

O'Donovan leads Aggies to tough victory over Rice

By Cray Pixley
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M men's tennis team defeated Rice in a 5-3 dual match Friday at Omar Smith Tennis Center.

The Aggies continued Southwest Conference play with Rice after a dual match against Texas Christian was postponed by rain on Wednesday.

A&M has an 11-5 overall record with a 1-1 Southwest Conference slate.

The Aggies won three singles matches.

No. 3 Shaun O'Donovan defeated Rod Burton, 5-7, 7-5, 6-4. A&M's No. 5 and No. 6 seeds were also victorious.

"O'Donovan set the pace today," A&M Coach David Kent

said. "He made one of the greatest comebacks we've ever had on these courts."

Michael Chambers beat Chuck Bratka 6-3, 7-5, and Wayne Green dispatched Sean Wade 6-1, 6-4.

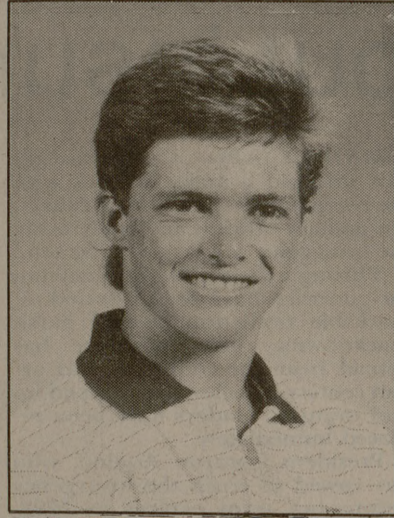
On the losing side for the Aggies was No. 1 Dean Johnson, who ran into trouble against Don Freeman 6-0, 6-4.

No. 3 Steve Kennedy was defeated by Ken Thomas 7-5, 6-3.

Rice's Larry Pearl won 1-6, 7-6, 6-2 over No. 4 Craig Whitteker.

Scott Campbell and Chambers defeated Bratka and Freeman 5-7, 6-1, 6-4 in doubles play. The Whitteker-Johnson team beat Wade and Thome 6-4, 2-6, 7-6.

A&M will go on the road to play Southern Methodist Thursday.



Shaun O'Donovan

Scott: Astros could win NL West

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston pitcher Mike Scott thinks the Astros have a chance to win the National League's Western Division this season.

But based on Scott's previous pre-season thoughts, that could spell trouble for the Astros.

He was pessimistic about 1986, but the Astros won the division crown by 10 games. He felt good about repeating last season when the Astros went into a late-season tailspin and finished third.

Now, despite last season's swoon, Scott has a good feeling about 1988.

"If we all pitch well and we can start scoring some runs, there's no reason we can't win the division," Scott said.

The Astros had one of the strongest pitching staffs in the major leagues last season, but a lack of timely hitting cost them dearly.

And the team went into the final week of spring training still looking for better hitting. Manager Hal Lanier even experimented with moving second baseman Bill Doran into the No. 4 position and dropping Glenn Davis to No. 5.

Davis, the Astros' most likely home run punch, was hitting .160 as the week started.

"We're just not scoring enough runs," Lanier said. "A lot of times the fourth-place hitter just needs to get a ground ball to get a guy home from third."

Doran struck out only 64 times,

hit .283 and drove in 79 runs in 1987. Houston ranked 24th and 25th, respectively, among the 26 major-league teams with a .253 club batting average and 603 runs batted in.

"All of us on this team want to gain respect for our offensive ability," catcher Alan Ashby said. "I think we are a better offense than we've shown. We just don't have the great power."

Nolan Ryan knows about power failures. Ryan led the majors in strikeouts and tied for the lead in earned run average and still was only 8-16 with a lack of run support.

"If the pieces come together like we hope they will and the pitching is strong, I don't see why we wouldn't be there," Ryan said.

Questions plague Rangers early

ARLINGTON (AP) — A year ago, the Texas Rangers were favored to win the American League Western Division and crashed hard into last place.

They open the 1988 season against the Cleveland Indians in Arlington Stadium Monday night with nobody giving them a chance.

There's hope last year's scenario can be reversed.

"Nobody picked Minnesota last year, and they won the world title," Rangers General Manager Tom Grieve said. "Something unusual usually happens in our division. I

just hope we are the ones who will make it happen this time."

When veteran Charlie Hough takes the mound against the Indians, the Rangers, who finished 10 games behind the World Series champion Twins, will be wrapped in question marks.

The Rangers have questionable pitching and defense, the two things that started them off poorly last year. They never could recover from a miserable nine-game losing streak in April.

Texas finished 11th in the AL with a 4.63 earned run average, the

second-highest single-season figure in club history, behind the 4.64 from 1973.

The Rangers led the majors with 760 walks and 55 hit batters. They also topped the AL with 1,103 strikeouts but had a league-record 26 balks. They allowed a club-record 199 home runs.

Texas' relievers compiled a 4.04 ERA with 27 saves in 329 appearances, and the team led the AL in a bad statistic for relievers — 240 walks.

The bright spot was Texas' club-record 194 homers.

Tickets for Rangers' games on sale now

ARLINGTON (AP) — Tickets to Texas Rangers' baseball games can be ordered by mail, over the counter at the Arlington Stadium ticket windows or at all Rain-bow Ticketmaster outlets in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

As of April 1, ticket prices will be: field and mezzanine boxes, \$10; reserved, \$9; Plaza \$8; Reserved Grandstand \$5; General Admission \$4 (adult), \$2 (children). Non-alcoholic seating is offered in section 320 in

the mezzanine boxes and section N of the reserved grandstand.

Concession prices include \$1.50 soft drinks and \$2.75 hot dogs.

Arlington Stadium can be reached by exiting highway 360 off Interstate 30, the old Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike.

For ticket information, call the Rangers at 871-273-5100 or write P.O. Box 1111, Arlington, Texas 76010.

“No matter how bad they are, Grandma loves to hear the latest jokes.”

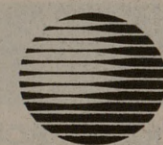


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