

Sports

Major League Baseball

National League				American League					
East				East					
Montreal	26	21	.553	—	Milwaukee	28	20	.583	—
St. Louis	25	21	.543	1/2	Detroit	27	20	.574	1/2
Philadelphia	22	23	.489	3	Boston	26	21	.553	1 1/2
Chicago	21	24	.467	4	Baltimore	25	21	.543	2
New York	21	26	.447	5	New York	24	23	.511	3 1/2
Pittsburgh	19	29	.396	7 1/2	Cleveland	24	24	.500	4
					Toronto	20	23	.465	5 1/2
West				West					
Houston	31	16	.690	—	Kansas City	26	21	.555	—
Cincinnati	28	18	.609	2 1/2	Oakland	23	21	.523	1 1/2
San Francisco	27	19	.587	3 1/2	Minnesota	23	25	.474	3 1/2
Los Angeles	24	23	.511	7	Seattle	21	26	.447	5
Atlanta	22	24	.478	8 1/2	Texas	20	25	.444	5
San Diego	13	35	.271	18 1/2	Chicago	20	28	.417	6 1/2
					California	18	27	.400	7

Astros win, increase lead as Reds fall prey to Giants

HOUSTON — Joe Niekro gave the Houston Astros their third solid pitching performance in three starts in the opener of a two-game series against the San Diego Padres, but they needed a check-swing single from ailing Art Howe to win their third in a row.

Howe, a balding 34-year-old third baseman who is recovering from a torn Achilles' tendon, slapped a hit through the right side of the infield with two out and the bases loaded in the ninth inning Monday to end a close contest 2-1.

The win coupled with the second-place Cincinnati Reds' 4-0 loss to the San Francisco Giants increased Houston's lead in the National League Western Division to 2 1/2 games. They have six games to play.

Niekro, who was lifted for a pinch hitter in the eighth inning, had followed Nolan Ryan's no-hitter Saturday and Don Sutton's two-hitter Sunday. He pitched well enough to win many games, allowing only one hit in eight innings, but Padres pitcher Juan Nunez was throwing just as well.

Howe said Eichelberger, 8-8, who got the loss, was cruising. We couldn't get to him. He was cutting his fastball, throwing a good breaking ball and showing a good change. He had the Astros score-

less through six innings.

Then the Padres' Terry Kennedy blasted a Niekro fastball over the right field wall in the top of the seventh for a 1-0 lead. The tension mounted.

Houston's chance to pick up a game on the red-hot Reds — they were losing to the Giants — was slipping away. As Astros pitcher Joe Sambito observed, "I looked over in the San Diego dugout and they were walking around having a good time. They were loosey-goosey. They didn't have anything to lose. Everybody in our dugout was at the railing with white knuckles."

The last-place Padres had two runners thrown out by catcher Alan Ashby at second base and had three baserunners cut down in double plays. And in the first inning baserunner Gene Richards' failure to slow down on the basepath to delay a tag at second base to end a double play cost a run. Juan Bonilla crossed home plate a second after Richards was tagged out.

Astros Manager Bill Virdon attributed the mistake to youth.

"When he sees that play he'll learn to slow down," Virdon said.

Despite the miscue, Sambito said he was impressed by the Padres.

Women's cross country team finishes third in Rice meet

By GAYE DENLEY
Battalion Staff

While Texas A&M wide receivers and running backs ran circles around the Louisiana Tech second-stringers, the women on the Aggies' cross country team plodded away for 3, 6-0 a third place finish in the Rice meet in Houston Saturday.

The University of Houston won the first team title, followed by the University of Texas at Austin.

The Aggies finished third best in the meet with 47 points, the sum of each individual Cougar's final place in the eight-team competition. Lamar University finished second with 57 points, and Texas A&M amassed 60 points with the fourth, fifth, 11th, 15th, and 25th place finishers.

Individually, Middle Hamrin of Lamar finished first in the two-mile race with a time of 10:43. Sophomore Marilee Matheny ran the fastest time for the Aggies, taking fourth place with an 11:43, nine seconds ahead of teammate Barbara Collinsworth, who finished fifth.

Senior Adelaide Bratten and sophomore Suzanne Sheffield posted times of 12:23 and 12:41, respectively, to give the Aggies 11th and 15th place points. Freshman Kim Cloud, who Coach Bill Nix said was not feeling well before the race, placed 25th in the competition.

"We had a good meet," Nix said. "Individually, I am very, very pleased with what the first four runners did. In comparison to how we ran last year in the same meet, we ran very well."

Nix said it is difficult to log his team's progress based on Saturday's results because the Rice meet was the only two-mile race the Aggies have run this season. The first meet, hosted by the Aggies Sept. 18, was a 3.1-mile event, which is the usual distance for cross country competitions.

Still, Nix said he is confident his runners will be ready for the TIAAW State Championship Oct. 31 in Denton.

Ski team finishes third in meet

The Texas A&M Water Ski team finished third in place in the All-Central Regional Championship over the weekend in Monroe, La.

The Aggies finished third best in the meet with 150 points, behind Louisiana State and the University of Texas. The first two teams qualify for the national tournament next month in California.

In single schools and about 150 skiers competed in the tournament. The Texas A&M men's team finished fifth overall. The women's team finished second.

The men placed third in the slalom, fifth in tricks and seventh in jumping. Individually, Bret Benson finished seventh in the men's competition.

The women finished third in the slalom, fourth in tricks and fifth in jumping.

The team will not compete in the annual Intercollegiate Water Ski tournament in March. However, the team will be a club meeting at 7 in Room 140 MSC.

Volleyball team wins tourney

By GAYE DENLEY
Battalion Staff

Two wins over the nation's top-ranked NCAA-Division II team highlighted the Aggies' undefeated, first-place finish in the Texas Women's University volleyball tournament in Fort Worth last weekend.

The Aggies handed top-rated Texas Lutheran College a pair of defeats, one in the preliminary rounds and one in the finals, en route to a 5-0 tournament record and their first championship of the season.

In the preliminary matches, the Aggies rolled over the University of Tulsa 15-3, 15-1, and West Texas State University 15-4, 15-2, nipping Texas Lutheran in between, 15-7, 18-16.

Oral Roberts University was the next victim, dropping a three-game match to Texas A&M in the semi-finals, 7-15, 15-13, 15-11. The championship match, once again pitting the Aggies against Texas Lutheran, was a near re-match of their preliminary contest, with Texas A&M taking the game 13-15, 15-11, 15-7.

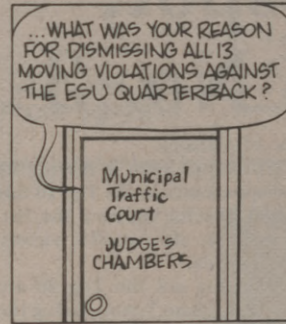
"It was a great team effort and a big boost of confidence," Coach Terry Condon said. "It was real good in that we went through everybody pretty easily - that is, we beat the weak teams easily and we played well enough when we had to beat the hard teams."

Hitter Wendy Wilson and setter Kristen Bloom, both seniors, led the Aggies' improving offense, Condon said, while freshman Chemine Doty, a 6' middle blocker, effectively neutralized Texas Lutheran's main offensive threat, Olympian Patti Dowdell.

Condon said she continues to be pleased with the Aggies' unified play on the court, an element that had been missing in their performance until last Wednesday's win over Lamar University in C. Rollie White Coliseum.

The Aggies take their six-game winning streak to Berkeley, Calif., Wednesday for the University of California Tournament.

TANK McNAMARA



by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds

Ranger bats come alive in win

SEATTLE — Victory didn't come easy for Texas despite a strong revival of Ranger hitting.

"It was a pleasure to see some hits fall in for a change, but even so, we had to hang on for dear life," observed Texas manager Don Zimmer after his team edged the Seattle Mariners 6-5 in the Kingdome Monday night.

Over their previous six games, the Rangers had batted only .202, but they pounded out 14 hits Monday, including shortstop Mark Wagner's three-run second-inning double, the game's decisive blow.

Texas left-hander Rick Honeycutt, a Mariner in 1980, posted his 11th win against six losses even though he gave up a three-run homer to Bruce Bochte, a two-run shot by Dan Meyer, and 10 hits in all over the first six innings.

"Obviously, I wasn't throwing all that many good pitches," Honeycutt admitted. "But I got away with it thanks to the relief guys."

The bullpen trio of Steve Comer, Mark Mercer and Jim Kern managed to hold Seattle scoreless after Bochte's seventh-inning homer had brought the Mariners to within one run of the visitors. Kern pitched out of a bases-loaded situation in the eighth and went on to register his fifth save.

Starter Glenn Abbott took the loss and is now 4-8.

Pat Putnam singled, Jim Sundberg doubled and Leon Roberts walked to load the bases in the Texas second. That brought Wagner to the plate and he responded

with a base-clearing double to right center.

Seattle was never able to catch up, although Meyer stroked his third homer in the Seattle half of the inning following a single by Gary Gray and Bochte's homer made it close again in the seventh.

Buddy Bell was instrumental in building the Ranger lead further. His third-inning sacrifice fly drove in Mickey Rivers to make it 4-2 and his RBI single in the fifth increased the margin to 5-2. Sundberg's run-scoring single in that

inning drove in the final Texas tally.

Seattle's Tom Paciorek had two singles in four trips, raising his average to .327 and putting him in second place in the American League's batting race behind the .338 of Boston's Carney Lansford.

The evening's results left both clubs five games back of West Division leading Kansas City and all but mathematically eliminating them from the race for the top spot.

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