

## Sloppy Ags down struggling HBU

**By Jerry Bolz**  
Assistant Sports Editor

The Texas A&M Aggies and the Houston Baptist Huskies stumbled over each other for 40 minutes Wednesday in front of 1,739, with the Aggies coming out on top 79-67.

Senior forward Donald Thompson, who led the Aggies in scoring with 16 points, thought the team took the Huskies too lightly.

"It's a good thing they counted the win because we came out and played sluggish," he said. "I guess we took HBU as a joke. Coach never told us their record. If he had told us, they probably would have beat us."

A total of four players fouled out of the sloppily-played game, with four others finishing one foul short of the limit. Darren Rhea, who had three in the first half, was the only casualty for A&M.

Guard David Williams said the Aggies need to get more serious about playing.

"I think we need to work," he said. "I think we've been playing around. We've been winning big, but we need to work."

"I didn't feel like anybody had an outstanding game," he said. "We're gonna have to have about nine players to compete."

All sloppiness aside, the Aggies still had no problem with HBU (1-5). They never trailed and the game was tied only once at 5-5.

Senior forward Doug Dennis started an eight-point run for the Aggies with an outside jumper at about the eight minute point of the first half. The next six points were scored

on free throws, including two by Thompson after a technical foul on HBU Coach Tommy Jones, to put A&M up 27-15.

The referees played the biggest role in the game, calling 19 fouls in the first half and 30 in the second. Both teams were in the seven-foul shooting bonus for the game's final 14 minutes.

The Huskies got within five with two minutes left in the half. A Thompson slam off a missed shot and a layup by guard Tony Milton pushed the lead back to eight at 33-25 to finish the half.

"A lot of guys think if we just get by, we're doing all right," Thompson said. "Coach kind of chewed on us at halftime."

Metcalf's motivational talk wasn't enough to change things. A&M's reckless second half performance was only outdone by the Huskies'.

Thompson came out hot and scored on two jumpers to add to a fast break layup by Williams, to give the Aggies a 39-25 edge. A&M continued to pour on the points, extending the lead to 19 with under two minutes to go.

The Huskies hit seven three-point field goals. HBU reserve guard Carlos Sanders hit four. He finished with 22 points to lead both teams.

Metcalf wondered if his team was going to try to stop Sanders.

"We looked like we didn't believe they could hit them (three-pointers)," he said. "You would think we would get suspicious after a little while."

The Aggies, 5-1, take on Southwest Texas State at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

## Rangers nab Ryan Express

### Ryan signs 1-year contract

ATLANTA (AP) — All-time strikeout leader Nolan Ryan decided to stay home on the range Wednesday and agreed to a one-year contract with Texas.

The free agent's total package is in excess of \$3 million and includes an option for 1990 and incentives.

Ryan, who got a \$200,000 signing bonus, will earn \$1.6 million in 1989 and \$1.4 million in 1990. If the Rangers do not pick up his option, they have to pay Ryan \$200,000.

In terms of bonus money, Ryan will earn \$150,000 for winning the Cy Young Award, \$50,000 for being named to the All-Star team and \$75,000 for being selected the play-off or World Series MVP.

Ryan, 41, had higher offers from California and San Francisco, but money wasn't the only factor.

"I'm a diehard Texan," said Ryan, who has 4,775 strikeouts in 21 seasons, and spent the last nine years with Houston.

"I wanted to remain in Texas. The overriding factor was what I felt was best for me and my family," he said.

The Astros offered \$1.3 million to keep him; Ryan made \$1 million last season.

The California Angels had offered Ryan \$1.8 million plus incentives and San Francisco made a bid of \$1.7 million.

"Ruth and the children helped make this decision," Ryan said. "I did what was in the best interest of my family."

Ryan lives in Alvin, Texas, just a short ride from Houston.

"I'm disappointed the Houston

situation didn't work out," Ryan said. "I wanted to finish my career in a Houston uniform."

Ryan has set or tied 38 major league records. He has fanned 200 or more batters in 12 different seasons with five years of 300 or more strikeouts.

The right-hander has pitched a record five no-hitters.

"We didn't come here and expect to get a pitcher of a Nolan Ryan (caliber)," Texas general manager Tom Grieve said.

Ryan's signing kept up the Rangers' wheeling and dealing at the winter meetings. They have made three deals involving 15 players and have added second baseman Julio Franco and outfielder-first baseman Rafael Palmeiro.

"Our goal was to come here and make some changes to make an effort to be a contender," Grieve said.

The Rangers' total active player payroll last season was \$6.025 million, one of the lowest in the major leagues.

Ryan had a two-hour meeting with Angels owner Gene Autry Tuesday night and met with the Rangers Wednesday morning.

"It was a very tough situation," Ryan said. "Mr. Autry was very good to me and I have known Al Rosen for a long time."

Ryan was 12-11 for the Astros last season with 228 strikeouts to lead the National League for the second straight season.

He has struck out 10 or more batters in a game 181 times in his career.

## Astro players 'heartbroken' over loss of strikeout king

HOUSTON (AP) — News that veteran pitcher Nolan Ryan signed a one-year contract Wednesday with the Texas Rangers didn't set well with Houston Astros players who termed Ryan's departure "a heartbreak."

"The whole thing makes me sick from a professional as well as personal standpoint," second baseman Bill Doran said. "He means so much to the club and the town."

Ryan, 41, agreed to terms with the Rangers in a deal that gives Texas the option to sign the all-time strikeout leader in 1990. If he pitches both years, he would be paid about \$3 million.

Ryan was the center of a bidding war between Texas, California and San Francisco. Ryan, who went to Houston as a free agent in 1979, signed for free agency in September after he failed to reach agreement with the Astros.

Texas general manager Tom Grieve said Ryan's agreement made Wednesday "probably one of the greatest days in the history of the franchise."

For Houston, however, it was one of doom.

"It's a tragedy. The front office is hurt, I'm hurt. We're all distraught," Astro outfielder Kevin Bass said from the Astrodome

where several players were working out Wednesday.

"It's a heartbreak," outfielder Billy Hatcher said. "The best thing that ever happened to the Astros was Nolan Ryan and letting him get away will hurt the ballclub. Not only the attendance, but the players and the city as well."

Fellow pitcher Jim Destine said he was "sorry to see him go, not only as a ballplayer but as a person. If there was a leader of our ballclub it was Nolan. We're all going to miss him."

Doran said the Astros made a mistake by not signing Ryan in September.

"When he announced he was filing, I nearly fell out of my chair. You can't blame Nolan. He's got to take care of his family," said Doran, who's a close friend of Ryan and even names his son for him.

"You don't get a chance often to play with a Hall of Fame guy. He's still a good pitcher. It's not like they were keeping him for sentimental reasons. A lot of teams in our division are improving themselves and we have trouble signing our own players. All we've done is lose Nolan. The public will be unhappy and I can't blame them."

## Today's tennis not as memorable as glory days of Borg

My first tennis experience wasn't pretty. When I was 9 my dad, a high school tennis jock, took me out to the local park for my first tennis lesson. I thought he was the best I had ever seen. Like most fathers, he was patient and understanding toward my awkwardness in handling the racket and making eye contact with the ball.

After three hours, however, he realized that a serious genetic mistake had occurred: I had no grasp of the game. It's not that I couldn't get the ball over the net, I just had the irresistible urge to swing for the fences.

Today I can run circles around the man in almost anything, except tennis.

Whatever happened to the tennis heroes of old?

On Tuesday Boris Becker pulled out another of those hard-to-find victories against Ivan Lendl in a match that lasted over five hours. Granted, these men are on the top of their profession right now, but

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when they retire will they be mentioned in the same breath as Bjorn Borg or Stan Smith?

Maybe so, but it seems that the game of tennis doesn't have the dominant personalities and larger-than-life figures that it once did.

Even though Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe are still playing, they deserve to be placed in the golden age of tennis past. Connors proved in the U.S. Open that he still has what it takes to make a run for the finals, but his consistency is lacking and it's about time for Jimbo to hang it up. The resurgence of the kinder, gentler McEnroe never materialized, and he has recently

been faced with humiliating first-round losses from relative unknowns.

But how these men and others like them dominated the '70s and early '80s!

It's hard to forget the 1982 Wimbledon final between John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg, a tennis match that has to be one of the greatest of all time. It was a classic matchup between two very different personalities with similar playing styles. It didn't matter who won the match but who would come out ahead in the psychological warfare. This was the chance for the young upstart McEnroe to prove himself against the seemingly untouchable champion.

McEnroe was in rare form. Questioning every line call, questioning the intelligence of anyone present who wasn't American, just being the man that everyone loves to hate. Sort of a J.R. in tennis shorts. Borg

was, as always, under total control. His intense stare said it all.

Men like Borg, McEnroe and Connors are remembered not only for their exceptional athletic ability and championships, but also for their intense personalities.

Other players such as Arthur Ashe, Australian Rod Laver and Ilie Nastase brought their own flair to the game. Nastase might not have been the most consistent player, but going into the stands between games definitely made an impression. American Andre Agassi is rapidly developing into the "hot dog" of U.S. tennis. His aggressive style has conjured up memories of a young Jimmy Connors.

Women's tennis has not suffered quite as severely from the identity crisis in recent

years. The past dominance of Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert has recently been upstaged by the outstanding play of Steffi Graf, who has been ranked No. 1 since August of 1987.

One reason why today's players may not hold the larger-than-life image in the future may be because of the difference in cultures.

The majority of top players in both men's and women's tennis are foreign. Players such as Lendl and Graf are from countries in which athletes aren't encouraged to express their feelings while in competition. While there is no doubt that players such as Lendl, Graf and Becker have already made their mark on tennis history, they may not fit the mold of some of the intense, arrogant and memorable members of the game.

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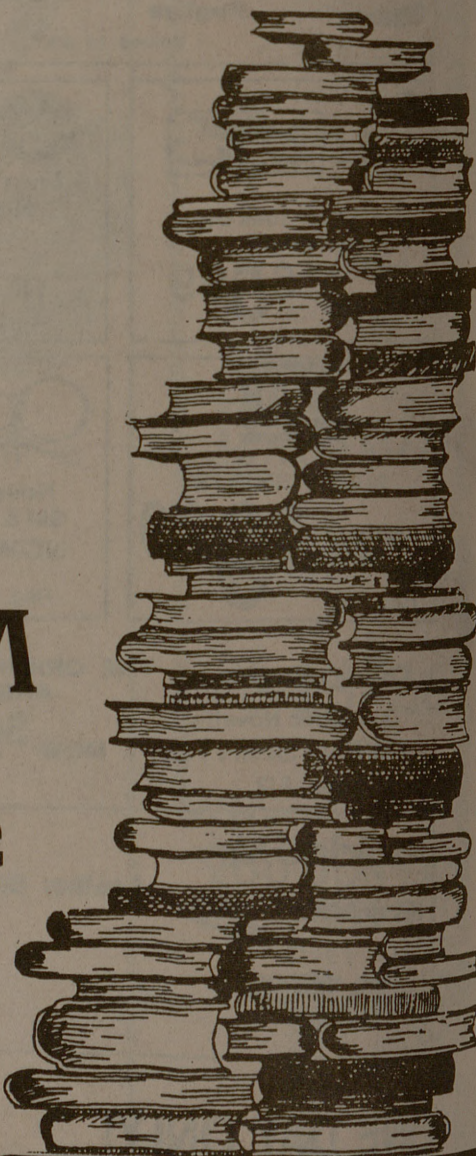
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