state by the Chamber of Commerce.
As for her future goals, Hutcherson said, "If I continue to do well in college, I would like to be a tennis pro and go on the tour."



Staff photo by Brian T...

Sonja Hutcherson takes dead aim on a fore-hand shot during action earlier this year at Texas A&M. Hutcherson, who won four high school state singles championships, traveled with the Aggie women this past weekend they ventured to Provo, Utah for the Brigham Young Invitational. The Ags were 1-2 in the event.

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Ag gymnasts claim first behind Hartwell

In weekend action, the Texas A&M gymnastics team beat Southwest Texas State University and the University of Texas at Arlington in a tri-meet in San Marcos.
Meet all-around champion Mark Hartwell led the Aggies with three first places and one fourth.
In the floor exercises, Hartwell took first place and teammate David Semon finished third.
On the pommel horse, Rick Zapata came in fifth. Hartwell took the long vault title with Semon taking sixth.
Semon was second on the parallel bars, with Rick Zapata fifth and Francisco Sun sixth. In high bar competition, Semon came in first and Hartwell was fourth. Hartwell was also first in the vault.
In the all around division, Mark Hartwell was first and Semon was fourth.

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Aggie women learn from BYU Invitational tourney

By RICK STOLLE
Battalion Staff
Like their male counterparts, the women's tennis team had little to lose as they traveled to Provo, Utah to compete in the Brigham Young Invitational tournament this weekend.
The Texas A&M women were only 1-2 in the tournament but learned valuable lessons according to coach Jan Cannon.
"I thought it was a great learning experience," said Cannon. "We played tough against some very tough teams."
She said the Ags were hoping for a national ranking after the tournament but she must wait and see the results from the other matches.
In the first match against the University of California at Berkeley, ranked number 12 nationally, the Ags could not get untracked as they lost 7-2.
Amy Closs and Sonja Hutcherson teamed up for two singles wins, over Liza Bee 7-5, 6-2 and Kaulei McCalla 7-5, 6-4 respectively. Hutcherson later teamed with Pam Hill to beat Beth Ferrbacher and Belinda Belamir in a doubles match.
The Ags were untracked in the second match as they took Colorado University to the wire before falling 5-4. The top player, ranked third nationally, had just returned from beating professional Virginia Wade 6-3, 6-4 two weeks ago.
And true to form, Kathleen Cummings beat Aggie Lilita Fernandez 6-1, 6-1. The Ags won two singles and two doubles but could not pull off any more wins and so, lost the match.
Finally, the Ags beat the University of Utah 6-3, to post their first win on the third and final day of competition.
The Ags had a 4-2 lead going into doubles but came on strong to win two of the three and take the win.
Liliana Fernandez beat Patti Rem 6-4, 6-4. The loss was her first of the year.
In what Cannon called the turning point of the match, Sonja Hutcherson defeated Karen Cannon in a marathon three-hour match, 6-3, 4-6, 7-6. The tiebreaker went to 7-3 before Hutcherson finally pulled out the win.
"It was the most pivotal game of the match," said Cannon. "I thought Sonja was about to collapse afterwards but she recovered and even played doubles after a little rest."
The tournament play brings the women's team record to 8-4. The Ags take on Yale Thursday at the Omar Smith Tennis Center at 1:30 p.m.

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