

Sports

Leave the yells at Kyle Yours Truly repents in sackcloth



Hal L. Hammons
Sports viewpoint

I must admit, when I read the letter from one Mike Freeman, Class of '91, in Friday's *Battalion* I was somewhat less than sympathetic to his cause. He was so incensed at the audacity of the Corps of Cadets — which had the nerve to show up *en masse* to last Monday's Texas A&M baseball game — he even misspoke himself, saying the Aggies played Oklahoma, rather than Oklahoma State. Silly boy, don't you know that Oklahoma is a basketball school?

In my own defense, I am not used to siding with "Aggie fans" who object, God forbid, to the grand old tradition of Aggie yells. Some of the cadets took the initiative to lead the over-capacity crowd in the yells, ordinarily not a part of the afternoon and/or evening's events at Olsen Field.

It seemed at first that Freeman wanted to voice a petty gripe about the big crowd baseball fans have been looking forward to for, well, forever.

The bigger-than-usual attendance has not been limited to games against No. 1-ranked opponents or games on national television. Although that game had by far the biggest turnout of the year (an Olsen Field record, by the way), this weekend's well-attended series against Texas Tech testifies that the numbers definitely are on the way up.

Baseball's traditional role of sub-sport may be in jeopardy in College Station. It could even go the way of U-of-Texas ball, which recently has seemed to challenge football's attendance numbers.

And some resentful fan thinks his grueling hours in the bleachers watching the Ags beat up on Sam Houston State and Lubbock Christian somehow have been made less noble or something like that. Big schmeal, right?

Well, Mr. Freeman and others of your ilk, I apologize. You were right, and I was wrong.

I finally came down from the ivory press box Saturday to get the points of view of the huddled masses. The ones who were pretending to tidy up the second deck with their brooms during the second game, indicating the sweep of the Red Raiders that was soon to be completed. The ones who mock opposing players who look stupid on the field. (There was a lot of mocking this weekend.) You know, the weirdos.

Of course, the Chief Weirdo is George, as all A&M baseball fans know — George meaning George

Lengel, a graduate student in physics from Mercer, Penn. George said the huge turnout Monday was indicative of a rather hypocritical spirit on the part of the "new converts."

"Everybody's front-running because we're winning," he said. "If crowds would be like that every game, it would be no problem. Just coming out to be on TV, that's bush."

The turnout for the two-game series with North Texas State last week would seem to make George's point rather well. The day after the record-breaking turnout of 5,373, a mere 673 showed up to watch a less-watchable opponent play the same Texas Aggies. Consistent isn't exactly the first word that comes to mind, is it?

Keith McKay challenges George for the honor of being the biggest mouth (no offense, big guy) on the second deck, and he sides with his comrade. The senior political science major from Longview agrees that real fans would "show up for more games, not just for free batting helmets and TV. . . ."

"Where were they the 22 games before that?" he asked me. I had no answer for the man who claims to miss games only when one is during one of his afternoon classes.

"We're ranked No. 3 in the nation. You've got to support stuff like that." I hear you, Keith.

Of course, none of them *resented* the new fans *per se* — it was the hypocrisy of the situation that riled them. And also the imposition of the neophytes' traditions upon the established ones.

It is the stand-bys' position that yells have no place at baseball games, aside from the usual rendition of the Aggie War Hymn provided by a tape of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band. And I surprised myself by agreeing with them after thinking for a while.

Keith put it like this: "Aggie baseball is fun because in football and basketball the yell leaders have control. In baseball, you can do whatever you want."

Maybe it was the simple statement of Kim Steadman, one of the Diamond Darlings, that convinced me about yells not belonging at this particular ballpark: "It's a tradition here, and I'm a big supporter of traditions, but it has never been a tradition to do yells at baseball games."

Like Freeman said, Aggie baseball has its own traditions — the brooms, the heckling of opponents with unusual names, the "Take him out! Leave him in! Take him out! Leave him in!" that accompanies the opposing manager on mound visits.

The diligence of the die-hards merits the respect for these institutions. The hypocrisy charges, of course, are just a few packed houses from being proved unmerited.

A&M pitchers strike out 35 in 3-game sweep of Tech

By Loyd Brumfield
Sports Editor

The Texas A&M baseball team showed there is a wide gap between second place in the Southwest Conference and, well, *second place*.

The Aggies destroyed Texas Tech in a three-game series at Olsen Field, winning Friday's opener 11-3 and sweeping Saturday's doubleheader 10-0 and 5-3.

Third-ranked A&M, which came into the series tied with Tech for second in the SWC, now stands all alone in the No. 2 position with a 5-1 conference record and a 33-7 overall record.

The Red Raiders fell to 25-14-1 overall and 4-5 in the SWC.

The Aggies did the job thanks to near-perfect pitching and a rejuvenated hitting attack. Tech was held to 14 hits during the series, and Raider batters were struck out 35 times. In contrast, the Aggies struck out nine times and belted 26 hits.

"Tech came in with some good numbers," said A&M Coach Mark Johnson, referring to Tech's conference-leading .342 batting average going into the series. "But our pitchers did really well."

A&M got its most dominant pitching performance from senior Sean Snedeker, who went the distance in Saturday's first game. He scattered seven hits and struck out 10.

"Sean came out and dominated from the first inning," Johnson said. "Once he took control he never let go."

Snedeker upped his record to 5-0 overall and 2-0 in conference play.

Randy Pryor and Nick Felix also pitched well for the Aggies. Pryor, who also went the distance, improved to 3-3 overall and 1-1 in the SWC with a win Friday. He pitched a four-hitter and struck out 13.

Felix threw for seven innings in Saturday's second game, striking out nine while giving up five hits. Junior Scott Centala came on in the eighth to finish the game, striking out three and giving up just one hit.

"Our pitchers are doing a great

job out there," A&M shortstop Chuck Knoblauch said. "They can't score runs if they can't get on base."

Errors also plagued the Raiders. Tech had seven for the series to A&M's none. They were especially a key in the second game of the doubleheader, when two Raider errors enabled three A&M runs to score.

With the Aggies up 1-0, A&M's Scott Livingstone reached first thanks to Tech first baseman Mark Gustafson, who mishandled a Livingstone hit and let it roll deep into right field.

The error allowed A&M right fielder Jim Neumann and cen-

terfielder Kirk Thompson to score, and Knoblauch came home when Tech right fielder Donald Harris' throw overshot home plate.

The Aggies took control in the first inning of Saturday's opener when Livingstone homered for the eighth time this year to knock home Knoblauch, who reached base on a single into centerfield.

Later in the inning, second baseman Terry Taylor doubled to the centerfield wall to knock home John Byington and Tom Carcione, who

See Aggies, page 10

Spring training over; baseball season here

From the Associated Press

Kirk Gibson, Jack Clark and Lee Smith signal a year of familiar faces in new places while spring's high hopes turn to reality Monday when Roger Clemens throws the first pitch of the 1988 baseball season.

The Los Angeles Dodgers, New York Yankees and Balti-

See related stories, page 11

more Orioles all made major changes during the winter with Bob Welch, Brett Butler and Danny Jackson among those others who switched leagues.

The Minnesota Twins, trying to become the first World Series champion to repeat since the 1977-78 Yankees, stood pat. The only changes they made came in the financial department — they now have seven million-dollar players, the most in the major leagues.

In Boston, Clemens could become the first pitcher to win three straight Cy Young awards. He will begin that effort today at 12:05 p.m. when Detroit and Jack Morris face the youthful Red Sox at Fenway Park in the first game of the year.

"We're probably a better ball-club than we were in 1986," Boston manager John McNamara said, referring to the Red Sox team that came within one strike of winning the World Series.

One improvement is the addition of Smith, a top reliever from the Chicago Cubs.

Detroit, wiped out by Minnesota in the American League playoffs, will try to squeeze another year out of its veterans, now minus Gibson, who signed a free-agent contract with Los Angeles. The Tigers, as usual, had the worst record in the AL during spring training while looking at lots of youngsters.



- learn about the performing arts
- get involved on campus
- help bring Broadway and classical artists to A&M
- have fun/keep off the streets

Apply for MSC OPAS*
1988-89

Information Sessions:

Tues. April 5, 7:00 pm, 308 Rudder
Wed. April 6, 7:00 pm, 510 Rudder

Applications are also available in 216 MSC

for more information call:
Paul at 268-8682 or 845-1515

*Memorial Student Center Opera and Performing Arts Society

BRING YOUR PARENTS TO THE
1988 *MSC VARIETY SHOW

"I'VE GOTTA BE ME!"



PARENTS' WEEKEND
Friday, April 8, 1988 7:30 PM

RUDDER AUDITORIUM

EMCEE: EDDY STRANGE

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE MSC BOX OFFICE AND AT ALL TICKETRON OUTLETS

\$4.00 AND \$5.00

CHEATING AWARENESS WEEK!!

APRIL 4-8

What are your scruples?

Open Forum: Wednesday, April 6
Zachry Lobby 12 noon

Student Government, Academic Affairs Committee

CALL BATTALION CLASSIFIED 845-2611