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Mississippi State holds off A&M, 11-9

By TOM TAGLIABUE
Sports Writer

The Mississippi State Bulldogs got five innings of no-hit pitching from Mike McRaney and then turned back an awkward rally by Texas A&M in the last two innings to defeat the Aggies 11-9 Wednesday at Olsen Field.

A&M, who lost its second straight game to MSU, fell to 16-9, while MSU improved its record to 8-5. Both teams were sluggish from the start but A&M took a 1-0 lead in the first inning as McRaney issued four walks.

A&M starter Darryl Fry (5-2) pitched three scoreless innings before MSU connected for four runs in the fourth.

Tracy Echols, who hit two home runs in last night's 17-9 MSU win, belted a two-out three-run homer to put the Bulldogs ahead. MSU picked up the fourth run of the inning on an RBI-double by Jack Malone.

Down 4-1 in the fourth, A&M threatened a come back when Chandler belted a long fly ball to deep left field, but a 15 mph wind kept the ball in the park and Bulldog left fielder Dan Paradoa made the grab against the fence.

MSU put the nail in the Aggies' coffin when they scored seven runs in the sixth.

Fry began the sixth by loading the bases for Malone, who bloomed a short single into left field to score a run. McDonald followed with a two-run double that chased Fry.



Photo by JOHN TATE

A&M's Jeff Schow (9) gets a high-five from Ever Magallanes (1) after hitting a grand slam in Wednesday's loss to Mississippi State.

Gary Geiger came in and gave up two RBI-singles, uncorked a wild pitch allowing Roark McDonald to score and then gave up an RBI-double to Scott Mitchell before striking out the next two batters to end the inning.

McRaney, who pitched 5 1/2 innings of two hit ball, gave up his first

hit — a lead off solo homer to Fred Gegan — in the sixth.

A&M added two more runs in the sixth when Chandler doubled home David Rodriguez. Chandler moved to third on a Maury Martin ground out and scored on a passed ball by McDonald.

Geiger, who gave up two runs on

three hits in three innings of the held MSU scoreless in the seventh and eighth, allowing the Aggies chip away at the Bulldog lead.

Schow brought the Aggies within three runs of the Bulldogs when he slammed a 1-and-1 pitch from the left-center field fence for a grand slam home run. Schow's home run of the year made it 11-9 MSU.

Barry Smith relieved Geiger the ninth and gave up two runs and a one out intentional walk to the bases. John Scott bounced into a picture-perfect 5-4-3 double play to kill the MSU rally.

A&M moved within two runs when Gegan scored on a passed ball after he had doubled and moved third on a Rodriguez single. He stopped the A&M threat when Chandler to pop up and pinch-hitter Blake Hutchison to ground out, giving the Bulldogs a 2-2 split on the four game road swing this week.

"I didn't feel like today we started," A&M Coach Mark Johnson said. "We weren't ready to go and deliver the first blow. You gotta be able to do that and we let (MSU) a lot of blows in."

A&M plays a five-game series in Hawaii over spring break. The Aggies will play a three game set against the No. 7 Houston Cougars. They will play a Saturday night double-header beginning at 5:30. Saturday they will play a single game at 1:30 p.m.

Texas, SMU have SWC meet plans in 1-2 order

By KEN SURY
Assistant Sports Editor

There are certain things which are etched in stone — the Ten Commandments and the University of Texas winning the Southwest Conference swimming and diving championships.

And that's the reason Texas A&M Swimming Coach Mel Nash is hoping his men's team will finish third this weekend in the SWC meet at the Texas Swimming Center in Austin Thursday through Saturday.

"I don't understand why it's inscribed in granite somewhere that Texas will finish first, SMU second, and then Arkansas, A&M, Texas Tech, TCU and Rice," Nash said. "But that's what happens."

"It's not like football where each year there are changes in the standings. Swimming programs don't

change much and so the placings remain pretty stagnant."

UT is ranked No. 3 in the nation and SMU is No. 8, so Nash said he doesn't expect any miracle upsets of those teams by A&M, or any other SWC opponent.

Nash said the meet's excitement,

as far as he's concerned, will be the battle for third place between A&M and Arkansas.

"Arkansas has finished third and us fourth the last couple of years," he said. "So Arkansas is comfortable about beating us in conference. We'll have to change that."

But bettering the Razorbacks will be an uphill struggle for the Aggies because A&M doesn't have any divers. So the Aggies have already spotted the Hogs 36 points, since the

men's diving competition was held two weeks ago during the women's SWC swimming meet.

"We were hoping to be behind (Arkansas) by only about 20 to 25 points after the diving," Nash said. "But Texas and SMU didn't send all their divers so Arkansas was able to finish higher and earn more points."

But despite the 36-point deficit, Nash said he's optimistic about the Aggies' chances.

"I like to think on paper we're a better team (than Arkansas)," Nash said. "We're deeper in strokes (the butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke) than Arkansas and that could be a factor."

At the forefront of the A&M swim attack will be All-American Chris O'Neil, who became the first Aggie SWC swimming champion, winning the 50- and 100-yard butterfly last year.

Joining O'Neil in the butterfly competition are Chris Kanning, Mike Kozlina and Roberto Salazar.

Kanning and Kozlina also swim backstroke along with Robert Block, Chris Emig and Scott McDonald.

The breaststroke squad is composed of Jeff Marx, Mike DeLoach and Jeff Garry.

A&M's short-distance (200-yard or less) freestylers include Eddie Homan, Clark McDonald, Aaron McDonough, Danny Stevens and Dan Kohel.

"In previous years we used to lose at conference and say, 'Oh, can we beat Arkansas?'" Nash said. "But this year the team's been saying, 'Maybe we can be Arkansas.'"

And maybe the Aggies can get some scratches on the SWC swimming stone.

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