

Sports

Title chase starts for Ag baseball with first workout

By TOM TAGLIABUE
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M baseball team began spring workouts Tuesday aspiring to attain something which has eluded it since 1978.

The Aggies' three senior captains — Barry Smith, Mike Scanlin and Fred Gegan — said the team goal for '86 is to win the Southwest Conference title.

"I think, comparing it to last year, we didn't really start thinking about going all the way (and winning the SWC title) until later on in the season. But right now, the first day, we (the team) really have that (winning) feeling inside of us," said Gegan, an All-SWC first baseman.

Smith, a relief pitcher, said, "I think everybody was ready to come back and get it going."

The '86 Aggies will have 40 home appearances and 20 away games, including series against several Top 20 teams. Preseason No. 1 Texas, No. 18 Arkansas, No. 19 Hawaii and Mississippi State, all of which played in the College World Series last year, are on A&M's schedule this season.

Smith said this year's schedule is the toughest the Aggies have had in his four years at A&M.

Scanlin said good showings against these ranked teams will help move A&M up in the polls.

"I'd like to be an All-American," Scanlin said. "We know that if our team wins, everybody is going to get what they want. If we win, Fred (Gegan) can get All-American (honors), and Scott Livingstone is going to get All-American too. I've never made All-Southwest Conference. I would really love, my last year here, to make the All-SWC team."

Scanlin also said another goal for '86 is to break several career A&M records. He is close to breaking the home run, RBI, at-bats and triples marks.

College Baseball Top 20 Poll

Here are the Top 20 teams in the Collegiate Baseball/ESPN college baseball poll:

1. Texas
2. Miami
3. Arizona
4. Florida State
5. Oklahoma State
6. South Carolina
7. Oral Roberts
8. Calif.-Berkeley
9. Michigan
10. Calif. State-Fullerton
11. Stanford
12. Maine
13. Old Dominion
14. Oklahoma
15. Brigham Young
16. Alabama
17. Louisiana State
18. Arkansas
19. Indiana State
20. Florida

Gegan and Scanlin said the team needs student support to help A&M win that ever elusive SWC crown.

"When we have a big crowd is when we play the big games," Scanlin said. "These first games are when we really need the support of the student body."

AGGIE NOTES: Former A&M head baseball coach Tom Chandler was recently named manager of the Cleveland Indians' minor league farm club in Batavia, N.Y. Chandler guided the Aggies for 26 years before retiring at the end of the 1984 season. Since retiring, he has scouted college players for the Indians.

A&M can't take UH lightly

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS
Assistant Sports Editor

All you ever heard about the "old" University of Houston basketball team was its famous Phi Slamma Jamma fraternity.

The Cougars are now referred to as "Akeem-less" since the loss of the nation's top player, Akeem Abdul Olajuwon, a year ago. And when UH tried to sign a 7-footer to replace "Akeem The Dream" this year, it ran into even more trouble.

Tito Horford, the nation's top recruit out of Marian Christian High School in Houston, was declared ineligible to play for the Cougs after recruiting violations surfaced.

Then the "new" version of the slamin' boys went out and lost their first three Southwest Conference games.

Suddenly Cougar fans didn't have to worry about winning the SWC, much less winning a national championship. They were more worried about beating Arkansas to stay out of the SWC cellar.

Just to complicate matters, coach Guy V. Lewis, in his 30th season at UH, announced Tuesday he would retire at the end of this season.

But Texas A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf, whose Aggies meet the Cougars at 7:30 p.m. tonight at Hofheinz Pavilion, knows the potential of UH.

"Houston is always tough," Metcalf said. "(Greg) Anderson, (Rickie) Anderson and (Alvin) Franklin are as good as anybody in the league. All three have the potential to make all-conference."

Even though the Aggies are atop the SWC at 5-0 (11-6 overall) and the Cougars are only 2-3 (8-7), Metcalf is still worried.

"It's still a wide open race," he said. "It's too early to be thinking about anything but Houston in Houston."

"They've won their last two ball games (against Arkansas and Baylor). We have to shoot well. They play in that zone and really go to the boards. They have a lot of firepower."

Most of UH's firepower comes in the form of 6-foot-9 Anderson, who is leading the Cougars in scoring at 22.3 points a game.



Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Going into tonight's Houston game, forward Winston Crite (21) is A&M's leading rebounder,

averaging 7.4 a game. Above, Texas' Raynard Davis (54) tries to draw a charging foul off Crite.

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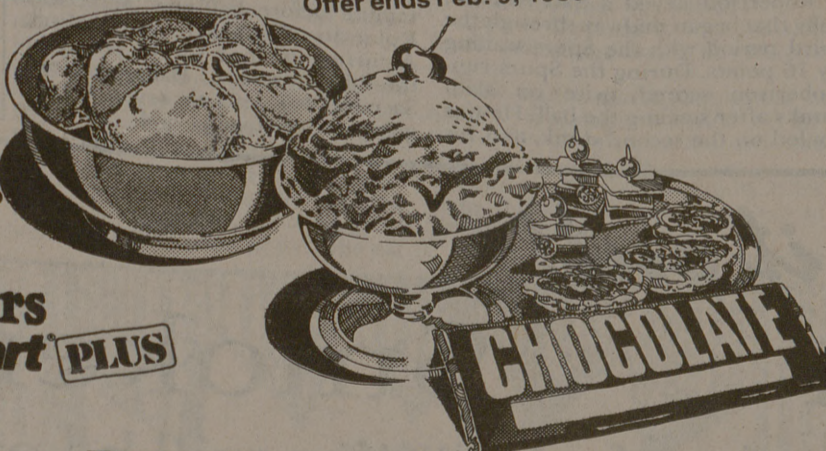
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