

Rene Lachemann's 'operations' have Seattle pitchers overjoyed

by Milton Richman
UPI Sports Editor

I like the way Rene Lachemann operates.

He's an original thinker, one of those self-starters, and he knows how to handle players. He reminds me of Jim Valvano.

I don't care that the Seattle Mariners are down at the bottom in the American League West; Lachemann is probably the first one I'd think of if I were an owner looking for a good, smart young manager.

One of his virtues is that he's up front with everyone. Particularly his players. He lets them know what he's doing.

Four weeks ago, a few days before the Mariners were about to wind up spring training in

Tempe, Ariz., he went over to one of his players and said the Golden Words.

"You've made the team," Lachemann said. "You're gonna be one of our starting pitchers. Go ahead and tell your mother, your wife and your 4-month-old baby."

If the Mariners' manager had named Matt Young lord over all he surveyed or tax-free winner of a multimillion-dollar lottery, Young couldn't have been happier. He was so elated, he couldn't even speak.

Young, 24, a left-hander from Azusa, Calif., has taken Floyd Bannister's spot in the Mariners' pitching rotation, and while nobody actually is looking for him to be as effective or lead the league in strikeouts the way

Bannister did last year — before becoming a free agent and signing a five-year \$4.5 million contract with the White Sox — he certainly surprised a lot of people with his performance against the Twins Thursday.

But, Lachemann wasn't surprised at all.

Young gave up a first-inning single to John Castino, then held the Twins hitless until Darrell Brown singled with one out in the ninth. With the Mariners leading, 2-0, Bill Caudill, their right-handed relief ace, came in to get the last two outs and save Young's second victory of the season. He'll never forget his first one. That came in his big-league debut against the Yankees in Seattle on April 6. He didn't finish, but he beat them 6-2, leaving in favor of Ed Vande Berg in the eighth.

Young made a believer of Lachemann by the way he pitched this spring in the Cactus League contests. Those games don't generally mean much, but as good as Young's figures were, Lachemann was even more impressed by the way he threw and his control. Young gave up only one earned run in 25 1-3 innings, striking out 21 batters while walking only five.

"It was the best spring I've ever seen any pitcher have since I've been managing," says Lachemann, who started managing 11 years ago and is in his third season with Seattle.

"Young went to UCLA. He was with Salt Lake City last season and won 12 games for them, but he was a question mark as far

as we were concerned when he came to us this spring because of his lack of experience."

Beggars can't be choosers. The Mariners weren't so deep in starting pitchers Lachemann really could pick and choose, particularly after right-hander Jim Beattie, one of his regular starters last year, came up with tendonitis in his right arm and was optioned to Salt Lake City for rehabilitation.

"I think he's got a chance to be an outstanding pitcher," Lachemann says, employing a manager's vernacular. When you ask him what he means by "outstanding," he says a pitcher who could win 15 to 20 games.

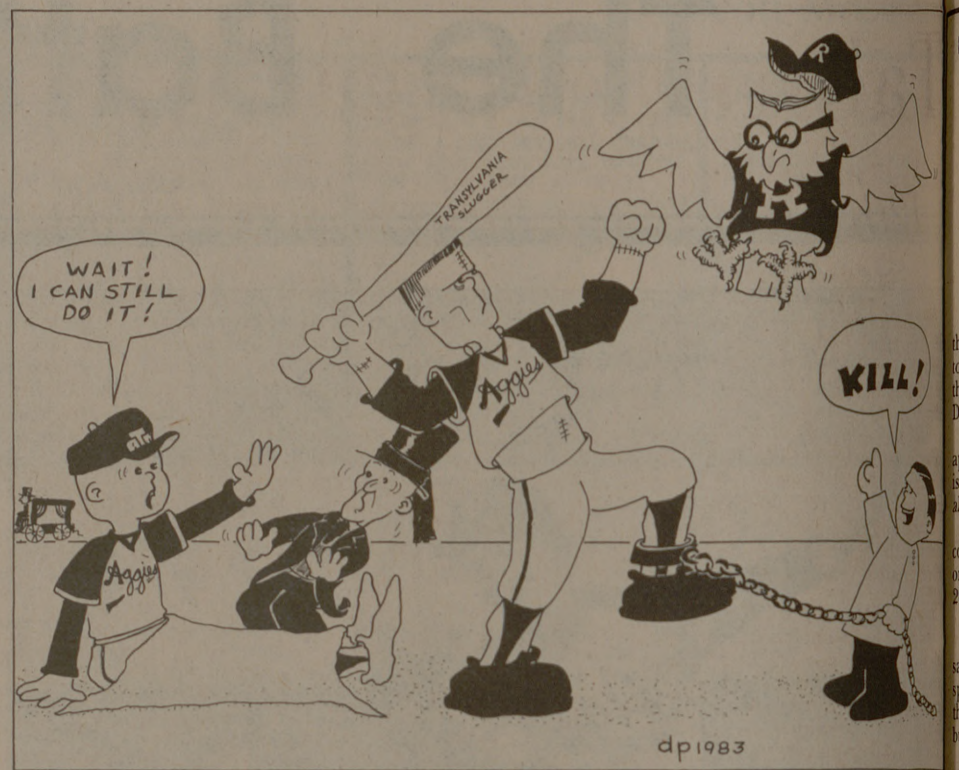
Lachemann isn't necessarily saying Young will do that this year, but if he does he'll surpass Bannister, whose biggest year with anyone was last year when he fashioned a 12-13 log with the Mariners.

Against the Twins in Minneapolis Thursday, Young walked two and struck out four and said he thought he could've pitched until the end. With the bullpen the Mariners have, though, he didn't feel that bad about being taken out.

Young has been having some control problems. "That's been from thinking too much about charts and pitches," he revealed.

OK, then, Lachemann said, he isn't going to have any more meetings with his young pitchers. He said he didn't want them thinking too much.

You see, I told you Lachemann is real sharp.

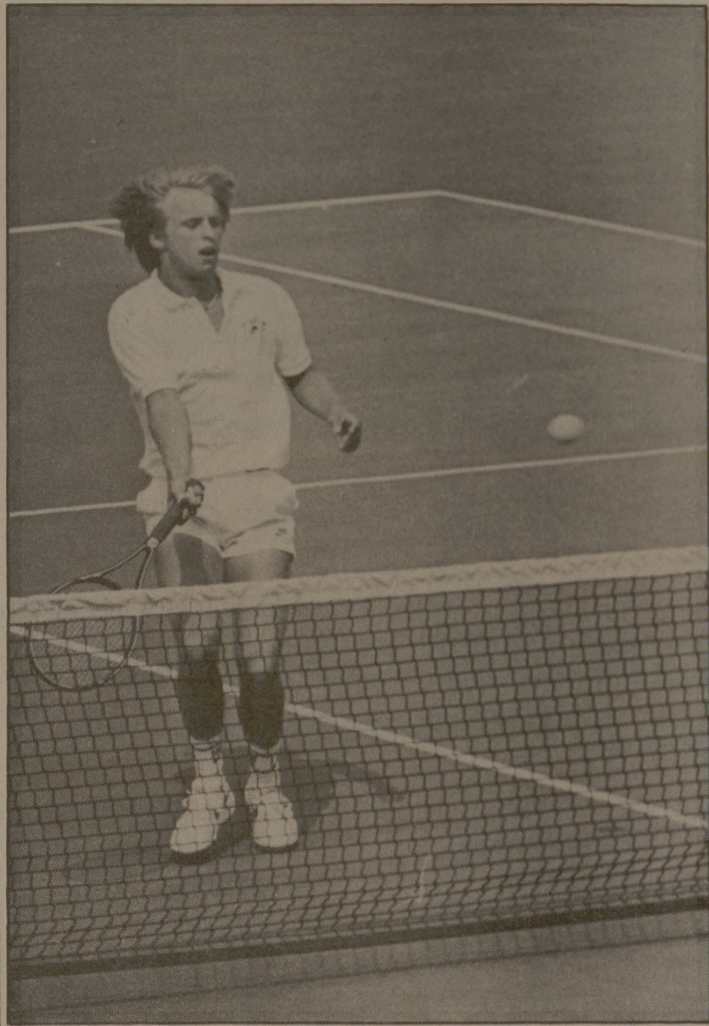


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Tennis teams in Corpus for conference tourney

The Texas A&M tennis team is winding up one of its best seasons ever at the Southwest Con-

ference tennis tournament in Corpus Christi this weekend. This year's tournament is un-



Texas A&M's Kimmo Alkio

ique in that it is the first time the women to compete at NCAA level. It's also the time that the same championship tournament has both men's and women's divisions.

Men's coach David Kerner says, "I think we'll do well. We've done it and we're capable of doing it together. What we do is cause things to happen. I feel we can. We're fired up."

The men's team has a record going into the tournament while the women's team is 15-10.

For the men, Brian Johnson and Kimmo Alkio are expected to do well after a successful match singles record of a combined 42-17. In men's doubles competition, the pair of Johnson and Tom Judson will be ranked No. 1 for the Aggies who ranked 20th nationally.

Of the women, Vannessa goes into the tournament with a 21-4 record on the year. Laura Hannah and Liliana Hernandez go in as the top doubles seed for the Aggies with a mark.

Rodney Harmon of SMU, Margaret Redfern of Houston are the No. 1 singles seeds in the tournament while SMU is ranked overall to defend its title. Texas is the pick to win the first SWC women's title.

The tournament will consist of single elimination play from No. 1 through 6 singles and 1 through 3 doubles. One will be awarded in the best-of-three standings for each individual match victory. Points will be added to points acquired during the regular season to determine the champions.

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