

Sports

Ags 'horn in' on SWC title with TCU sweep

Houston helps A&M by tripping UT

By Tom Tagliabue
Sports Writer

Stranger things have happened during a Southwest Conference baseball series, but you'll be hard-pressed to find one as odd as the series between Texas A&M and the TCU Horned Frogs at Olsen Field.

The 2-1, 7-5 and 5-3 sweep by the 14-ranked Aggies gave them a share of the conference title with the Texas Longhorns, who failed to get two wins over Houston which would have given them sole possession of first.

Baseball

Even though it was the Frogs who helped the Ags, 39-21 and 16-5, in the win column, it was the Houston Cougars who did A&M the biggest favor, upsetting conference leader Texas 5-3 and 4-2 Sunday in the final games for Houston Head Coach Rolan Walton, who announced his retirement earlier this season.

It was not an easy road for the Aggies, who had to come back from a five-run deficit early in the first game of Sunday's double-header.

A&M's Darryl Fry started the Sunday opener and lasted only 1/3 of an inning, giving up all five TCU runs on four hits, including a two-run home run by former Aggie Bubba Jackson.

Pat Wernig was called on to quell the rally after Fry faced the first seven TCU hitters and managed only one out. Wernig picked up the last two outs in the first and held the Frogs scoreless the rest of the way, scattering six hits through 6 2/3 innings.

A&M picked up one run in the third and moved within one of TCU on Jeff Schow's three-run round-tripper in the fourth. It was Schow's 10th homer of the year.

A&M took the lead and the game in the fifth with a three-run rally.

TCU starter Dwayne Williams came out after he issued Pat James and Fred Gegen back-to-back walks. Don Wren greeted reliever Chris Cauley with an RBI single and Maury Martin followed with a two-run double.

TCU Coach Bragg Stockton yanked Cauley and brought in Jim Blane to finish the game.

Wernig improved his record to 6-2 overall and 3-1 in the SWC, while Williams took the loss, dropping to 7-4 and 2-4.

Again, the finale started out with a first-inning TCU rally, but A&M starter Gary Geiger allowed only one run on an RBI double and picked a runner off first base.

A&M moved ahead in the second with a three-run rally. With one out in the second and James on third, Robi Chandler took two balls from TCU starter Kerry Knox and drove his third offering over the left-field fence for his fourth homer of the year.

Andy Duke, starting in place of Scott Livingstone at

third base, singled to chase Knox. Tim Mauser came in, walked Wren and gave up an RBI single to Ever Magallanes.

Both teams went scoreless until the seventh, although the Ags did threaten in the fourth, when they left the bases loaded, and in the fifth, when a missed squeeze bunt turned into a rally-ending double-play.

TCU cut the score to 3-2 in the seventh on Darren Thorpe's RBI double.

The Aggies answered the TCU threat with a two-run seventh to make it 5-2. Mike Scanlin doubled off the wall in dead-center field and scored on Gegen's RBI double.

Mauser left in favor of Glenn Serviente, who picked up an out before Martin singled to center to score Gegen.

TCU mounted a threat in the ninth against Geiger, but he allowed only one run in the final inning to hold off the Frogs and give the Aggies their first conference title since 1978.

Geiger, 6-4 and 4-1, scattered eight hits and struck out five batters in the complete game effort. Knox fell to 1-4 and 0-2.

A&M's second year Head Coach Mark Johnson praised his team's effort.

"No question, Houston helped us," Johnson said, "but I don't want that to overshadow what these guys have done. Our guys had enough courage to get it back up. We did talk about (the possibility of Texas losing to Houston), but we talked about it being a long shot."

"It would be tragic for us not to take care of our business here if it did happen. The guys got ready — and I don't want to be an 'I-told-you-so,' but I told them, the first game against Texas and the last game against TCU may be just as equally important."

"It was kind of a little surprise this week. We didn't anticipate having that much help from Houston. It feels really good, but the championship goes to the players."

Senior captain Mike Scanlin, who won the Saturday series opener with his two-run homer, said the sweep of TCU and winning the conference title is exciting.

"(The wins) brought out the little kid in me again," Scanlin said. "I went out there and just started having fun again, remembering how much fun it was to win, to hit, to make catches and to be with the guys. I think that's been the whole key, is that we've gone out there and had fun together as a group."

But the player who got the most satisfaction from the series was Chandler, who had struggled at the plate all year.

"I have been struggling and you just have to get the confidence going," Chandler said. "I know I can do it. I know I can hit the ball as hard as anybody. I just have

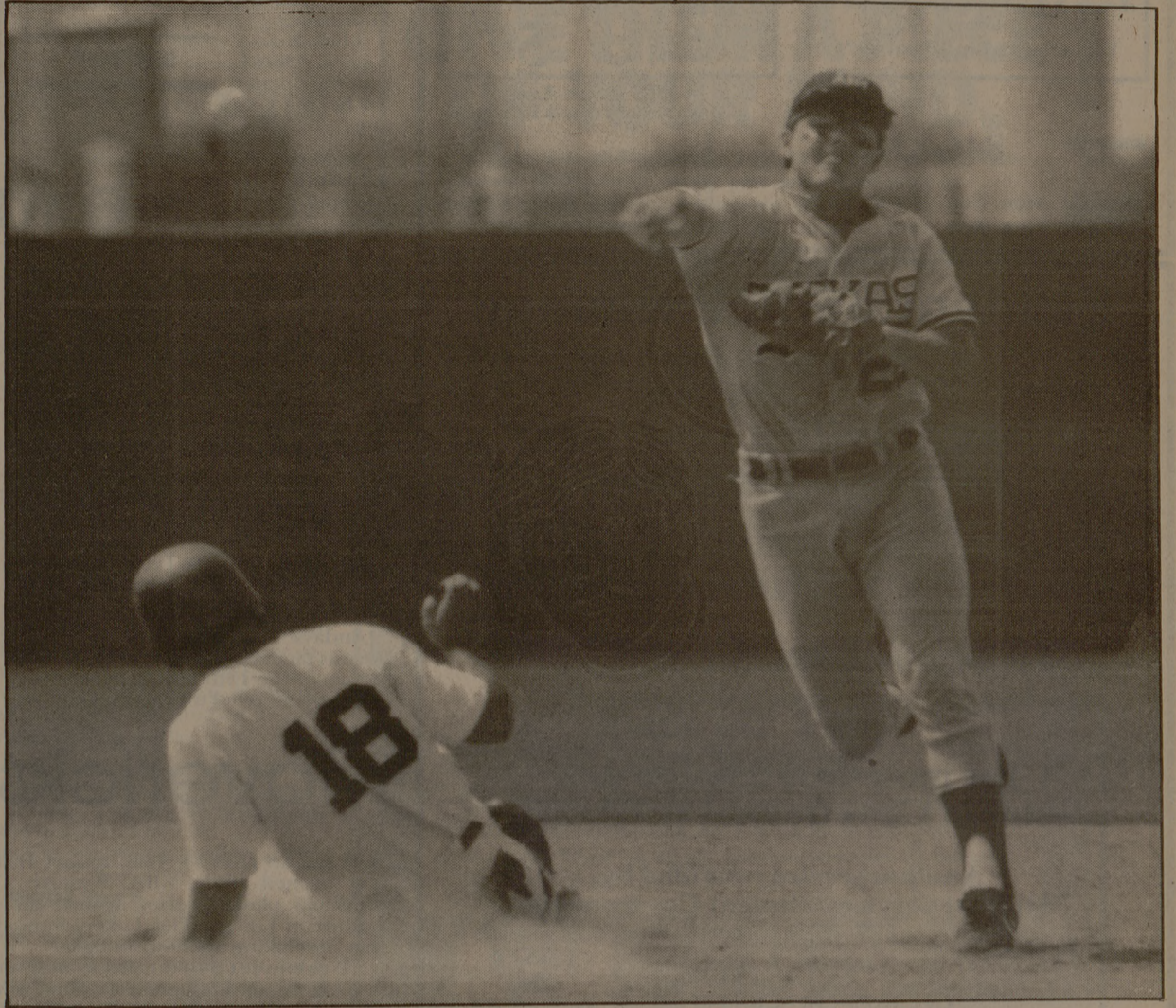


Photo by Anthony S. Casper

A&M's Robi Chandler throws to first to complete a double play as TCU's Drew Watkins slides into

second. Chandler also cracked the winning home run to take Game 3 from the Horned Frogs.

to get up there and tell myself, 'I want to hit the ball hard and I'm going to.'

"I belted it. I hit that ball as hard as I could hit it. I knew it (was gone) right when I hit it."

Johnson said the pitching staff deserves a lot of credit for keeping the Ags in the games throughout the year.

"The pitchers are really the ones who have kept us

in the games every weekend," Johnson said. "We've gotten clutch hits out of different people, but the pitchers are the ones that always gave us a chance to win. Coach (Jim) Lawler's done a tremendous job and deserves a lot of credit, but the bottom line is, championships are won by the players and they're the ones who have had to get ready to play and got it up and did it."

DEADLINE!

Faculty advisors and students should make sure that their student organizations are participating in

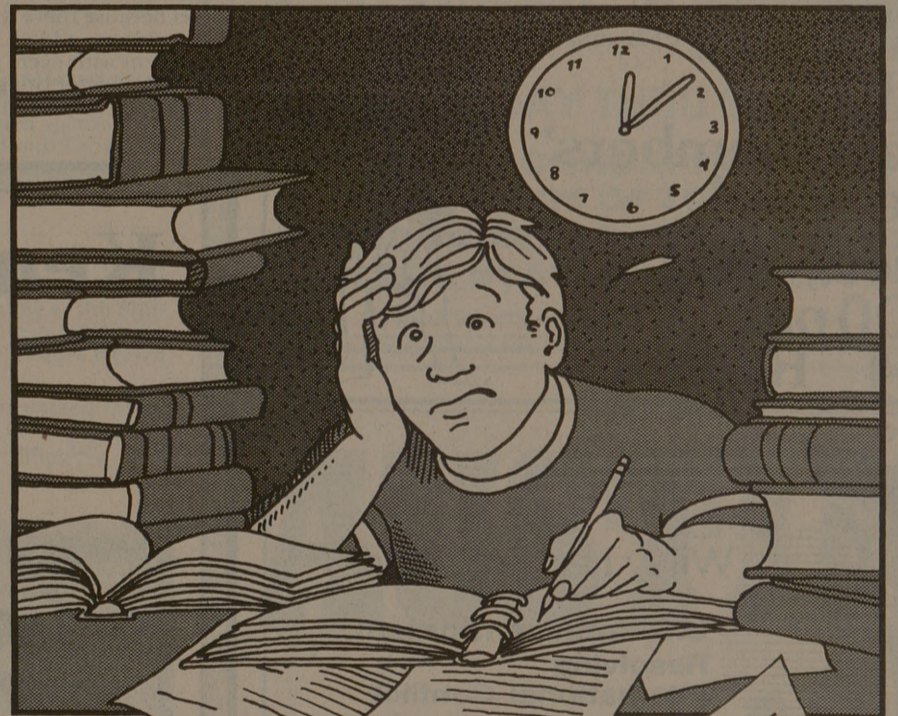
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For more information, call Ruth Franks, Open House Chairman or Terry Marsaw, program advisor, at 845-1515.

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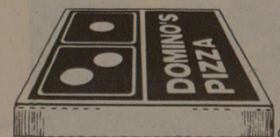
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