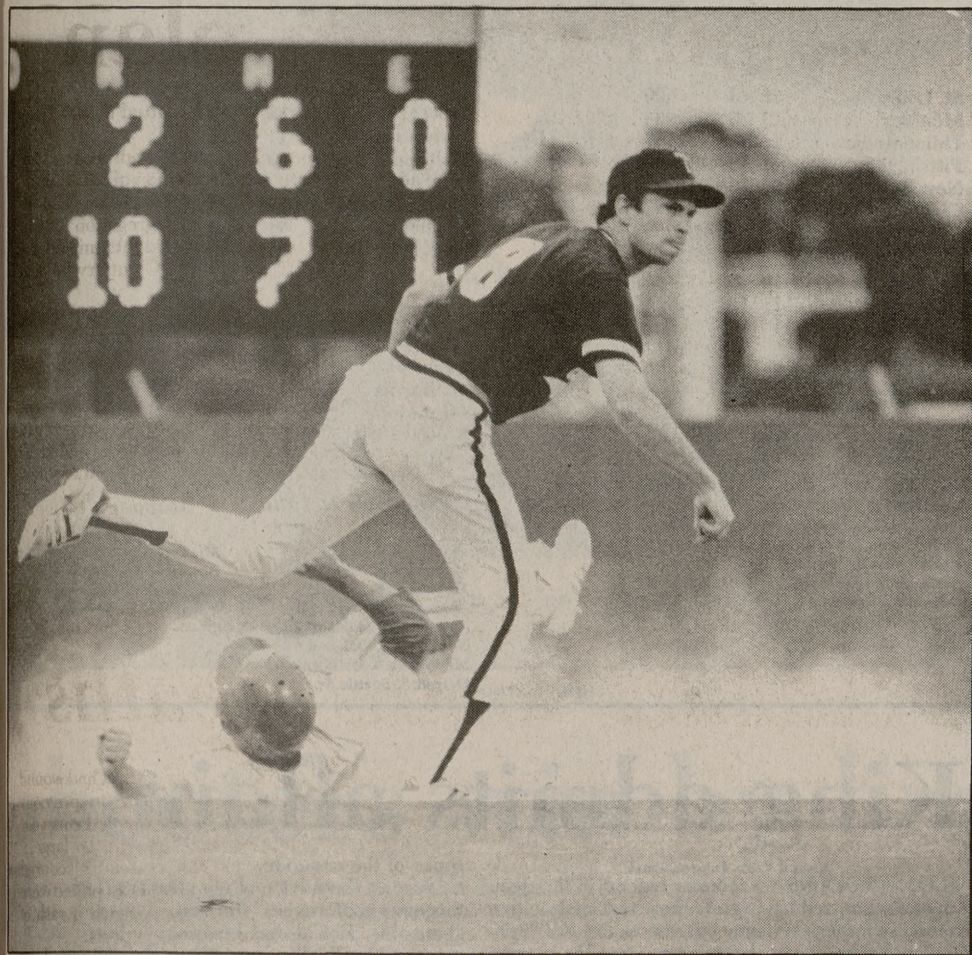


Sports



Staff photo by Greg Gammon

Clint Heard, second baseman for the Texas Aggies, lets his throw to first base go as Texas baserunner, Spike Owens, attempts to break up the double play. The Aggies turned the

Aggies take two from Texas but fail to gain tourney berth

By FRANK L. CHRISTLIEB
Battalion Staff

When Texas Aggie senior Rodney Hodde came to the plate for what he knew would be his last college at-bat, he must have known what the 2,200 fans in Olsen Field wanted to see.

Hodde promptly hit a two-run homer, his second of the day and his 13th of the season, over the right field fence, helping the Aggies complete Saturday's 4-2, 13-5 double-header sweep of the University of Texas.

However, a Friday night 4-1 loss to the Longhorns destroyed any chances Hodde and his teammates might have had of playing in the SWC post-season tournament. The final series of the year left the fifth-place Aggies with a 10-10-1 SWC record, half a game out of fourth, and a 35-16-1 season record. UT finished the regular season in first place at 16-5 and 48-8-1.

By winning both games Saturday, the Aggies became the first team to beat the Longhorns twice in a row this year, and the first to sweep them in a double-header since TCU did it May 3, 1980.

Saturday's wins made Friday's loss a little less painful, and the fact that the Aggies won 14 of their last 16 games gives them something to look forward to next year. The team won't lose many players either, since it has only four seniors: first baseman Hodde, designated hitter-leftfielder J.P. Bramhall, third baseman Tim Boyes and pitcher B.B. Schott.

The Aggies are losing two team leaders in Hodde and Bramhall, but as Aggie second baseman Clint Heard said: "Somebody always steps up as the leader."

Aggie pitcher Steve Davis, coming into Friday's all-important game with a 6-0 record, gave up all four UT runs in the four-plus innings he pitched. UT's Randy Richards, 4-for-4 in the game, hit a solo home run in the second inning and Mike Zatopek hit one in the fifth. Richards also had a triple and two singles for four of the Longhorns' 11 hits.

Zatopek's homer brought Texas A&M head coach Tom Chandler out of the dugout, sent Davis into the dugout and brought Perry Swanson in from the bullpen. Swanson pitched the final five innings, giving up only three hits and striking out four.

Meanwhile, UT's Tony Arnold, undefeated at 13-0, was pitching into and out of trouble all night. He finished with his 14th win and his 11th complete game of the season, giving up 10 hits and striking out four.

Even though the Aggies had hits in seven of the nine innings, they could score only in the sixth, when Tim Boyes walked and Joe

Szekely doubled down the left field line to bring him in. Terry Lawrence then hit an infield single, putting runners on second and third with one out, but Arnold retired the next two Texas A&M batters on a fly ball to leftfield and a line drive to the second baseman.

The Aggies had two hits in third and ninth innings, but couldn't score any runs, leaving eight baserunners on in the game, with four of those left in scoring position. The Aggies also made some crucial mistakes while running the bases, with Billy Cannon thrown out in the third inning trying to steal and Dave Kennard thrown out in the eighth trying to stretch a double into a triple.

Texas A&M started the ninth inning as if it had delayed scoring only to make the game interesting for the 3,600 people in Olsen Field. Szekely began with his second double of the game, and Lawrence followed with his second single, putting runners on second and third with no outs. But Grant Priess struck out, Cannon flied out and Kevin Smith grounded out, with Smith showing the Aggies' disappointment by throwing his batting helmet down as he crossed the bag.

The Aggies started scoring in the first inning of Saturday's first game, when Hodde pulled a 3-2 pitch over the right field fence for a two-run homer, giving him 55 RBI for the season and breaking the Texas A&M season record of 53 set by Kyle Hawthorne in 1978.

After UT scored a run in the second to make the score 2-1, the Aggies scored again on a walk to Smith, a single by Cannon, a sacrifice by Clint Heard and a sacrifice fly by J.P. Bramhall. They made it 4-1 in the fourth on Lawrence's double and Heard's sacrifice fly.

Texas A&M's David Flores, 8-3, pitched a complete game, giving up eight hits and striking out five. Although the Longhorns out-hit the Aggies eight to four, it was Hodde's first-inning homer that proved to be the difference.

In the second game, UT scored in the third inning to lead 2-0 on solo homers by Kirk Killingsworth and Buck Goldthorn. But in the bottom of the third, the Aggies did something that's hard to do in baseball — they scored four runs

on one hit. UT pitcher Dave Seiler, who had retired the first six Aggies in order, walked four batters to start the inning. That made the score 2-1 as David Kennard received credit for the RBI.

Longhorn reliever John Machin gave up two runs following a single to Boyes, and Hodde hit a sacrifice fly to bring in the fourth run of the inning.

Leading 5-2 in the sixth, the Aggies scored five more runs to make it 10-2. Kennard, who was 3 for 3 with five RBI and three runs scored, had a three-run double in the inning. Texas A&M scored its last three runs in the eighth on Hodde's second homer and Heard's sacrifice fly, which

brought Cannon in from third base.

Cannon, Boyes, Smith and Heard had two hits apiece to contribute to the Aggies' 12-hit offense, while Robert Slavens gave up five hits and two runs in 7½ innings of pitching to earn the win. Bobby Taylor finished the game to insure Slavens of his third win in five decisions.

With the Aggies missing the tournament by only one win, Texas, Arkansas, Houston and Rice will now compete in Austin May 15-17.

And as head coach Chandler said: "We're playing the best ball of the season, and it's really a shame that they've got to leave out the best."

Celtics take series

United Press International
BOSTON — Perhaps it was fitting that it came down to the final second of the final minute of the final game. Not until Bobby Jones' inbound pass deflected off the top of the backboard and into the eagerly awaiting arms of Cedric Maxwell could the Boston Celtics

celebrate their miraculous comeback.

Larry Bird, who scored 23 points and hit the game-deciding basket with 63 seconds remaining, held his head in his hands in a state of near exhaustion. It was, he said later, the first time in his brief but brilliant career he had made a

game-winning basket for the Celtics.

M. L. Carr blew kisses to the crowd and general manager Red Auerbach was manhandled on his way to the locker room. Julius Erving and the rest of the defeated Philadelphia 76ers scrambled to avoid the onrushing masses caught up in the madness of the moment.

The Celtics earned a berth opposite the Houston Rockets in the NBA finals with their 91-90 victory Sunday, completing their comeback from a 3-1 deficit — the fourth team to achieve such a feat in league history. And that they accomplished it against a team that was their virtual equal was all the more astonishing — and rewarding.

Each time in the final three games of the series, the Celtics overcame late deficits and won the game with their defense. On Sunday, they held the Sixers to just one point over the final 5:24 in erasing a seven-point bulge.

Time and again the helter-skelter Celtics defense, doubling up on Erving wherever possible, forced the Sixers into uncharacteristic turnovers — four steals in the final 4:21.

The Celtics opened the fourth quarter trailing 75-71, but scored the first eight points, four by Robert Parish and two by Carr and Nate Archibald. But the 76ers then held Boston without a field goal for 6:04 and reeled off a 14-1 run, including 10 points by Erving, to take an 89-82 lead with 5:24 left.

The Celtics, who again were awful from the foul line (22-for-35) got their final run going on one free throw by Maxwell with 4:34 left and two more 17 seconds later by Archibald. After a Bird steal Parish canned a turnaround jumper with 3:44 left and then blocked a Darryl Dawkins bid. Bird was fouled by Erving at the other end and tied the game with 2:51 left on two foul shots.

Bird then stole the ball one more time and raced down the left side, dropping in a 12-foot banker. Philadelphia had a chance to tie, but Maurice Cheeks could convert just one of two foul shots with 29 seconds left.

And with the Hollywood-like ending, the Celtics began to think about the Rockets and Tuesday night's Game 1.

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