

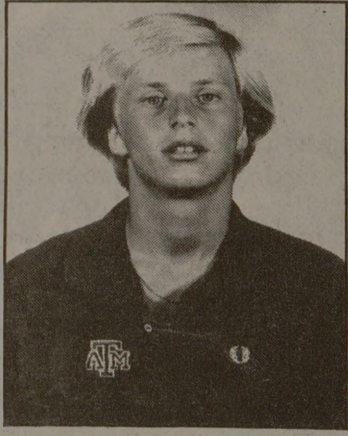
Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

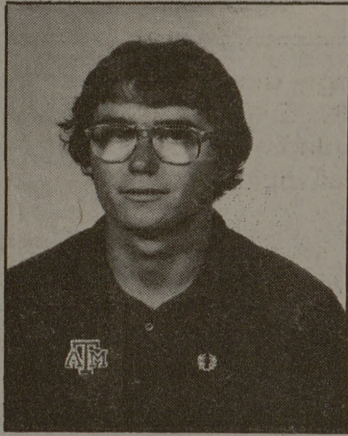
April 28, 1982 / Page 15

Pazourek, Alkio end successful year in doubles

by Denise S. Sechelski
Battalion Staff



Kimmo Alkio



Mike Pazourek

To tennis coach David Kent, a good doubles team is like a good marriage — it goes right along and hopefully works out for the best.

The Texas A&M tennis team was just such a union in its freshman doubles pair, Kimmo Alkio and Mike Pazourek. Alkio and Pazourek lost only one match in the No. 3 bracket during the year and went on to win the championship in that category at the Southwest Conference tournament over the weekend.

Kent says the decision to pair the two in doubles came by mere chance.

"It was a matter of desperation," Kent explained. "Our doubles were really poor, and we weren't winning anywhere. I was trying everything. I wish I could take more credit for getting them together, but I can't. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. They just clicked right from the start."

Pazourek agreed that the team's previous lack of success in doubles allowed Kent more

freedom to try various player combinations.

"We didn't really have any doubles teams that were doing an effective job in the lineup," Pazourek said. "So we just switched around and by luck we got to play the No. 3 spot during the Corpus Christi tournament. We kept winning at No. 3, so

Coach decided to keep us there."

Although they didn't begin playing together until after the spring season started, Alkio said he and his partner didn't think much about how they'd finish the year in the SWC.

"But once we started playing," Alkio said, "and we'd play-

ed SMU and some of the other tough teams, we thought we would do well in the conference tournament. We knew we could do it, but it probably turned out to be a little easier than we first thought. We only lost 11 games in the whole SWC tournament."

Alkio and Pazourek won three matches in the tournament to take the championship in the No. 3 bracket. They beat Alan Smith and Brian Yearwood of Texas Tech 6-1, 6-2 in the first round, and Texas' Paul Crawford and Gavin Forbes in the finals 6-2, 6-1.

But Pazourek cited the semi-final victory over Arkansas' Jose Lambert and Jean Van Rensburg (6-3, 6-2) as one of the pair's best victories of the year. The Razorbaks were the only team all year to beat the Aggie freshmen at the No. 3 position.

"The first match against them during the regular season was probably the toughest match we had," Pazourek said. "We didn't feel we'd played the best we could have. That made us more fired up to play them in the conference tournament, though,

and we really took it to them in that one."

The key to success throughout the year, Pazourek said, was

"We knew we could do it, but it probably turned out to be a little easier than we first thought." — Texas A&M tennis team member Kimmo Alkio.

the way Alkio's style of play complemented his own.

"He'd set all the plays up," Pazourek said, "because he has a really good return of service. Then I could dominate at the net after we'd gotten a weak return from our opponents off his good shots."

But although the pair was winning matches consistently, Alkio and Pazourek agreed that

playing singles and doubles in the same meet was sometimes hard to do.

"For me," Pazourek said, "playing the singles and doubles in one day was a little tiring. Sometimes after I'd played a long singles match I'd be a little drained for the doubles. You have to get motivated all over again if it's an important match."

Alkio said: "It's pretty hard to stay motivated for three and four matches a week if sometimes we play schools that are ranked below us. It's really hard to do your best every time. You usually just have to do it for the team."

The extra effort was undoubtedly appreciated, because a team's finish in the conference is determined by individual match victories. The Aggies' tie with Texas for fourth place was the highest finish ever by Texas A&M.

"It felt pretty good to win the conference," Pazourek said. "I think this gives us a lot of momentum going into next year

when we can shoot for something higher."

Kent agreed that the future looks good for his freshmen.

"They're improving with every match they play," Kent said.

"It felt pretty good to win the conference. I think this gives us a lot of momentum going into next year when we can shoot for something higher." — Mike Pazourek of the Texas A&M tennis team.

"and they should be able to move up some from the bracket they're in. They gained a lot of confidence from the conference victory, and right now they feel they can play anybody."

Browns' property

Baldwin, Whitwell selected by Cleveland in NFL's college draft

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

Much like a father awaiting the birth of a new child, Keith Baldwin watched and waited Tuesday afternoon. He wasn't sure what to expect, but he knew someone in New York would make a decision about his football future during the day.

And at one point, the 6-4, 242-pound Aggie defensive end began to worry about his status in the NFL's college draft, the first six rounds of which were

held Tuesday in New York. But a phone call cleared the situation up for Baldwin.

"I had been watching the draft on television most of the day, so I knew exactly when they picked me," Baldwin said Tuesday night after being selected by the Cleveland Browns as the fourth pick in the second round of the draft. "They picked me at about 1:24 (p.m.) or so, but it took them so long to call that I thought they'd made a mistake or something. Then they called

about 10 minutes later to confirm it."

Baldwin, who led the Aggie defense with 91 tackles during 1981, said he has no complaints about the outcome of the draft.

"It's a little higher than I expected to be drafted," he said. "I had thought that I'd go between the second and fourth rounds somewhere. Overall, I'm very pleased."

Baldwin didn't stay in the dark quite as long as the Aggies' Mike Whitwell. The senior wide

receiver from Cotulla didn't receive his confirmation call until after 8 p.m.

But Whitwell said he finds it a comfort to have been drafted by the same Cleveland Browns who selected his teammate Baldwin.

"I figured I'd go somewhere in the middle rounds," Whitwell said. "I was happy I went to the Cleveland Browns, because I feel I'll have a good chance to play up there."

"I think I was the first receiver drafted from the Southwest

Conference, and that makes me feel good. I'd have been disappointed if I'd been picked much later, but I can't really say that because I'm happy to have been drafted by a team that didn't draft too many receivers. I'm looking forward to playing for the Browns and getting a chance to play."

Baldwin, who still lacks about two semesters of classes before he can receive his industrial distribution degree, will attend a Browns mini-camp in Cleveland

May 5. A Houston Smiley High School graduate, Baldwin said he will come back to Houston after the mini-camp, and will report to the Browns' summer training camp in July.

Whitwell led Texas A&M with 27 receptions for 731 yards during the 1981 regular season, including games with catches worth 160 against Baylor and 154 yards against Rice.

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