

Sports

A&M men finish undefeated at home

Ag women can tie for 1st in SWC

By Ken Sury
Assistant Sports Editor

The Texas A&M men's tennis team kept its unbeaten home record intact Monday with a sound 7-2 whipping of Houston.

"This will give us a lot of momentum going into the (Southwest Conference) tournament," A&M Coach David Kent said. "But the big thing is that this is the first time in nine years we've had a team go undefeated at home."

A&M had to fight hard Friday against Rice to keep its home winning streak alive. The Aggies won the No. 1 doubles match to break a tie and defeat the Owls 5-4.

While Monday's UH match ended A&M's home season, it also was Kimmo Alkio's and Russ Simmons' last home match as Aggies. Both seniors finished on a winning note, as Alkio defeated a frustrated Jeff Rolquin of UH 6-1, 6-2, in the No. 1 singles spot, and Simmons and freshman partner Brent Haygarth won at No. 1 doubles with a 6-2, 6-4 decision over Rolquin and Earl Zinn.

Kent praised the play of both seniors. "Alkio and Simmons are quality seniors," he said, "and they went out in style. Alkio is just a one-in-a-million type of player that a coach will have, and Simmons is a fine doubles player."

Alkio, the nation's No. 28 singles player, said he was satisfied with his win.

"I'm really glad it went the way it did," Alkio said. "I've only lost two matches at home (against TCU's Neil Broad and Rice's Scott Melville)."

"I've been pretty consistent in my play this year. I've won a couple close matches and lost a couple, so I guess it all evens out."

For Simmons, the win over Rolquin and Zinn was a small amount of revenge for an earlier defeat to the UH duo in the ITCA National Indoor Championships in February.

Simmons and then-partner Mark Smith, who since has been forced to quit the team due to a back injury, were out-served by Rolquin and Zinn in their second-round match.

"They beat us in straight sets

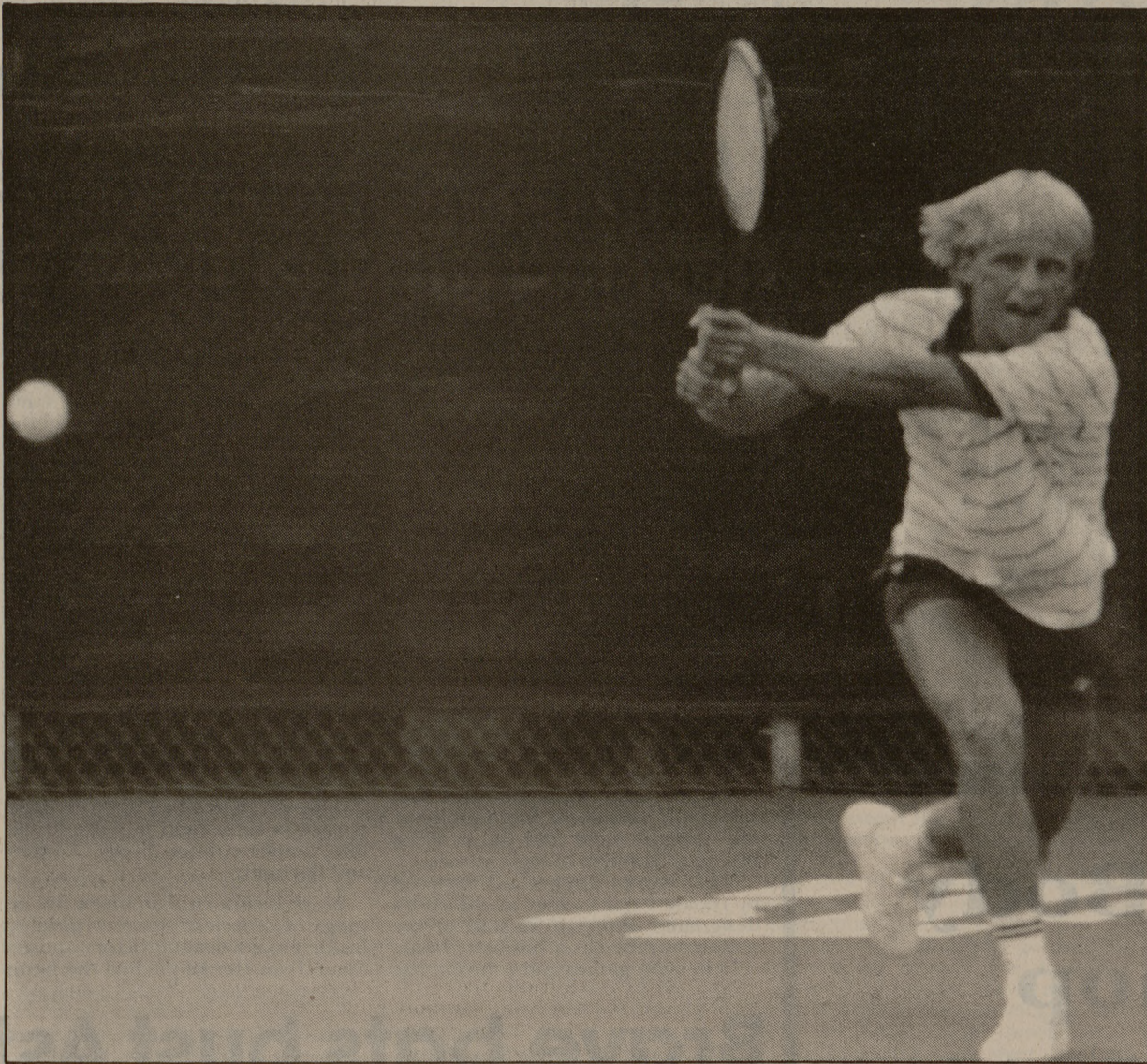


Photo by Brad Whitten

A&M's No. 1 singles player Kimmo Alkio slams a backhand against Rice's Scott Melville Friday.

Alkio lost to Melville, but beat Houston's Jeff Rolquin, 6-1, 6-2, Monday in his home finale.

there, and we beat them in straight sets here," Simmons said, "but coming from indoors on a fast court to the slower courts outdoors, there's such a huge difference.

"All they have is strong serves, so I felt we could take them."

A&M's only loss to UH in singles play came as Marcel Vos lost to Gerald Marzenell in a hard-fought 2-6, 7-6, 6-4 match. But Vos and partner Alkio came back in No. 2 doubles for a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Marzenell and Brent Saigeon.

The A&M women's tennis team still must finish conference round-robin

play, but even so, this weekend's SWC tourney looks to be a dogfight among A&M, SMU, Texas and TCU.

Friday, the A&M had a chance to put itself in the driver's seat against TCU, which had upset SMU earlier in the week. But the No. 17 Aggies found the Horned Frogs just as inhospitable and dropped a 5-4 dual match.

Saturday, A&M grabbed a 5-2 lead over Texas Tech before rain stopped play. The only doubles match completed was a 6-1, 6-2 win by A&M's Kim Labuschagne and Karen Marshall over Lisa Roberts

and Paula Brigance. Labuschagne and Marshall finished at the No. 2 doubles spot with an 8-0 conference record.

The uncompleted doubles matches will be played Thursday at the HEB Tennis Center in Corpus Christi prior to this weekend's SWC tournament.

A&M currently has 48 match-win points in the conference, tied with TCU and SMU. Texas leads the conference with 50 points.

One win Thursday will put the Aggies into sole possession of second place and, if they can win both matches, head into the SWC tourney tied for first.

Ags 'execute' Owls to earn postseason berth

By Tom Tagliabue
Sports Writer

The catch word of the Southwest Conference baseball series between Rice and Texas A&M at Olsen Field this weekend was "execute."

The Owls didn't and the No. 9 Aggies did.

And with the 3-2, 5-1 and 5-4 sweep of Rice, A&M condemned the Owls to the conference cellar.

Baseball

and assured itself of a spot in the conference postseason tournament.

The Aggies, who improved to 36-18 overall and 13-2 in the SWC, also stayed atop the SWC standings with a game lead over No. 5 Texas. The Owls fell to 30-25 and 3-15.

A&M Coach Mark Johnson said the victories over Rice were tough because the Owls, like the rest of the SWC, were gunning for the Aggies.

"People don't realize that in the Southwest Conference — I know there are a lot of sweeps and I know people won't believe me — it's very, very tough to sweep," Johnson said. "It's phenomenal that we've been able to do it (the last three series). It really speaks a lot to our kids because we're not just blowing people out, we're having to scrap for everything we get and our guys just won't give in."

"I think we're finally making believers of some people. Everybody's been waiting for us to fold because everybody feels like we're not quite

good enough, but I think we're starting to prove that we are."

The Aggies made believers out of the Owls.

A&M's Darryl Fry started Saturday and picked up where Dale Barry left off Friday, pitching a two-hit complete game and improving his record to 9-4 overall and 3-1 in the SWC.

Fry got a lot of help from the Aggie offense as it scored five runs on three homers and a RBI single.

Jeff Schow led off the Aggie first with his ninth round-tripper of the year — the third time this season Schow has led off the first with a home run.

After A&M's Ever Magallanes grounded out, Scott Livingstone blasted Rice pitcher Pat Combs' first pitch over the fence. It was Livingstone's sixth homer of the season.

The Aggies' Don Wren singled home Mike Scanlin, who had walked and later moved to third on Fred Gegen's fielder's choice.

Gegen would pick up A&M's final two runs in the third on his eighth homer of the year, a shot off Combs with Pat James aboard.

The only Owl run off Fry was unearned as John Cegelski reached base on Livingstone's error and scored on Eric Graff's deep double to center field.

In the second game, A&M starter Gary Geiger got into early trouble as Rice connected for one run in each of the first three innings.

Pat Wernig relieved Geiger with one out in the third and with Owl runners at the corners.

The first hitter to face Wernig was Rice's Paul Dishman and Dishman's at-bat would change the momentum of the ball game.

On Wernig's first pitch, Dishman attempted a squeeze bunt and missed. Aggie catcher Maury Martin looked at the Owl runner advancing to second, but turned and saw Steve Turner charging home.

Martin threw to Livingstone, who applied the tag to Turner for the second out of the inning. Dishman grounded the next pitch to Gegen, who stepped on first base to end the inning.

In the fourth, A&M turned the tables and executed what Rice could not — a squeeze play.

After Wren's RBI ground out, Martin squared around and laid down a sacrifice bunt to score Gegen, who had singled, to knot the game at 3-3.

Both teams went scoreless until the eighth, when Rice nearly pulled off an upset. Dishman redeemed himself with a solo homer off Wernig to put the Owls ahead 4-3.

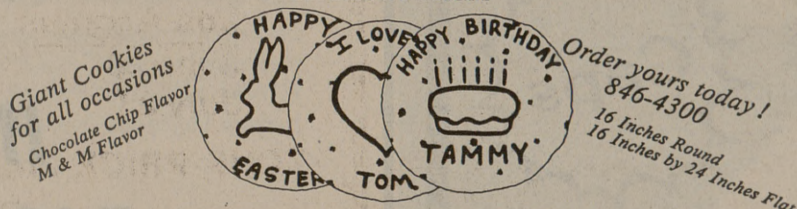
A&M rebounded with good hustle and clutch hitting to grab the victory from Rice.

Scanlin, who struck out six times during the series, led off the eighth with a check-swing grounder and beat the throw for a single.

Johnson signaled James to bunt,

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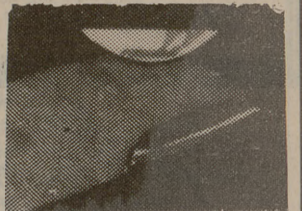
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