

SPORTS

Ag netters take good with bad

By MARYBETH ROHSNER
Sports Writer

A Good Friday can sometimes be followed by a Lousy Saturday.

Such was the case for the A&M men's tennis team over the weekend. A&M defeated Baylor 9-0 in dual-match play Friday, only to face a disappointing 4-5 loss against Texas on Saturday.

The Aggies, now ranked No. 10 nationally with an overall record of 18-7, bruised the Bears, but just couldn't muster enough points to win against the No. 7 Longhorns.

"I have no explanations and no excuses," said A&M Coach David Kent. "You have to give Texas a great deal of credit."

At the end of singles play, A&M appeared to have the match won. Kimmo Alkio defeated Texas' Charles Beckman, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, giving the Aggies a 4-2 lead over the Horns heading into the doubles matches.

But, once again, the Aggies' "doubles trouble" haunted the team, deflating a seemingly sure victory into a "well, maybe next time" defeat.

Texas' Royce Deppe and Beckman surprised A&M's Grant Connell and Alkio in No. 1 doubles play, 6-4, 6-1. Though the Ags' No. 2 team fared slightly better against the Longhorn tandem, Greg Hill and Marcel Vos lost to Paul Koscielski and Fred Thome in a tie-breaker match, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2. Texas' No. 3 doubles team easily overpowered the A&M duo of Mark Smith and Russell Simmons, 6-1, 6-2.

Kent has experimented with his worrisome doubles teams all season, especially in the No. 2 and No. 3 slots. Kent's netters haven't had any difficulty pulling off smashing singles victories, led by nationally-ranked Grant Connell, but the doubles teams have suffered some embarrassing losses in Southwest Conference play thus far.

This weekend's narrow loss to Texas may lead to still more shuffling of A&M's doubles duos, but Kent was unavailable for comment on that subject.

The A&M women's team also had a Good Friday. The women blew away Oklahoma City University 9-0, bringing the team's season record to 11-7.

"Of course, the team is real excited to win against OCU," said A&M Coach Jan Baldwin. "We're getting our winning feeling back."

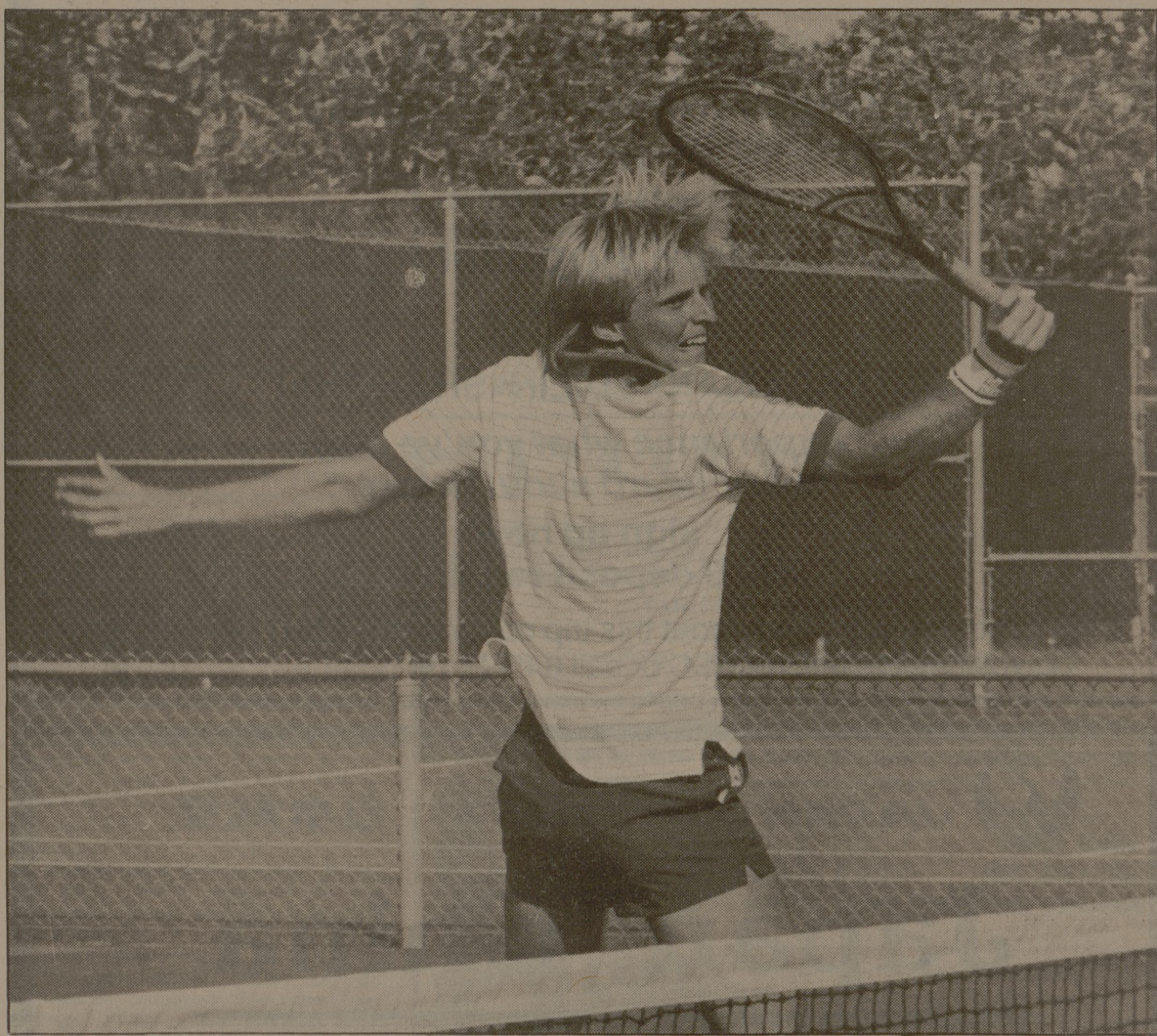


Photo by GREG BAILEY

Texas A&M Kimmo Alkio charges the net for a backhand volley during his singles match against Texas' Charles Beckman Saturday at the Omar Smith Tennis Center. Coach David Kent's Aggies dropped the dual-match to the No. 7 Longhorns, 4-5.

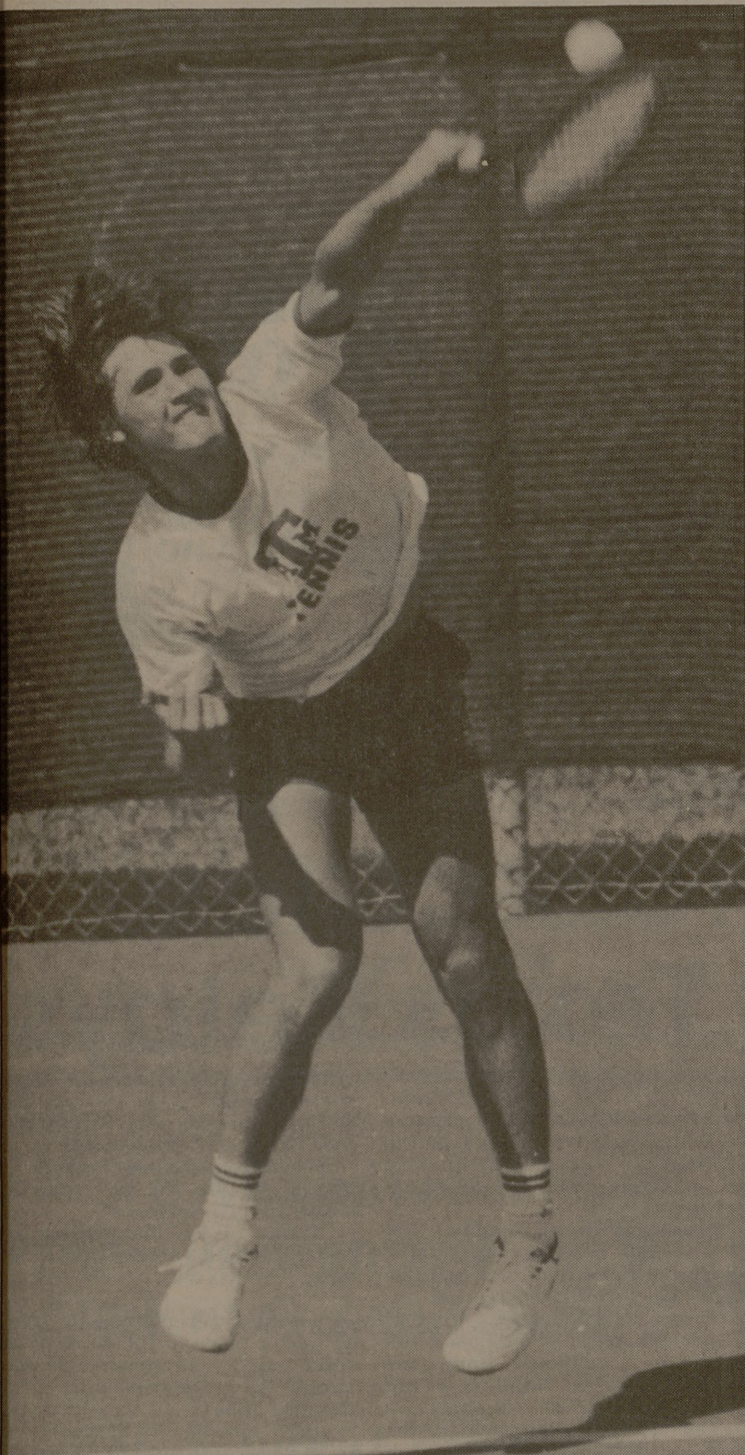


Photo by LEE BOOKER

Texas A&M's No. 1 singles player Grant Connell blasts a serve over the net during the Baylor match Friday at the Omar Smith Tennis Center. The No. 10-ranked Aggies defeated the Bears 9-0, improving their record to 18-7 overall.

In keeping with past performance, the Ag lady netters posted a convincing victory over the Chiefs at the Royal Oaks Racquet Club in Bryan.

The women haven't been as successful away from the Omar Smith Tennis Center, however.

"Anybody would rather play at home," Baldwin said, "but I don't think you can narrow (our win-loss

record) down to something like that."

The Aggies have the chance to prove their prowess when they travel to San Antonio today to face Top 10-ranked Trinity. In No. 1 singles action, the Ags' Vanne Akagi will challenge the Tigers' Gretchen Rush, currently ranked as the nation's No. 1 singles player.

Trinity defeated A&M when the teams met three weeks ago, but Baldwin still optimistic this time around.

"We know we can play Trinity and do well," Baldwin said. "We played fairly close last time. You tend to play teams like Trinity based on their reputation, rather than reality."

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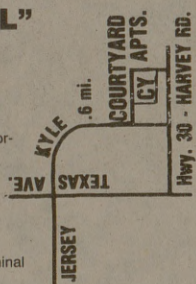
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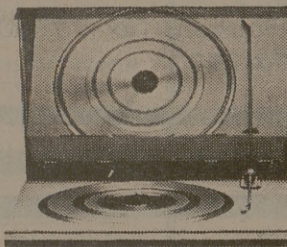
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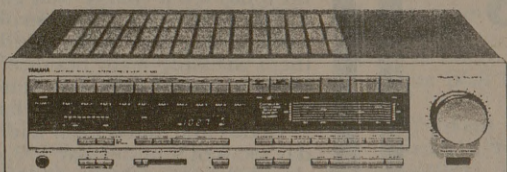
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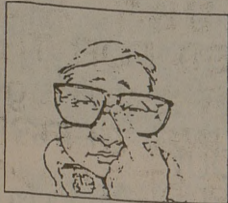
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