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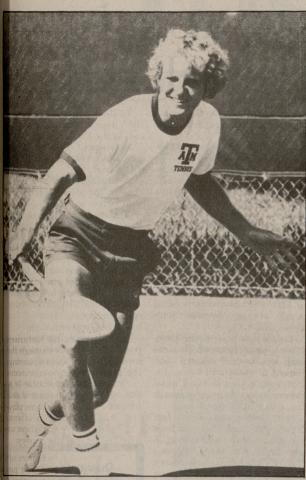
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Ron Kowal, a senior member of the Aggie men's tennis team, has emerged as one of the top players in the Southwest Conference during his Texas A&M career. Here, Kowal hits a backhand against an op-

## Experience Kowal's tennis partner

by Joe Tindel Jr.

Battalion Staff
The weather was abominable three years ago when a highly

confident young tennis prospect arrived in College Station. Ironically, the reason Ron Kowal wanted to play tennis at Texas A&M lie in the nature of the weather — more specifically, a warmer climate. And like almost everyone else, he liked the people here.

Kowal didn't figure tennis at Aggieland would let him down a few notches, though. In Naper-ville, Ill., he was the big man on the high school campus.

At Texas A&M, he was that

new guy with the Midwestern ac-

"When I came here, I just got off winning the Illinois state men's singles title," said Kowal, now the captain of the Aggie tennis team. "I was ranked in the top 35 in the nation. I was the king of the hill back home as far as the first state champion out of our high school.

"I was real popular. I'm not being conceited, I mean (tennis) was just a popular thing, and I came down here with a head that probably couldn't fit through the coach's door

Kowal was quickly humbled. His new surroundings were enough to stifle his first few attempts at showing the local fans he was for real, as the competition turned out to be a little

tougher than he expected.

playing college ball and all of the sudden, you found me at the bottom of the barrel," Kowal said. "I mean it was a very big adjustment. The competition was so much tougher. The pressure they put on you from coming out of a place like that and then coming in to college tennis is so much more stre-

It was David Kent, the Aggies' head coach, who let Kowal know that his case of "freshmanitis" was a completely normal thing and that it would pass with ex-

As it turned out, Kent's treatment was the remedy for the ailment. Kowal finished his freshman season as half of one of the

SWC's champion doubles teams.
"I established myself as a doubles player," Kowal said. "At that time, I had so much press-ure on me in singles, I couldn't accomplish any part of my full game because I was so tight and so tense. So when I'd go on the doubles court, I had someone there to talk to and someone there to get all this pressure off

He returned for his sophomore year recognized as a dou-bles player but still lacking something in singles. In fact, it wasn't until last season that Kowal made a name for himself as a singles player, making it all the way to the Southwest Conference No. 6 singles finals last

spring.
As Tom Judson's partner

during his sophomore year, Kowal might have found the season more profitable if he and Judson were playing horseshoes or darts. It was a season of near misses, as the duo fell in three sets to both the eventual NCAA champs and the runners-up. They missed the NCAA tourna-

ment "by a hair," Kowal said.
"We just played so much together that it just wasn't there any more," he said. "It was like getting a divorce, as the coach

Last season, Kowal teamed with Greg Hill to form the duo that made it to the semifinals of the SWC tourney.

much an individualist. It's his team perspective that's helped him be the team captain for the past three years. Off the court, he uses his leadership abilities as resident adviser in Cain Hall.

But he said he's still concerned about setting an example by improving his own game.

As far as where I would like to be right now, I don't ever think I really punched through as well as I should in singles," Kowal said of his accomplish-

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Being part of a doubles team perhaps goes along with Kowal's philosophy of the game. He's a team player, he said, and not so I've been as consistent at win-

ning as I would like to be.
"That's something that I'm trying to work on this year. I'd like to come through and make a strong performance — at least play at the level that I think I should be playing every time I go out onto the court."

Kowal and the Aggie men's tennis team have finished their fall competition, but still ahead are this weekend's NCAA indoor qualifying matches in Fort Worth.

## Mustangs' initial goal a victory from reality

gan preparations Monday for game a lot of people have een waiting for and F.A. Dry egan work for the game he dn't want to see — his last at exas Christian University.

TCU Chancellor William E. ucker, saying his school was t a "win at any cost institu-n," fired Dry Monday, the ond dismissal in as many ears in the Southwest Confer-

iseum. Juniors etween 7 a.m. z "We do, however," said Tucker, "want to enjoy winning seasons and to become a consistently tough competitor."

ne same day.

Texas A&M was the last and other stude tague school to fire a coach, urchase ticked dumping Tom Wilson and then day may burb toming up with more than \$1 million to hire Jackie Sherrill

way from Pittsburgh. s host TCU sm Speculation as to Dry's suc-while Texas to content around a num-ber of coaches already in the ea - chief among them for-TCU quarterback Chuck currently a successful ach at Cleburne High School Dry's firing came as no sur-rise, since he had been under essure to produce a meaninglimprovement in the win col

> "Don't have any long faces," ry told friends after meeting th Tucker early Monday. ou don't have to feel sorry for ." Dry has two years remainon his contract and TCU is bligated to pay him for that period of time

In six years at TCU, Dry ade obvious gains in the comogs. Nevertheless, they have nonly 12 games during Dry's nure (three this year) with a nal chance for No. 13 coming ext Saturday in College Station inst Texas A&M.

Collins, meanwhile, has a nce for 12 victories in his first son at SMU — taking a 10-0 ord into next Saturday's action with Holtz' Arkansas Texas Stadium beginning at

2:50 p.m.
"This one is for the outright Southwest Conference championship," said Collins, "and that was our goal from the start. And with that goes the Cotton Bowl trip and that is something our players felt they were deprived of last year (being ineligible for the bowl game because of NCAA probation).

"But we know the only way we can win a national championship is to win this game and the next one. That means this game is very important. But in the context of the national cham-pionship, all the other ones were portant, too.

Collins was facing the task of calming his players after their frantic 34-27 win over Texas Tech. That victory, SMU's 14th

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Razorbacks. The game will be in a row, came about only be-televised by ABC-TV from cause of a trick kickoff return after Tech had tied the game

with 17 seconds remaining.

The SMU coach admitted Monday that things got out of hand on the SMU bench after Bobby Leach had run 91 yards for the winning score.

'I started screaming for people to get off the field (after the score)," said Collins, "and I realized that there were 45,000 people in the stands, 200 football players, cheerleaders, band members and an awful lot of other people around.

'And not one soul was paying any attention to me.

"I was trying to get the extra-point team on the field and I turned around and asked one of He said, 'coach, they are in the end zone



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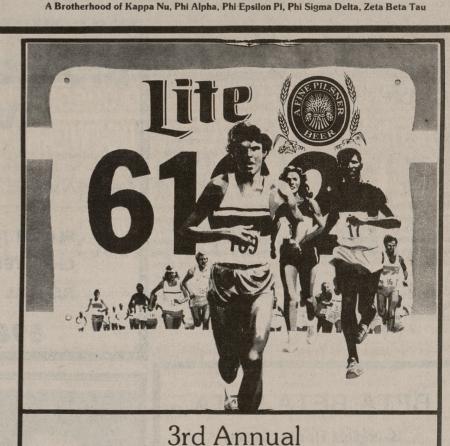
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