

SPORTS

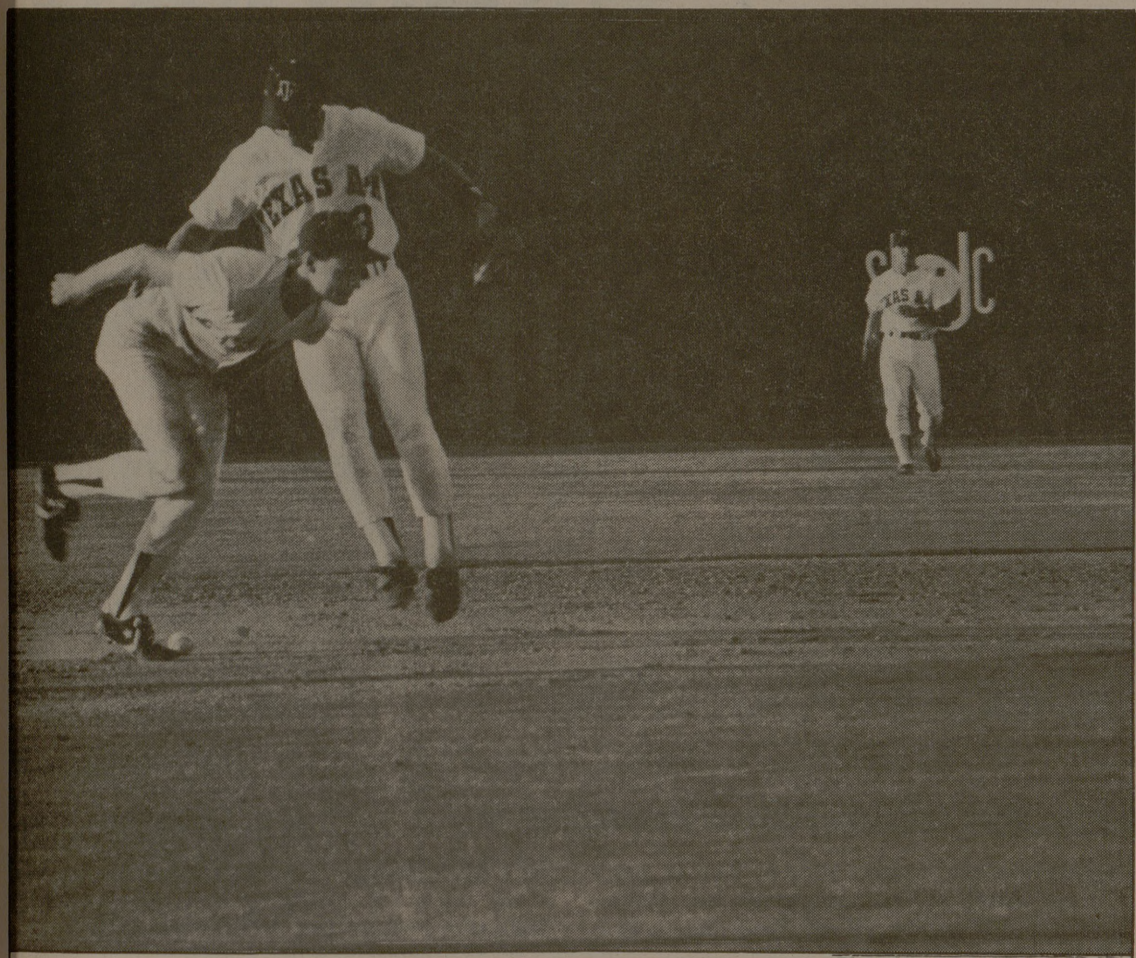


Photo by ANTHONY CASPER

Right At The Feet

A&M's Scott Livingstone (3) and Rob Swain play against Southwestern. A&M won both games Monday at Olsen Field 4-3 and 8-2.

No. 3 Ag softball team leave Lobos 'deserted'

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS
Assistant Sports Editor

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A desert land filled with lots of strange fans. Where the Lobos' howls linger like balls gone foul.

"We have to bring them down to earth. Show them they're not the awesome Texas A&M Aggies," said New Mexico softball Coach Susan Craig.

The No. 15 Lobos started the four game series on Saturday like they would stand behind the words. Maybe the No. 3 Ags weren't as good as their ranking implied.

A 3-2 upset win by the Lobos in eight innings of the first game, backed up the big mouth. But by Sunday afternoon, Craig and the Lobos were the ones brought down to earth.

The Ags took the next three games 5-2, 5-4 in eight innings and 5-0, to reassert the fact that they are indeed the No. 3 — if not the No. 1 or No. 2 — team in the nation.

"They were prepared for us," said A&M Coach Bob Brock. "They kept coming back and coming back. They were fired up."

"We squeezed out three (games). I guess that's pretty good on the road. It certainly won't hurt our chances (to get an NCAA bid)."

In that first game, the weather, bad calls and poor pitching did the Ags in. Aggie ace Shawn Andaya couldn't establish any rhythm and was pulled for the first time ever in favor of Yvette Lopez in the fifth inning.

"I was very off," Andaya said. "It was just one of those days when I was out of it. I think they were up to hitting me."

Brock's surprise move caught Lopez off guard, and she gave up the tying run in the fifth.

"I was surprised," Lopez said. "He usually doesn't pull Shawn for me."

The game went into the eighth inning and the tie breaker rule (both teams start with a runner on second) was put into play.

A double by New Mexico third baseman Dee Sanchez, and the Lobos appeared to be on their way.

"It was supposed to be an outside pitch," Lopez said. "I threw it inside and she hit it."

The strange climate played its part in the loss.

"We just weren't used to that altitude," Brock said. "The players couldn't even sweat with the humidity as low as it was. We've never played in anything that hot before."

The highlight for the Ags was none other than freshman Liz Mizera. Mizera added home run No. 13 to her stats with a 210-foot solo shot to left center.

The second game was more than just Mizera. Add third baseman Cindy Cooper, right fielder Deb Rollman and Lopez to the list of stars.

Lopez went all seven innings, struck out eight and gave up six hits for her 12th win against four losses.

The second inning broke the Lobos' backs.

Rollman singled with two outs and second baseman Judy Trussell walked for the second time in as many innings. Cooper followed with her third homer of the season — a three run shot over the center field fence.

"That one felt good," Cooper said. "I got under it. I really felt like it was going over when I hit it."

Mizera couldn't let her teammate, Cooper, outdo her. She added on to her count with a solo homer in the fifth. That was No. 14 on the year.

"(Mizera) came over and said, 'I can't let you get ahead' after she hit hers," Cooper said. "Everytime I hit one, she gets another one."

Rollman finished the game two-for-two by adding a double in the sixth.

"I tell you that Deb Rollman is hitting the ball," Brock said. "She is really pushing the other players to do well."

After a day in the New Mexico sun, the Ags knew what to expect on Sunday.

The Ags turned on the solar power in the third game of the series and it's a good thing they did.

Mizera quickly added No. 15 to the growing list with a shot over the left field fence for a 1-0 lead.

The Lobos tied it up in the bottom of the fourth and neither team scored in the last three innings.

Once again, the Ags were put in the tie breaker position.

Trussell started off running at

second base for the Ags. After a Cooper sacrifice bunt, the Lobos showed what they learned from the Ags — if you don't pitch to Mizera, she can't hit it over. So the walk put runners on first and second with one out.

Carter, who had been hitting the ball hard but just wasn't getting it to fall in the right place, got one to fall just over the out stretched glove of the shortstop for a 3-1 lead.

Jackson singled, and a Schwind single sent Carter home. McNutt walked loading the bases for the revived Rollman. Rollman slapped a hit to third and the fielder's choice scored Iva. A 5-1 lead looked pretty safe, especially with Andaya on the mound.

"Normally that would be true," Cooper said. "But, they way they were hitting the ball, we needed all the runs and hits we could get."

Indeed, Andaya, who had struck out 11 before the eighth, gave up three runs with no outs. Lopez was again called in to save the day.

Three straight strike outs later, the Ags had won their second straight over the Lobos, an exciting 5-4 game.

In the fourth game, the Ags showed their power.

The scoring began in the second inning when left fielder Josie Carter singled over the shortstop and Iva Jackson sacrificed her to second. With one out, Cindy Foster, who has been hitting well of late, showed she can play with the Mizera's and Cooper's.

Her ball didn't quite make it over the fence. It hit the top of the center field fence and landed inside the field for a double and a 1-0 lead.

McNutt scored Foster with a bloop triple to right center field.

The Ags got two more runs in the fourth on a Jackson single, a Mary Schwind double and a Rollman single.

When Cooper singled in the fifth and Schwind singled to score her, the Ags were sitting pretty with a 5-0 lead.

Lopez picked up another win by going all seven innings. She had two wins, a loss and a save in 19 innings and improved to 13-4 on the season.

Briton captures Boston Marathon

Associated Press

BOSTON — Britain's Geoff Smith, courageously overcoming cramps in both hamstrings, struggled to a front-running victory Monday for the second consecutive year in the Boston Marathon.

The 31-year-old Smith, a deceptively tough, 5-foot-8, 130-pounder who used to be a fireman and soccer player in Liverpool, England, was on world record pace for the first 19 miles, way out front of the field of 5,500 runners.

Then, after experiencing painful

cramps in his hamstrings — which caused him to stop briefly, throw his hands over his head, kick his right leg into the air, put both hands to his face in frustration and grimace often — Smith still won by more than five minutes, an even bigger margin than he did last year.

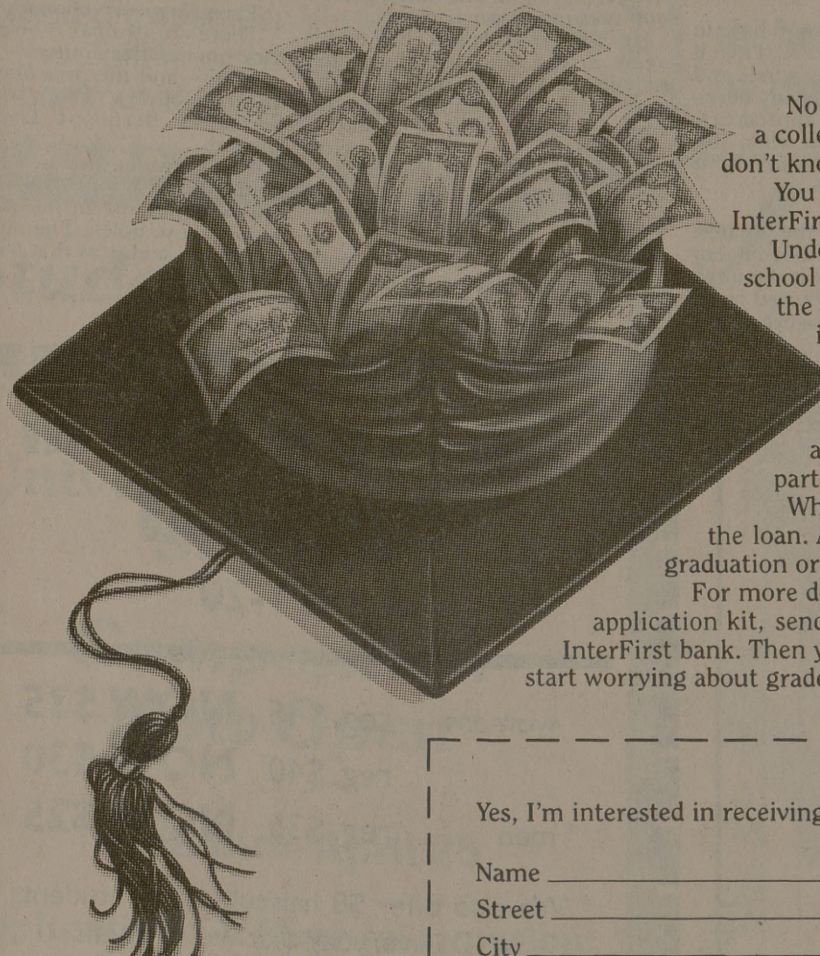
Smith, who had come into this race confident that he could lower the world best of 2 hours, 8 minutes, 5 seconds, held by Steve Jones of Wales, was clocked in 2:14:05.

It was the slowest winning time in Boston since 1977, when Jerome

Drayton of Canada won in 2:14:46. Last year, Smith won in 2:10:34 — 4:15 ahead of runner-up Gerry Vanesse.

The women's winning time also was slow, with favored Lisa Larsen Weidenbach, 23, of Battle Creek, Mich., winning by more than eight minutes in 2:34:06. It was the slowest since 1980, when Canada's Jacqueline Gareau was declared the winner in 2:34:28 after Rosie Ruiz, who crossed the finish line first but was discovered to have run only the final mile, was disqualified.

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