

Sports

A&M looks to keep respect against TCU

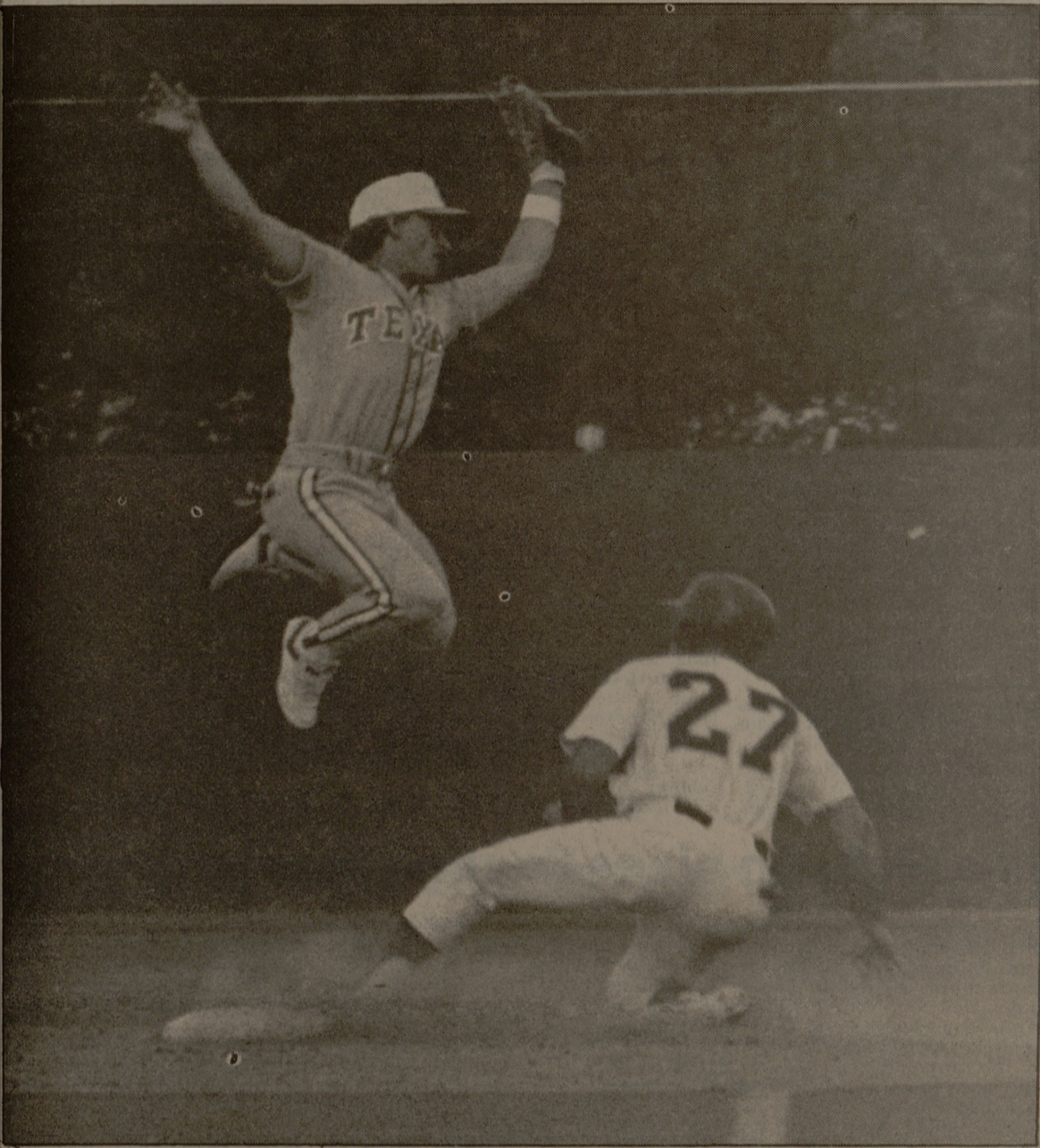


Photo by Tom Ownbey

Texas' Coby Kerlin goes high, but the ball sails past as A&M's Pat James slides into second base

weekend in Austin. A&M closes out the regular season this weekend against TCU at Olsen Field.

By Tom Tagliabue
Sports Writer

Texas A&M's last Southwest Conference baseball series of the year against Texas Christian this weekend at Olsen Field probably doesn't mean a whole lot to the 14th-ranked Aggies.

Texas has virtually clinched the conference title with its sweep of A&M last weekend. The Aggies can either keep second place or drop to third place. And this weekend's opponent, TCU, is next to last in the conference with a 30-27 and 5-13 record.

So, what do the 36-21 and 13-5 Aggies have to play for?

Plainly and simply, respect. The Ags must fight to keep the national respect they earned this year after gaining a 29-18 record against Division I teams.

Second, A&M must try to keep the respect it earned by battling for the top spot in the SWC when most observers predicted A&M wouldn't make it that far.

Finally, nine senior ballplayers will make their last regular-season appearance of their A&M careers this weekend.

Starters Jeff Schow (LF), Fred Gegen (1B), Pat James (DH), Robi Chandler (2B), Dale Barry (P) and Mike Scanlin (CF), as well as relief pitchers Russ Swan and Barry Smith and reserve outfielder Bill Doug Potter will take their final regular-season curtain calls at Olsen Field this weekend.

The series is scheduled to get underway Friday at 7 p.m. and follow with a two-night double-header Saturday at 5:30 p.m. — weather permitting. Stadium supervisor Leo Goertz said the field received about 3½ inches of rain between Wednesday and Thursday and a decision will be made at 8 a.m. Friday to determine if the field is in decent playing condition.

If the opener is postponed, it will be rescheduled for Saturday and the series will conclude Sunday.

This weekend's matchup should be a showcase for the A&M seniors, who lead the team in almost all categories.

Baseball

Gegen, an All-SWC first baseman in 1985, has a nine-game SWC hitting streak and has hit safely in his last 12 games, the longest streak for an Aggie this season.

James, who has played nearly every position in his four years as an Aggie, has an eight-game hitting streak which has helped improve his conference batting average to a hefty .419, the highest on the team although he doesn't have enough at-bats to qualify for SWC leaders.

Schow, one of four seniors who came to A&M as transfers, is hitting .319 in conference play and leads the team in on-base percentage at a .420 clip. Schow also is hitting .422 with runners in scoring position, which leads the team.

While those players have been getting good numbers, the Ags' biggest offensive weapon, Mike Scanlin, has been struggling. Since entering the Rice series two weeks ago with a .467 SWC average, the senior from Houston has gone 4-for-21 with 11 strikeouts and only one extra-base hit.

His conference average stands at .379, but he still leads the team in runs scored (18), hits (25), RBI (17), doubles (9), home runs (4), total bases (46) and has a perfect 1.000 fielding average.

Scanlin holds nine A&M records and is closing in on 11 others.

Barry, who is 8-1 and 5-1 with a 2.52 ERA, is expected to start the opener, while Darryl Fry, 9-4 and 3-1 with a 4.45 ERA, will throw in Saturday's opener. Either Pat Wernig or Gary Geiger will go in the finale.

TCU is anchored by former A&M player Bubba Jackson, who transferred two years ago to Fort Worth. Jackson, the Horned Frogs' catcher, is third in the conference in hitting with a .391 average and tied for third in the conference in hits (25).

A&M will also have to watch out for TCU outfielder Bernard Walker, who leads the conference in stolen bases with 11.

A&M, which at one time had a team batting average of over .300 has slipped down to .294, just a few points below TCU, which has a team batting average of .297.

A&M gears for 'tuneup' at UT meet

By Ken Sury
Assistant Sports Editor

The Texas A&M track and field team has been running like a well-oiled machine this year and gets its final tuneup before the Southwest Conference Championships Saturday at the Texas Invitational in Austin.

A&M Coach Charlie Thomas said he will be taking his largest team ever to the meet with the hope of having more Aggies qualify for the NCAA championships.

Thomas said the emphasis on this meet will be on individual events. The Aggies will not run any relays since the men's team has already qualified in the 400- and 1,600-meter events. The 1,600-meter team qualified last weekend at the Mt. Sac Relays in Walnut, Calif., with a time of 3 minutes, 46.5 seconds, behind Texas Tech's winning time of 3:03.88.

The Aggie machine, however, will be missing a few cogs at the UT meet.

Freshman Randy Barnes will not compete in either the discus or shot put due to some swelling in his right hand, while sprinter and relay man Gary Pervis will be sidelined with a sprained ankle.

Several A&M women have various ailments which will keep them from competing this weekend, Thomas said. Alexis Russell has an injured sacroiliac, which will keep the women's relay teams from competing.

Thomas said his main concern is to get everyone 100 percent healthy by the May 16-17 SWC championships.

Among the Aggies still gunning for a NCAA berth are freshmen Stanley Kerr in the 100- and 200-meter dashes, Floyd Heard in the 100- and Matt Dunn in the 800-meter dash.

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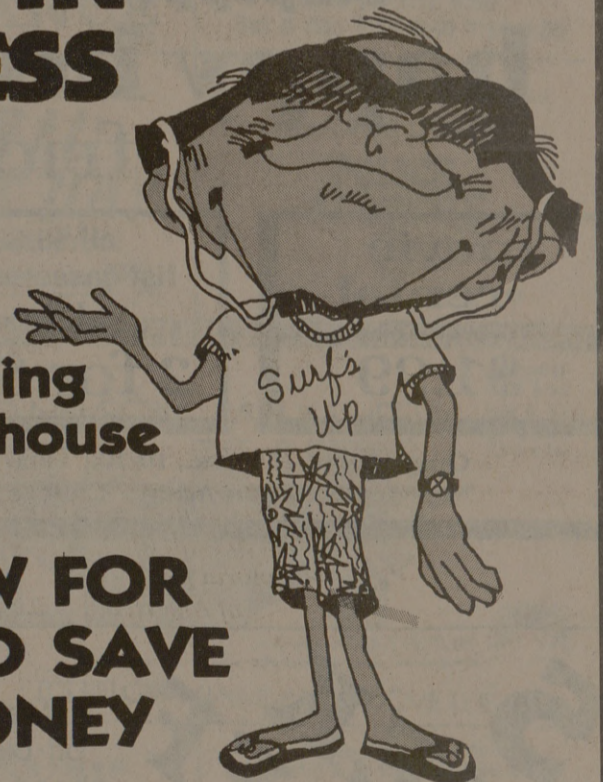
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