

Agg baseball team sweeps series over Pan American

A&M offense comes alive in season opener

By Jerry Bolz

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

six hits. John Byington led off with a single and Eric Albright walked. Duke loaded the bases with a bunt single down the third base line. Easley knocked Byington and Albright home on a line single to right field.

That forced Pan Am to replace Todd Burgess, the second pitcher of the day, with Joe Gilhaus.

Aggie Baseball

- **Record:** 3 wins, 0 losses.
- **Ranking:** 11th.
- **Next Game:** Tuesday at Southwest Texas State.

Duke scored on a wild pitch by Gilhaus and A&M's two starting freshmen, Trey Witte and Ronnie Allen, got a single and a double, respectively. Allen scored Easley on his hit.

Kirk Thompson reached on a fielder's choice to set up Terry Taylor's two-run blast over the right field fence to round out the scoring in the inning.

Sophomore Steve Hughes got A&M's first win of the season in four innings of relief for starter Randy Pryor.

A&M sent all nine batters to the plate in a single inning five times.

A&M coach Mark Johnson said his team was ready to hit the ball.

"I don't know if we're a big inning ball club — we were this weekend," he said. "Everybody was loose enough to hit the ball."

Duke said, "It feels really good to come into the opening series and hit the ball."

For the weekend, the Aggies scored 40 runs on 37 hits.

Pan Am had five homers in the series, including three by center fielder Sidney Holland.

The early game Saturday caused both teams to reach deep. A&M jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the second inning before Pan Am clobbered senior righthander Mark Herrmann for seven runs. Only two of the runs were earned.

First baseman Mark Beene keyed the inning with a three-run shot. In the bottom half of the third, the Aggies showed they weren't going to sit still as they brought home five runs, including two on a double by third baseman Byington.

The Broncos made it 8-6 in the fourth when Holland connected on



Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

Aggies Terry Taylor (left) and Chuck Knoblauch (right) score during one of Texas

A&M's wins in a season-opening three-game sweep of Pan American.

Aggie, Longhorn baseball rivalry will heat up SWC season

The 1988-89 school year has been a rough one for fans of the Southwest Conference and Texas A&M.

During the fall and winter the conference has been bad-mouthed in the national press for one thing or another.

During football season the talk centered on the football recruiting scandals and the relative mediocrity of the teams in comparison to other conferences.

A&M was in the spotlight for its probation sentence.

Now that basketball season has arrived the bubble heads on television don't even mention SWC on their national broadcasts because of the inferior quality of hoops in the region.

The criticism of the SWC as a conference full of "outlaw" teams may have been a little



Doug Walker

Sports editor

overdone concerning football.

The basketball played in this part of the country is no match for the action you'll see in the Big East, the ACC or the Big Ten.

Baseball is the SWC's best hope for national respect.

Mark Johnson's Aggies could be the group to vindicate a year of frustration for A&M fans. His squad, though picked to finish second to perennial champion Texas, looks like the champion on paper.

The Aggies are the most experienced and explosive team heading into the season. Texas, which has won 61 of 74 SWC titles, has a lot of unproven talent.

Even Texas coach Cliff Gustafson is picking the Aggies.

"I've got to go with A&M because of their experience and the offensive lineup they can throw at you," Gus said.

Under Gustafson, the Longhorns simply reload every year. A rebuilding year for Texas usually includes a trip to the NCAA regionals.

A&M, Texas and Arkansas annually

receive bids to the NCAA tournament and are frequently joined at the top by another contender.

Don't be surprised if Texas comes out on top of the SWC once again this year.

Somehow the Longhorns always come up with just enough to edge the Aggies in their three-game series.

Maybe it's a mental thing. Whatever it is, the Horns always seem to come out on top.

Maybe the difference is in the non-conference competition the teams face.

While A&M may play Maine, a regular visitor to the College World Series, in the first Aggie Invitational, A&M's non-conference slate doesn't match up well with Texas's. A&M may meet Oklahoma State, another perennial power, in the Dixie Classic in Louisiana next month. Both

teams are top teams this year.

A&M does have a respectable schedule and will probably rack up a lot of victories.

By comparison, Texas faces a schedule outside of the SWC that can only be described as vicious.

The Longhorns, who swept UCLA over the weekend, have series against national powers Arizona State (three games), Miami (3) and a pair two-game home-and-home series against Oklahoma.

Who knows? Maybe this really is the year the Aggies unseat Texas.

But don't bet on it. The Longhorns will be right in the thick of things when it's all said and done.

And the difference between A&M and Texas may end up being the Longhorns' stronger schedule.

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