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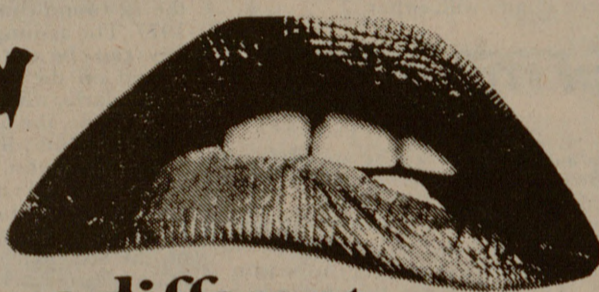
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## A&M's Labuschagne hopes to use college as springboard to pros

By Anthony Wilson  
Reporter

Everyone loves to see an underdog get his chance — especially in the world of sports.

What real sports fan didn't root for the Chicago Cubs during their run to the pennant in 1984? Who couldn't enjoy Georgetown's defeat at the hands of Villanova in 1985? And did anyone truly want to see Marvyn Hagler rip Sugar Ray Leonard's head off?

Kim Labuschagne, Texas A&M's top-ranked woman tennis player, had her chance to become one of those underdogs April 21 in the Virginia Slims tournament in Houston. She was scheduled to play doubles against Martina Navratilova, the world's top woman player, and Kathy Jordan. However, the chance slipped through her fingers. Actually, it slipped out of Andrea Jaeger's shoulder.

Jaeger, Labuschagne's doubles partner, had to withdraw from the tournament because of bursitis in her shoulder.

"I was very disappointed," Labuschagne said. "It was weird because that morning she was supposed to play a singles match at 11 o'clock on center court."

"There was a guy who introduced the players as they came on the court. I was practicing a few courts down. I heard him introducing the courts and he said something about 'Substitution — Andrea Jaeger.' So the tournament director came out and he told me that she pulled out of singles and doubles. Andrea came out later and said how sorry she was."

Labuschagne, a native of South Africa, said her feeling of excitement about playing against Navratilova was preceded by panic.

"We won our first round match and I looked ahead to see who we would play," Labuschagne said in her British accent. "When I saw that (they would be playing against Navratilova), I was just flabbergasted. First of all, I was very nervous because I thought, 'Oh God, Martina!'"

"But then I thought, 'You know, if we're going to lose in the second round, we might as well play the best player in the world.' So I was getting really excited. Then right before we played, I was used to the idea of playing her. That's why I was so disappointed. If it had been the day before, it would have been, 'Ah, thank heaven. Relief!' I was really excited to play her, just to say, 'I played Martina.'"

Her pairing with Jaeger was something of a fluke, the junior said.

"We're both sponsored by Wilson rackets, one of the sponsors of the tournament," Labuschagne said. "They were given a wildcard into the tournament so they could give it to any of the players who play with Wilson. Andrea had asked for a partner so the Wilson lady, who sends me my rackets, called Coach (Bobby Kleinecke) in Austin and asked if I was interested in playing with Andrea."

"I had seen Andrea on TV and playing in tournaments in South Africa. She was a star so it was kind of a big thing."

Last Friday and Saturday, Labuschagne played in the Southwest Conference tournament. She advanced to the semifinal round in No. 1 singles before losing to eventual champion Beverly Bowes of Texas 6-2, 6-2.

"In my first match, I was a little tentative," she said. "I didn't go in as aggressively as I wanted to. And then I think it carried over in my match against Bowes. I wasn't really nervous. I was just tentative. I didn't play to win. I think maybe I was kind of looking into the future instead of taking it step by step."

Labuschagne is hoping to be invited to the NCAA tournament within the week. The tournament will be May 14-22. Labuschagne played doubles in the tournament in 1986 and lost in the first round.

Labuschagne said she expects a lot more from herself next year.

"Basically next year, I want to win conference in the number one position, make All-American, make the finals of the NCAA or win the tournament and get ranked in the top three in the nation," she said.

This summer Labuschagne has entered several professional tournaments to improve her skills and world ranking. College players are allowed to play in professional tournaments but are not allowed to collect any money except for expenses.

Players have to play in three pro tournaments before they are ranked. Labuschagne has played in two tournaments, advancing to the

quarterfinals in one. To be eligible for major tournaments, such as the U.S. Open, players have to have a ranking of at least 150.

"With the point average I have right now, I should be ranked in the top 200 at least," she said. "At doubles ranking, I think I'm about 80 plus points so I should be ranked in the top 100 in doubles far as professionals, my first goal is to get in the top 50 in the world."

Labuschagne said she is eager to begin playing with the pros.

"Right now, I feel I'm ready," she said. "The only thing I need is to be used to playing in front of people and that type of competition. From being in the Virginia Slims, I noticed it's vastly different from college tournaments. It's just a little more of a professional atmosphere."

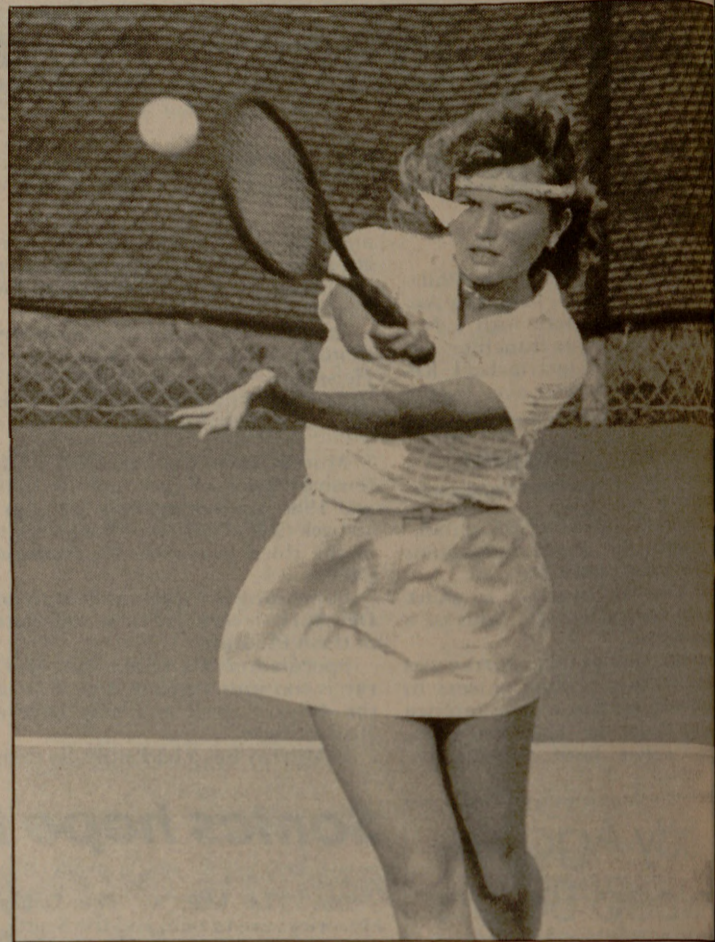
However, the difference in players' abilities from college to pro are not that great, Labuschagne said.

"It's more or less the same," she said. "The level of college tennis is top 10 teams, we played this semester was very similar to professional tennis, except for the top 10 players in the world. They're in a league of their own."

Although Labuschagne said she expects to return to A&M next year, she said she might decide to go pro.

"If I make it to the semifinals of the U.S. Open, obviously I think I'll come back," she said.

Labuschagne recently competed in the Virginia Slims tournament in Houston. The junior from South Africa hopes to play on the pro tour someday. She says she also plans to compete in the U.S. Open doubles in August.



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## Rockets know series far from being over

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston veteran Cedric Maxwell is telling his teammates that a loss and a scare should convince the Rockets that Portland won't fold when the two teams meet today in the fourth game of their NBA playoff series.

"When you get them down by 25 or 30 points you tend to think they'll roll over and die but they are professionals and they keep coming at you," Maxwell said.

The Rockets almost blew a 25-point halftime lead but held on to win Tuesday night's game 117-108 to take a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five first-round playoff.

Houston could eliminate the Blazers in the fourth game tonight at The Summit. Tip-off is at 7 p.m. CDT.

The Rockets dominated the Blazers 125-115 in the series opening but Portland's trapping defense resulted in a 111-98 victory in the second game.

"We're going to have to play a lot smarter," Rockets Coach Bill Fitch said. "We've got to work our tails off to play as well in the fourth quarter as we did in the first quarter."

Portland's Clyde Drexler scored 10 of his 26 points in the third quarter Tuesday when the Blazers started whittling away at Houston's lead.

Portland got the deficit down to six points with 4:24 to play before Houston ended the rally.

"We've got to come out of the box more aggressive," Drexler said. "We were aggressive in the second half Tuesday but we dug a hole too deep to get out of."

Kiki Vandeweghe scored only 6 first-half points against the

Rockets but finished with 20, also aiding the Blazers' rally.

"We've got to come out better or it's over," Vandeweghe said. "We just stood around (Tuesday). We have to turn the fast break and move their big guys around."

Fitch didn't try to hide his disgust in the Rockets' second-half defensive performance.

"When we have a 25-point lead, nobody should shoot layups on us," Fitch said. "The Towers (Ralph Sampson and Akeem Olatunji) are more important on defense than on offense."

Portland's resiliency in the second half will help them in tonight's game, Blazer Coach Mike Schuler said.

"It would have been so easy to pack it in, but they didn't do that," Schuler said. "That was very important to our players."

The Blazers were called for three illegal defenses in Tuesday's game. The Rockets complained the Blazers were using an illegal zone in Sunday's loss.

"I knew that would happen," Schuler said. "Houston talked so much about it, I knew the refs would be watching it closely."

Fitch said the Rockets counted 15 illegal defenses in Sunday's game but there were only two others that weren't called in Tuesday's game.

"They'll never be able to do again what they did Sunday," Fitch said. "They'll try something."

The fifth game of the series, if necessary, would be played in Portland Saturday.

The Houston-Portland winner will play the winner of the Dallas-Seattle series. Seattle leads that series 2-1.

## Brown leads Las Vegas Invitational

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Ken Brown of Great Britain put on a fast start for a 64 and the lead Wednesday in the storm-interrupted and uncompleted first round of the \$1.5 million Las Vegas Invitational.

Play was held up for almost 24 hours by a series of early afternoon thunderstorms that struck the desert resort with rain, wind and lightning.

Officials eventually called play the day at 8:30 p.m., CDT, with the field of 156 pros and 624 amateurs still on the three courses for the first three rounds of the event.

They marked their positions on the courses and the pros were due to return at 11 a.m. CDT today to complete first-round play. Due to the size of the field — and forecast calling for more thunderstorms — no further play is scheduled today.

The second round of the \$1.5 million, 90-hole tournament is set for Friday.

PGA Tour officials said no decision has been made on the tournament schedule beyond Friday, whether the tournament will be reduced to 72 holes.

Brown, who splits his season between the American and European tours, made the turn in a modest way then ripped the back nine with a burst of six birdies in seven holes.

That string was interrupted by a long delay. He came back 10 hours later and parred the hole, completing the back nine.

The original schedule called the pros to play one round, called with a different 4-man team, on each of three courses before the field is cut for the final rounds at the Las Vegas Country Club.