

# Ags finish 13th in nation

By Tony Cornett  
Sports Writer

David Kent is an eternally optimistic tennis coach.

"If you had told me when the season started," Kent said, "that we'd be 24 and 10 on the season, four and four in the conference, and ranked 13th in the nation with these young people, I'd have said that you'd been hitting the juice too much."

The success of this year's men's tennis team was just not supposed to happen.

Their team consisted of one senior, one junior, one sophomore, and five freshmen. Yet they posted the best overall record and finished higher in the conference than any previous Kent-coached Aggie squad.

The old saying that goes "You've got to have seniors to win" just didn't apply to this group.

Playing in what is widely considered to be the toughest tennis conference in the nation, the Aggies battled to a fourth place finish in the conference tournament behind perennial powerhouses Arkansas, Texas, and SMU.

That finish is the highest for an Aggie squad in ten years.

Arnold Kettenacker was the lone senior on the team this season and Coach Kent gives more credit to him for the success of the team than to anyone else.

"Arnold was a heckuva senior," says Kent, "and kind of like a big brother to these guys. You have to give the credit to Arnold for this season because he has really kept this team in line and done a lot for us."

This season's No. 1 player and only junior, Greg Hill,

looks to be the heir to the leadership position vacated by Kettenacker. Hill played No. 1 all season and posted a record of 21-13.

Hill and freshman Grant Connell will represent the Aggies in singles competition in the NCAA championships May 13-20. They are ranked No.30 and No.44 respectively in the nation. Hill and Connell will also team up to compete for the doubles title.

Some good news for the team is that Kimmo Alkio will be returning from his native Finland to rejoin the team. He had some required military duty to get out of the way and will be some welcome experience for the team in the coming season.

"What more can you say about Kimmo?" asks Kent. "He can do it all. He's very tough mentally and has done very well in European tournaments."

As far as next year's schedule goes, the team will be playing the same group that Kent likes to call the "top 20 bunch". Schools like LSU, Trinity, Tennessee, and the tough schools of the Southwest Conference are in that group.

Kent feels that the Aggies national ranking of 13th will help the team attract even more good competition by drawing them to College Station to try to wrestle the Aggies ranking away from them.

This season may be over for the team, but the team members will be busy getting ready for a summer of hard tennis.

Dean Goldfine will compete in tournaments in Florida.

Mark Smith will be participating in the Olympic trials

thanks to tennis being a demonstration sport in the upcoming Olympic Games. He'll also play on the National Amateur Circuit.

Coach Kent emphasizes the importance of summer competition.

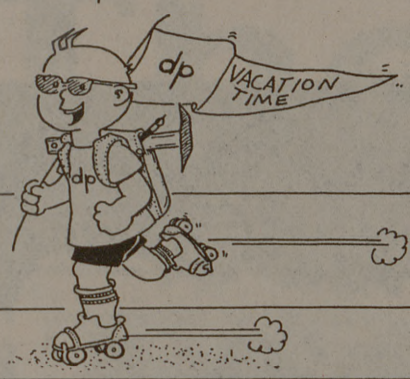
"They've got to get out and play," he says. "Everybody else is going to play. They all go their separate ways, but they've

got to get that experience and come back a better player in the fall."

The Aggies have never won the conference championship. But with the talent that they now have and the good talent expected to come in, they could be in position to make the traditional conference winners sweat it out.

Coach David Kent is optimistic.

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## Danny White's trial set

United Press International

PLANO — Dallas Cowboys cornerback Danny White, accused of punching a high school student in a traffic incident, will be tried June 18 by a county jury, his attorney said Friday.

The senior Clark said at least one Plano High School student has been contacted by a private investigator inquiring about the Clark family.

Davis denied knowing anything about a private investigator. "We don't know what Mr.

punched him after a traffic incident on Feb. 25. White has denied the charge.

Clark said he has been getting a number of telephone calls since he filed his complaint, including some prank calls.

The senior Clark said at least one Plano High School student has been contacted by a private investigator inquiring about the Clark family.

Davis denied knowing anything about a private investigator. "We don't know what Mr.

Clark is talking about," said Davis.

The Clark family is concerned the jury might show favoritism to White but Davis discounted that possibility. "I have never run into a jury that wasn't fair-minded. I don't understand their attitude," said Davis.

The younger Clark said he wants to make sure White gets the same treatment as anyone else.

Davis admitted a conviction could adversely affect White's career.

## Astros' Thon: I will be back

United Press International

Dickie Thon has a message he wants to get across to everyone and anyone who has the slightest doubt about him ever being back for Houston again.

"I'll be back, and I won't have any fear," says the 25-year-old star shortstop who had been the key to the Astros' success virtually their heart and not going to let anything happen to him before he was hit above the left eye with a pitch and put on the commission on April 8.

Rosen is the conveyor of a message for Thon, who has been working out again in Houston where the vision in his left eye has improved from 20/100 to 20/60.

Rosen, the President and General Manager of the Astros, is fully aware of the club's unimproved proclivity for misfortune, its sad history unhighlighted by a string of tragedies unequalled perhaps by any other team in the majors.

Such former Houston players as Walt Bond, Jim Umbricht and Don Wilson all died prematurely, Roger Metzger accidentally cut his fingers off working with an electric saw in his home and, more recently, J.R. Richard's career was suddenly ended by a stroke.

Now there have been rumors that Thon might not be able to play anymore because of a problem with his vision. He suffered a fracture of the inferior orbital rim of the bone above his left eye a month ago when he was hit by Mike Torrez in a game with the Mets in the Astrodome.

Rosen has been in constant touch with Thon and his doctors, so he knows as much about the situation as anyone. He puts no stock at all in the rumors.

"I'm in touch with the doctors and with Dickie constantly," Rosen said. "There has been steady improvement. Last week, the doctors were enthused by what was perceived to be a quantum leap."

"I can tell you this: Dickie has been working out in Houston. He's already in the batting cage and has begun to throw. You know how he is, very quiet. He never says very much, but he does say 'I'll be back and I won't have any fear.'"

Rosen says Thon doesn't blame Torrez for what happened.

"Dickie said they like to pitch him inside," he said.

He said the ball sailed and he didn't pick it up until it was too late."

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The Astros consider Thon the best shortstop in the National League and no one gives them much argument on that.

Thon hit .300 most of last year, then tailed off a little near the end but still finished at .286. He hit 20 home runs, drove in 79 and stole 34 bases. His play in the field was in a word — superlative.

This year, he started off even better. He had played in only five games before being hurt and was hitting .353 with 6-for-17.

Craig Reynolds and Al Bannister have done good jobs filling in at shortstop, but neither of them give Houston the same thing Thon did. The Astros miss him.

## Rockets want Olajuwon

United Press International

The Houston Rockets plan to sign Olajuwon if they win a college draft, but a club spokesman said Monday the Rockets have broken no league rules in discussions with Olajuwon, and he said he had no idea what the NBA was investigating.

League rules forbid a team from having any discussions "with any player who has remaining intercollegiate eligibility or is otherwise ineligible to be selected" in the draft prior to 45 days before the draft.

The draft is scheduled June 19.

Olajuwon, a junior, renounced his remaining year of college eligibility April 27. Ewing, a junior at Georgetown, elected to remain in school for his senior year.

Foley said the Rockets plan to choose Olajuwon first, but if he is unavailable, they will select Michael Jordan of North Carolina, who is also an undergraduate.

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