

Take on Lakers next

# Spurs shovel, bury Nuggets

**United Press International**  
Now that they've buried the Nuggets, the San Antonio Spurs are ready to rise against the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers.

"I guess we put the final shovel of dirt on them (the Nuggets). We feel very confident we can play with the Lakers, even in Los Angeles," Spurs Coach Stan Albeck said after Wednesday night's 145-105 romp which eliminated Denver in five games of a Western Conference semifinal series.

George Gervin scored 26 points and Gene Banks added 23 to propel the Spurs into a Western Conference showdown against the Lakers, beginning Sunday at Los Angeles.

The Eastern Conference fin-

als begin Monday, with Milwaukee visiting Philadelphia.

After watching San Antonio set four offensive NBA playoff records against his team in the series, Denver coach Doug Moe doesn't sell the Spurs short against the Lakers.

"They are strong and they are powerful and I really feel they will do well," Moe said.

San Antonio set playoff records for the most field goals in a five-game series (274), highest field-goal percentage (51.6), most assists (181) and most points (664).

Johnny Moore had 20 points and 13 assists for the winners and Artis Gilmore added 17. Billy McKinney led the Nuggets with 20 points. Alex English and Rob Williams each scored 18

points, but the Nuggets could not overcome a shooting percentage that stayed in the low 30s all night.

Los Angeles closed out its share of the Western semifinals Tuesday night with a 116-108 victory over Portland to win the series, 4-1.

The Eastern finalists were settled early when both the 76ers and Bucks swept their first-round opponents. Philadelphia, which won a hard-fought series over the New York Knicks, could use the rest while Milwaukee is ready to go after shocking the Boston Celtics.

The oddsmakers lean toward a Philadelphia-Los Angeles title series for the third time in four years although the 76ers have some walking wounded from the Knicks' war.

"Philadelphia is far and away better than anybody in the



Coach Stan Albeck says Spurs can play with LA

league, but we're confident we can play well against any team," Bucks' Coach Don Nelson said.

## Horns

(continued from page 11)

Houston that virtually handed the conference title to the Horns.

Still, third baseman Bryan Burrows said the series with A&M is an important one for the Horns because, "We've been suffering from a mental letdown over the past couple of weeks—we shouldn't have lost four out of our last five games."

"Our chances for post-season play are still good, but we need to sweep A&M to bounce back emotionally."

For the Aggies—who at one time were ranked No. 17—the season has been disappointing. They started off hot, piling up a 20-4 non-conference record against ranked teams like Maine and Cal State-Fullerton.

Then came the decline. The problem, Aggie coach Tom Chandler says, can be described in one word. Pitching.

"Our major weakness this year was pitching," Chandler said Wednesday. "Our staff had simply astronomical ERA's, and that's what hurt."

Still, Chandler said beating the Longhorns might ease some of the pain.

"A couple of wins in this series would probably salvage our season—at least in the minds of the seniors."

"But it's definitely going to be tough. We're playing the number one team in the country—an outstanding college ballclub."

Second baseman Clint Heard said the Aggies' season has been a tough one.

"It's (the season) been a real disappointment. We started strong, but throughout the season the breaks just haven't gone our way."

"But we're ready for the game, because A&M and UT always play an emotional series. We're anxious to get it on with them."

## TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hill



# Phils clobber Reds, 9-4; Astros sneak past Mets

**United Press International**  
With the kind of comfort they offer Mike Schmidt, Joe Morgan and Tony Perez should enter the hammock business.

"Joe is in front of me walking like crazy and I got the league-leading hitter (Perez) hitting behind me," Schmidt said Wednesday night, after dismantling Cincinnati pitching for the second straight night to give the Philadelphia Phillies a 9-4 victory over the Reds.

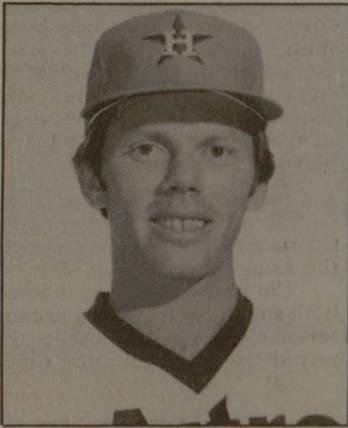
"All the way down to the eighth hitter, we have a good lineup," continued Schmidt, who drove in four runs for the second game in a row.

The Phillies clobbered Cincinnati pitching for 22 runs and 29 hits in the final two games of the series. They finished their six-game home stand with a .398 team batting average and 48 runs scored—all but five coming in four games.

"The hits have been coming at the right time," Philadelphia Manager Pat Corrales said. "That's making life a lot easier around here."

Schmidt had a run-scoring single in the first, a sacrifice fly in the third and a two-run single in the fourth. Bo Diaz's three-run homer highlighted the Phillies' five-run first and Garry Maddox added a solo shot in the fifth.

Even Steve Carlton, who allowed eight hits in eight innings of work and struck out



Astro Mike LaCoss throws six-hitter in 4-3 victory

nine to pick up his fourth win in six decisions and 289th career victory, had a pair of doubles and two runs scored. Rich Gale, 3-1, took the loss.

The Reds' Johnny Bench reached a milestone in the seventh inning when he lined a single to left-center for the 2,000th hit of his career. He became only the second player in Cincinnati history to reach that plateau. Pete Rose, who had 3,164 hits in a Reds uniform, was the other.

In other games, Montreal defeated Atlanta, 4-1, San Francisco downed Chicago, 7-4, Houston topped New York, 4-3, San Diego blanked St. Louis, 10-0,

and Los Angeles nipped Pittsburgh, 3-2.

In the American League, Toronto 7, Texas 1, Cincinnati 16, Baltimore 8, Boston 1, Oakland 1, Chicago 1, Milwaukee 2, New York 8, St. Louis 1, Cleveland 11, Minnesota 7, and Seattle 5, Detroit 7.

**ASTROS 4, METS 1**  
New York, Tony Scott drove three runs with a home run double to back the six-hitter of Mike LaCoss, 1-2, for the Astros. Rick Ownbey, 0-1, was the loser as the Mets drew their fifth straight.

**EXPOS 4, BRAVES 1**  
Montreal, Bryan Little tagged home two runs in the second and Steve Rogers' five-day and help snap Atlanta's losing game winning streak.

**GIANTS 7, CUBS 4**  
San Francisco, Atlee Hatcher, the NL's ERA leader, won his third game and Jack Clark hit out of a slump with a two-run single to pace the Giants.

**PADRES 10, CARDINALS 1**  
At San Diego, Eric Show scattered seven hits and Ramirez drove in four runs in the Padres. Steve Garvey collected two singles to tie his career hit total to 1,999.

**DODGERS 3, PIRATES 1**  
At Los Angeles, Pedro Guerrero hit a one-out home run in the bottom of the ninth to snap the tie and lift the Dodgers. Guerrero connected for his season homer of the season to tie winner of Tom Niedenfur-

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## Ryan on 21-day disabled list

**United Press International**  
**HOUSTON**—The Houston Astros placed pitcher Nolan Ryan on a 21-day disabled list with a pulled hamstring.

A team spokesman Wednesday said Ryan cannot pitch again until May 31. He suffered a severe hamstring muscle pull in his left thigh during a game Monday night at New York.

Team physician Dr. Bill Bryant said Ryan can begin swimming to rehabilitate the injury.

Ryan, 36, missed the first 10 games of the season with a reoperation of his prostate gland. Ryan was active for 16 games before the latest injury.

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