

Sports

Aggie women get NCAA tennis bid

By Ken Sury
Sports Editor

The Southwest Conference champion Texas A&M women's tennis team will have to take two sets of finals next week as it received its bid Thursday to compete in the NCAA Women's Tennis Championships on May 15-18.

The NCAA selection committee gave the Aggies the No. 15 bid for the 16-team tournament to be held at the University of Texas' Pennick-Allison Tennis Center. Texas received the No. 16 bid.

Of the sixteen teams, six are given automatic bids by being the top team in their respective NCAA region. The remaining 10 teams receive at-large bids from the NCAA selection committee.

Trinity, ranked third in the nation by the latest Head Intercollegiate Tennis Standings (H.I.T.S.) last earned the automatic bid for this region. A&M is currently ranked 18th and Texas 16th, but these rankings do not include the SWC Tournament.

A&M first-year Coach Bobby Kleinecke, who shared SWC Coach-of-the-Year honors with TCU's Roland Ingram, said he's glad to have the NCAA berth, but realizes his team faces a difficult field.

"We've got some good players," Kleinecke said, "and we play good tennis. But it'll be tough. Anything can happen. Before we played Northwestern (an Aggie 6-3 win during spring break over the then-No. 6 team) nobody thought we could win that."

The team competition merely kicks off the women's championships. The 64-player singles and the 32-team doubles competition will be held May 20-23. The selection will be announced May 18.

Kleinecke said he doesn't expect an Aggie to be named for the

singles draw, but thinks two doubles teams, the No. 1 tandem of Vane Akagi and Gaye Lynne Gensler and the No. 2 duo of Kim Labuschagne and Karen Marshall have a good chance of being selected.

Both tandems earned bids in the Rolex Intercollegiate Tennis Coaches Association (I.T.C.A.) Indoor Nationals in February, which was only a 16-team field.

In the I.T.C.A. Nationals, Akagi and Gensler lost in the consolation finals to Harvard's Cathy Vigna and Erika Smith, while Labuschagne and Marshall lost their first-round match to Houston's Kathy Foxworth and Stina Almgren.

But both duos had strong SWC seasons. Labuschagne and Marshall were undefeated in their eight conference matches and won two SWC tourney matches before losing to SMU's Heather Hairston and Jennifer Santrock in the No. 2 doubles final.

Akagi and Gensler were 5-1 in the conference (Gensler missed two matches with an injury), but lost their first-round match to SMU's Jean Marie Sterling and Tammy Christiansen.

Both tandems were named to the all-SWC squad. Labuschagne and Marshall received six of the nine ballots, while Akagi and Gensler got five votes.

The NCAA Men's Tennis Championships will be held in Athens, Ga., May 17-25. Of the Aggies, SWC No. 1 singles champion Kimmo Alkio has the best shot at receiving a bid.

Alkio is ranked 40th in the current H.I.T.S. List, but that doesn't include his victories over No. 14 John Ross of SMU and No. 4 Bobby Blair of Arkansas during the SWC tournament.

A&M, SHSU to square off again

By Tom Tagliabue
Sports Writer

The newly crowned Southwest Conference co-champion Texas A&M baseball team will take on Sam Houston State in a Highway 30 series this weekend.

The Aggies, ranked No. 12 with a 39-21 overall record, will play a three-game series against the Bearkats, whom the Aggies have already beaten three times this season.

The Aggies and Bearkats are scheduled to play a Saturday afternoon double-header at Olsen Field at 1 p.m. They will switch sites and travel to Huntsville for a Sunday single game at 2 p.m.

Tickets for Saturday are \$2 and student passes will be honored this weekend.

Aggie Coach Mark Johnson hopes this series will give his team a competitive edge before the SWC Tournament, which the Ags host on May 16-18 at Olsen Field.

"We want to look at it like Sam Houston is another team we're going to compete against," Johnson said. "I want to really compete hard because you need to get back into the swing and get that valve turned up again so you get use to it again."

"So we want to make it important and play hard even though we're going to throw a lot of pitchers, which puts us back into that Tuesday game rhythm that we've had before, where we're throwing a lot of different guys."

Winning the championship, which Johnson said has improved the team's attitude, should be a big boost against the Bearkats.

"Winning the championship — what a lift for the guys," Johnson said. It was a great lift and it was a deserved lift. It put us in a good mood. The guys are coming out to the ballpark and they feel good about themselves and feel good about what's been accomplished."

Johnson said finals week will provide a lot of distractions for the team. "We can't put off the studies until the last minute," Johnson said. "Next



A&M's Fred Gegen (24) is out at second amid a cloud of dust during the Aggies' sweep of TCU.

A&M hosts SHSU in a double-header Saturday at 1 p.m., then plays in Huntsville Sunday at 2.

Photo by Anthony S. Casper

week they're going to have a lot of distractions. (We need to) be sure we're studying hard now and that we're planning ahead and not going to pull all-nighters the night before a tournament game.

"(We need to) make practice count for the hour and a half or two hours we're out here and then get back and get our priorities straight. Naturally they're looking forward to the tournament and they're concerned about how they're going to play. We just have to be mature enough to practice hard and then leave it on the field."

SWC Tournament Notes . . . Ticket sales for the SWC postseason baseball tournament are going well according to Jim Kotch of the Athletic Ticket Office.

Kotch said 1,500 reserved seat tickets, all located on the lower deck of Olsen Field, were offered and fewer than 200 per game remain. Six-game tournament tickets are \$24 and individual game reserved seats are \$4 each.

The University of Texas Athletic Department received 470 reserved seats along the first-base line and

some 2,000 general admission seats. Neither Arkansas nor Baylor have requested any tickets.

The upper deck of the stadium will be general admission, Kotch said, and only 300-400 of the \$3 tournament tickets have been sold.

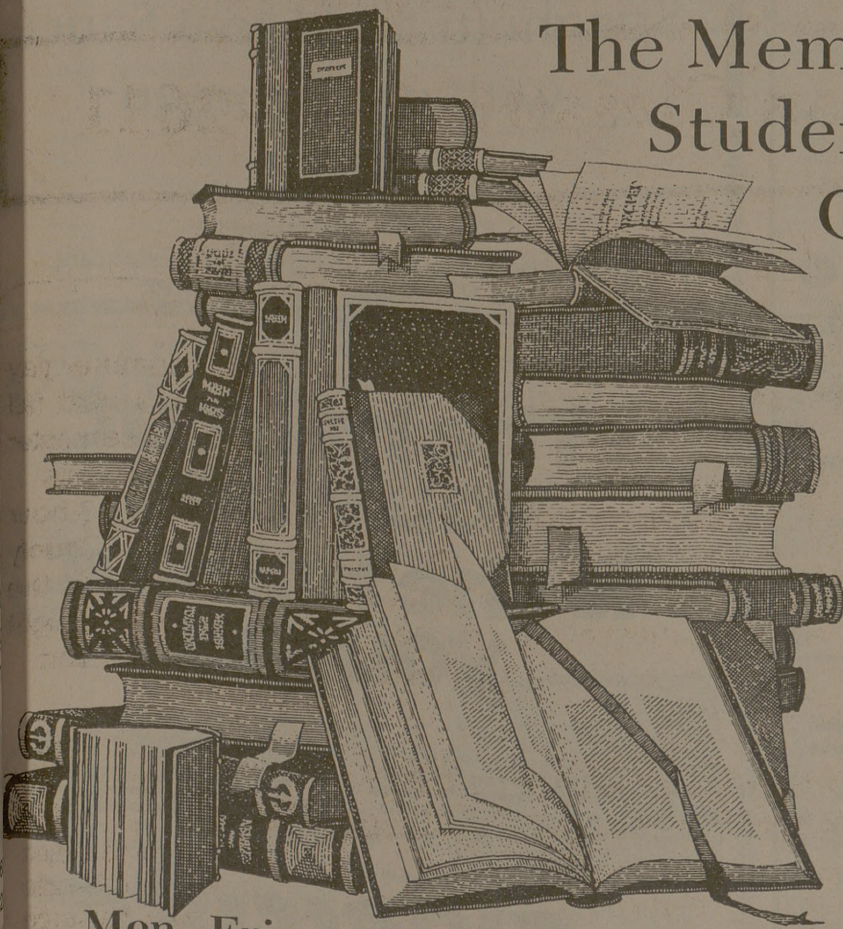
Kotch advised students that their season passes will not admit them to the series and tournament tickets must be purchased. Tickets are being sold at the G. Rollie White ticket office Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and can be purchased by Visa or MasterCard.

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