

The Battalion Sports

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Aggies sweep fifth-ranked Titans

Chandler says clutching key to A&M victories

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff
Spring break hasn't been a experience for the California-State-Fullerton baseball team.
The Titans headed south only two losses and a No. 5 national ranking in their backet, but by Sunday evening found five more marks in "loss" column.
First, the Titans lost three games Friday and Saturday to nationally-ranked Texas — no surprise. The Longhorns are strong enough to beat and are near-impossible to beat in Austin. So the Titans headed to Col Station hoping to take out frustration on the Aggies. They were quick to find out, however, that Texas A&M is just as pitiable as the Horns when it comes to baseball.
The Aggies used solid pitching and clutch hitting to defeat State twice Sunday, 6-1 and



Cal State-Fullerton outfielder Tom Thomas is tagged out, at left, during Sunday's double-header. At right,

Titan head coach Augie Garrido agreed:
"I was very impressed with their first pitcher (Luecken)," Garrido said. "He was in total command of the game and of us. He has a good fastball and has the ability to throw the slider. That was his best pitch today."
Luecken said that even though he started the game a little shaky, giving up two walks and falling behind six hitters in the first two innings, he was pleased with his performance.
"Since one (preseason) scrimmage, this is the best game I've had this year," he said. "I guess I was a little nervous because I heard so much about how good they hit. Pitchers don't like to

hear things like that. But once I settled down, I got some confidence and my slider started working."

The Aggies were also productive at the plate. Texas A&M tapped the Titan pitching staff for 17 hits in the two seven-inning games, including two home runs in the second contest.

Bobby Beach gave the Aggies a 3-2 lead in the third inning of the second game with his shot over the left field fence. Later in the inning, Todd Edwards added to that total with a two-run homer over the right field wall to bring in Kevin Smith. Beach finished the day with three hits in six appearances at the plate.



staff photo by David Fisher

Thomas argues the call with an umpire. The call stood, and A&M went on to sweep Cal State 6-1, 7-5.

The rest of the hitting honors were spread throughout the Aggie squad as every Texas A&M starter got at least one hit. Aggie second baseman Clint Heard wasn't surprised.

"We weren't intimidated by them," he said. "We didn't know what to expect, but we knew we could hit them and a lot of balls did fall in for us."

"This (sweep) was a real confidence-builder for us. We thought we had a real good ball-club going into these games and we proved it today."

Garrido said he knew all along the Aggies were a first-rate team.

"I'm not surprised with the loss," he said. "I think we could

have played better, but I don't want to make any excuses. We got beat by a very fine team. They had strong pitching in the first game and clutch hitting in the second."

The Aggies host North Texas State on Tuesday in a double-header that starts at 1 p.m. and again on Wednesday in a single game beginning at 3 p.m. The next big test for Texas A&M will be over spring break when the Aggies travel to Coral Gables, Fla., to take part in the Miami Hurricane tournament. Miami and Maine, both College World Series participants a year ago, will be in the tournament, along with Southern Illinois.

A&M races past Tech

by Frank L. Christlieb

Battalion Staff

LUBBOCK — Sherlock Holmes, you can go home. The mystery's been solved. Case closed.

The Texas Aggie basketball team, which earlier in the season lost its way during a downpour of grueling non-conference games, has discovered itself. And what a time to come in from the storm.

In a string of recent strong performances — including three straight victories over TCU, Texas and Texas Tech — the Aggies have put nearly every aspect of their game into synch. Against Texas Tech on Saturday in Lubbock, when Texas A&M had to win to clinch third place in the Southwest Conference, the Aggies hustled until the final buzzer and wound up winning 93-70.

As a result, Texas A&M, which finished 17-13 on the season and 10-6 in the SWC, will enter this week's league tournament as one of three teams playing their best basketball of the season. The Aggies will open quarterfinal play Thursday night at 7 p.m. in Dallas' Reunion Arena against the winner of tonight's TCU-Rice game in Fort Worth.

Although it goes without saying, the regular-season champion Houston Cougars have played in the stratosphere all season — and they still are after Saturday's 93-64 thumping of the Baylor Bears.

The SMU Mustangs, who finished fourth after winning a coin flip with the TCU Horned Frogs, won 17 games to finish with their highest victory total since 1966. The Mustangs host Texas tonight in Dallas in an effort to qualify for the league tournament quarterfinals Thursday night.

And the Aggies. What can you say about a team that traveled more than 20,000 miles to compete in tournaments and road games in November and December, lost five of its first eight games and had its leading scorer out of action for two weeks? And to top it all off, Saturday's 56.3 percent field-goal accuracy gave Texas A&M a 50.8 percentage for the season, which represents the best total in the school's history.

Shelby Metcalf, Texas A&M's coach for the past 20 seasons, knows what he thinks about the 1982-83 team.

"We never got enough practice in December to put a team together," Metcalf said after the Aggies scored 59 points in the second half to bury the Red Raiders Saturday. "We never had a chance. That's why I think so highly of these young men, because they've stuck with me through the toughest season of my life."

The Aggies, who led 34-26 at halftime, outscored Texas Tech 25-5 in the first 10 minutes of the second half to build a 59-31 lead. Metcalf said his players seemed to be a changed team in the second half.

"We came out as ready to play in the second half as we have been all year," he said. "I didn't realize how important third place was to them until the second half. They really wanted it."

Several times during the game, Texas A&M players scrambled for loose balls, came up with steals and passed the ball to open teammates when they could have shot instead. That kind

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Gymnasts beat Tech

Texas A&M gymnastics defeated Texas Tech Friday in a dual meet, 204.15 to 200.20. Texas Tech is the defending state champion, and the Aggies' second year coach, Phillip Taylor, was the Red Raiders this year. Mark Meyer and Grant Merdale both won first place to lead the Aggies. Texas A&M will host the state championship meet April 16th.

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