

Sports

A&M sluggers sweep Pan Am

By Anthony Wilson
Sports Writer

Before throwing his first pitch in the second game of Texas A&M's three-game weekend series with Pan American University, Pan Am starter Mike Eckert knelt behind the mound for a quick prayer. Unfortunately for Eckert and the rest of the Broncos, it was A&M's prayers that were answered.

The Aggies returned from a six-game road trip in Louisiana to sweep Pan Am at Olsen Field 3-2, 5-1 and 9-6.

John Byington led the A&M charge offensively, driving in the game-winning runs in the first two games on home runs. Byington hit a three-run homer in the eighth inning of Friday's game to lift A&M over Pan Am.

Anthony DeLaCruz logged his first win of the season by pitching 1 1/2 innings in relief of Sean Snedeker. Scott Centala retired the last two batters for his second save.

The Aggies exploded for five runs, which is all they would need for the win, in the first inning of the first game of Saturday's double-header. Byington hit a towering shot over the left field wall driving in

Chuck Knoblauch and Scott Livingston. Tim McWilliam followed with a walk and was driven in on Tom Carcione's opposite field home run to right field.

Byington's home run was his fourth of the year and his fifth game-winning RBI.

"It was a 3-0 fastball," Byington, who had seven RBIs in the series, said. "Coach (Mark Johnson) gave me the green light, so he was kind of doing me a favor. It was right down the middle."

Johnson said Byington's dinger immediately got the club pumped up for the remainder of the series.

"He drove it," Johnson said. "The first inning of the ballgame ignited the whole day for us. It was a good way to start. He had a good weekend with key hits."

Nick Felix became A&M's first four-game winner of the season. Felix pitched seven innings and allowed one run on four hits in another strong outing.

"Nick's a plugger," Johnson said. "He had trouble with the leadoff hitter every inning. That was discouraging to me. But he fought through it and got out of innings."

The Aggies had to come from behind to win the second game of the twinbill.

Pan Am jumped out to a 4-1 lead in the third inning when Herb Erhardt hit a three-run homer off Randy Pryor. A&M whittled away at the Broncos lead and tied the score in the fourth inning on back-to-back home runs by Tom Carcione and Terry Taylor.

The home runs were Carcione's sixth and Taylor's seventh.

Pan Am regained the lead in the fifth and added another run in the sixth for a 6-4 advantage. A&M claimed the lead for good in the bottom of the sixth by scoring four runs with the aid of only one RBI. McWilliam led off the inning with a single down the third base line. McWilliam advanced to second on a single by Carcione. Taylor followed with a walk to load the bases with no outs.

McWilliam scored on a wild pitch. Carcione scored when centerfielder Steve Kennett dropped Mike Easley's line drive. Maury Martin followed with a perfectly executed suicide squeeze to drive in Taylor for the game winner. Easley later scored

on Knoblauch's RBI single. McWilliam closed out the scoring for A&M by hitting a solo homer to left in the seventh.

"We've got enough punch that I think our guys realize that our games are never over until the last pitch," Johnson said. "We've got enough who can contribute to a big inning. That's a quality of our ball club. One through nine can hit. We haven't got a real weak spot in our lineup."

Freshman Steve Hughes picked up his second win by pitching 2 1/2 innings in relief of Pryor. Hughes won a game at Northeast Louisiana and Johnson has been pleased with the righthander's progress.

"I'm impressed with him," Johnson said. "He's got a split-finger (fastball) and he can throw it for strikes. It's a tough pitch to hit. He gets a lot of ground balls and double play balls."

Centala struck out two in his one inning stint to save his third game.

The victories improved eighth-ranked A&M's record to 18-2. Pan Am fell to 9-6. Hardin Simmons will visit the Aggies at Olsen Field for a 1 p.m. double-header on Tuesday.

Lady Aggies finish fourth in SWC play

FORT WORTH — The Texas A&M women's basketball team continued its mastery over TCU with a 74-68 victory over the Lady Frogs Saturday night.

The Lady Aggies will now head into the Southwest Conference Post-Season Tournament with a 14-12 regular season record and an 8-8 SWC mark. A&M, the tournament's 5th seed, will play fourth-seeded Arkansas Wednesday night at Moody Coliseum on the SMU campus in Dallas.

"This is a great spot for us to be in," A&M Coach Lynn Hickey said. "We finished fourth and have a winning record."

A&M's spot may not be great for very long because the winner of the A&M-Arkansas has the unenviable task of facing SWC champion Texas.

"I was concerned about this game," Hickey said. "They had a lot going for them. Not only were they playing to get in to the tournament, but this was the last home game for their seniors."

TCU will stay home during the tournament.

McDonald leads A&M past Frogs

FORT WORTH (AP) — Darcan McDonald's 15 points paced five Texas A&M players who finished with double figures, and helped the Aggies to a 66-60 victory over TCU Saturday night in Southwest Conference action.

With the victory A&M moves to 16-14 on the year and assures coach Shelby Metcalf of his 22nd winning season in 25 years of coaching the Aggies.

A&M's SWC record evens at 8-8, good enough for fifth place in the conference.

The Aggies will face Arkansas, who finished third in the SWC, in the first round of the conference tournament Friday at noon in Dallas Reunion Arena.

TCU's record drops to 9-18 overall and 3-13 in conference play. The Horned Frogs finished fourth in the basement of the SWC.

TCU led 33-29 at the half, but A&M rallied in the second half and built a 10-point lead, 53-43, with 8:17 to play when senior guard Keron Graves hit a 19-foot jumpshot.

But the Horned Frogs battled back. A basket by John Lewis and a layup by TCU within one, 56-55, brought the game to a 3:52 remaining.

But clutch shooting by A&M's Freddie Ricks and Doug Dennis kept the free-throw line helped the Aggies ice the win.

Metcalf said he has a lot of work to do to prepare for the upcoming SWC tournament.

"Now we can go to work for three days and get ready for the tournament. Realistically, we've got to get into the semifinals of the tournament to have an outside shot at the NIT," he said.

Metcalf also said his players were keeping their eyes on the NCAA tournament bid that goes to the tournament's winner.

"Anything can happen," Metcalf said. "These players know the NCAA bid goes to the winner and we'll just have to see what happens over in Dallas."

A&M netters miss finals of coastal tournament

By Curtis L. Culberson
Assistant Sports Editor

CORPUS CHRISTI — The Texas A&M men's tennis team didn't advance to the finals this weekend, but it pulled off an incredible comeback victory against Arkansas and stayed with McNeese State until the last set in the early rounds of the HEB College Tennis Team Championship.

The Aggies went 2-2 for the tournament and their season record goes to 8-4.

Arkansas led the Aggies 4-2 after the singles Friday, but A&M bounced back and swept the doubles, stealing the victory from the Razorbacks 5-4. It was the first time in nine years the A&M men have come back to win from a single's deficit of 4-2.

The Aggies lost in the top three seeds against the Hogs with A&M's No. 1 seed Dean Johnson losing 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 to Mike Brown; A&M's Shaun O'Donovan dropping his match to Donie Wood 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 in the No. 2 seed, and A&M's Steve Kennedy losing to Augusto Solano in the No. 3 seed.

Craig Whitteker defeated Arkansas' J.P. Miency 6-4, 6-3 in the No. 4 seed and Mike Chambers was victorious over Derick Brooks 6-3, 6-4 in the No. 5 seed, while A&M's Wayne Green was defeated by Cha Im.

In doubles play, the O'Donovan and Kennedy team beat Keith Buford and Brown 6-1, 6-3. In the No. 2 seed Johnson and Whitteker defeated Im and Wood 7-5, 6-3, while Chambers and Scott Campbell

won over Solano and Brooks 6-2, 6-4 in the No. 3 seed.

"It was a quality win," A&M Coach David Kent said. "Arkansas is a very tough team."

Excellent double's play saved the the Aggies Friday but after a 3-3 split in the singles Saturday, A&M faltered in the doubles, losing 5-4 to McNeese State.

Dean Johnson lost to Johan Kjellsten 6-4, 6-0 in the No. 1 seed and MSU's Ulf Niklasson won over Steve Kennedy in twin 6-2 sets in the No. 2 spot.

A&M's No. 3 seed Shaun O'Donovan beat Pontus Lavelfalt 6-2, 7-5 and in the No. 4 and No. 5 seeds Mike Chambers and Craig Whitteker were victorious over MSU's Alex and Erich Reich 6-2, 6-3 and 3-

6, 7-6, 6-4 respectively.

Whitteker made an amazing comeback victory, Kent said. At one point he was down 6-3, 5-1. Whitteker held off his opponent for five match points, he said.

Ulf Persson beat A&M's Wayne Green 6-2, 6-4 in the No. 6 seed.

The A&M doubles team of Chambers and Campbell beat the Reich brothers in the No. 3 seed 6-3, 6-2. But A&M lost both of the crucial two doubles seeds. O'Donovan and Kennedy lost 7-5, 1-6, 6-4 to Niklasson and Lavelfalt, and the Johnson-Whitteker team lost 2-6, 7-5, 6-4 to Persson and Kjellsten.

The Aggies are back in action at home this Thursday when they face UT-El Paso at 1:30 p.m. at the Omar Tennis Center.

Kerr breaks 200-meter indoor record

Texas A&M's Stanley Kerr broke the American 200-meter indoor record with a time of 20.63 at the Texas Tech Last Chance Qualifiers track meet Saturday.

Kerr broke James Butler's record of 20.64 set last year.

Kerr will now advance to the NCAA Indoor Championships this weekend in Oklahoma City, Okla.

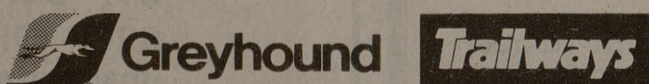
"Stanley had an outstanding race," A&M Assistant Coach Ted Nelson said.

This spring, make a break for it.



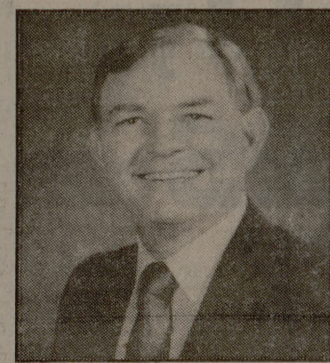
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