

Thursday, March 23, 1989

Ags will face tough road in SWC

By Doug Walker

SPORTS EDITOR

When the top-ranked Texas A&M baseball team travels to Lubbock to take on Texas Tech this weekend the Aggies will attempt to live up to some high expectations.

The Aggies, who last won an outright Southwest Conference title in 1978, are off to their best start ever by winning 26 of their first 27 games and lead the national polls for the first time ever.

Now the Aggies have to prove they deserve the ranking.

The media didn't think A&M could out-gun Texas before the season as they picked Texas to win its 62nd title in 74 years of SWC baseball.

Proving the sports writers wrong won't be easy in a conference which is arguably the nation's best with four teams ranked in the top 20 nationally.

A&M, Texas (No.4), Houston (No.15) and 17th-ranked Arkansas are in the national polls but don't have outstanding records compared

to their conference counterparts.

The Aggies go right into the fire as they meet a Tech team which is off to its best start ever at 18-6. Baylor (25-4) has a 13-game winning streak and is 3-0 in the SWC after sweeping Rice last weekend to start the SWC season.

The strength of the conference becomes apparent when you see that every team in the league goes into conference with a winning record. Rice (17-13) has the worst overall mark.

With the strength of the league,

Team	Record	Pct.
1. Texas A&M	26	.963
2. Houston	27	.931
3. Baylor	25	.862
4. Arkansas	17	.810
5. Texas	27	.794
6. Texas Tech	18	.750
7. TCU	16	.667
8. Rice	17	.567

the potential for an upset is always there for the contenders. Understandably, no one seems to want the favorite's role.

"I don't know how anybody picked us over A&M," Texas Coach Cliff Gustafson said recently.

"They've got the pitching and the hitting."

Gustafson hasn't won 1,047 games in his career without knowing something about motivation. The more he builds up the Aggies, the better he will look if the Longhorns steal another title.

A&M Coach Mark Johnson says the Aggies aren't worried about predictions by the media.

"The media are the ones concerned about the favorite, not us," Johnson said.

As the conference race swings into high gear this weekend, the big question is whether Gustafson was sandbagging or really concerned about his team.

The Longhorns, with a 28-7 record, have played a tougher schedule than the Aggies. But they have been erratic against weaker opponents.

Three of their seven losses have come against Texas-Arlington, Dallas Baptist and Texas Lutheran in Austin. Pitching ace Kirk Dressendorfer, last year's SWC Player of the Year, has been inconsistent. The same can be said for the entire pitching staff as the Longhorns enter

SWC play with a 4.48 earned run average.

A&M has benefitted from strong hitting and tough pitching in its impressive start. The Aggies have a league-leading team batting average of .347 and the league's second-best team ERA at 2.89.

Only Houston, the conference darkhorse, has a better team ERA with a mark of 2.66.

The 27-2 Cougars are led by Fred Hinojosa, last year's SWC batting champ, who is hitting at a .415 clip. Houston is riding an 11-game win streak and opens SWC play at Arkansas this weekend.

A&M looks to be going into a fun weekend series in Lubbock. A&M is averaging over 19 runs per game in their last six games with the Red Raiders in Lubbock.

Johnson expects a tough conference race and hopes his team won't be too much of a target because of the number-one ranking.

"The conference is stronger this year," Johnson said. "Everybody seems to have a good ballclub. The problem is when we start knocking each other off and the stats go down."

No.5 Fullerton St. shuts out A&M 2-0

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

FULLERTON, Calif. — Anjie Bryant allowed only four hits to silence Texas A&M as fifth-ranked Fullerton State downed the Aggies 2-0 in the opening game of the Pony Invitational Wednesday night.

Bryant (10-1) struck out three A&M hitters, overcame three Fullerton State errors and worked out of jams in the first and fifth innings to preserve the shutout while A&M's Dana Mitchell dropped to 15-12 as the hard-luck loser.

Mitchell only allowed three hits and struck out one, but was hurt by three Aggie errors.

The verdict moved Fullerton State to 20-4 on the year while the Aggies dropped to 15-13.

A&M Head Coach Bob Brock knows the Aggies need to start taking advantage of scoring opportunities.

"I thought it was a real good game," Brock said. "We had our chances to win."

Fullerton State scored single runs in the third and sixth innings to take the win.

Cary Hess doubled with one out in the third and scored when Nikki Lewis singled to center to give Fullerton State a 1-0 lead.

A&M attempted a comeback in the fifth as Michelle Mayfield reached on an error and advanced to third on a single to center by Barbara Kajs. Kajs moved to second on the throw from center field.

Rene Blaha followed by hitting a grounder to second base. The second baseman bobbled the ball allowing Kajs to reach first. However, Mayfield was out at the plate when she tried to score on the play and the second baseman threw her out.

"We've been playing a lot of ranked teams and we are a team without a lot of experience," Brock said.

A&M continues play in the tournament today with an 11 a.m. game against the Akron Zips and a matchup with the Utah Utes at 3:30 p.m.

Sampson's play seems to fall short — another victim of hype?

Remember a few years back when Sports Illustrated ran the picture of a 7-foot high school center who could take a silver dollar off the top of the backboard? The kid's name was Ralph Sampson, a college prospect who had recruiters around the country falling over each other in a desperate attempt to sign him.

He was a player they thought would be the franchise of any program in the country.

Sampson had all the tools that basketball coaches dream of: extraordinary height (and he was still growing), agility, speed as well as great defensive ability. Sampson had his whole future laid out in front of him with nowhere to go but up, and he was calling the shots.

Somehow, some way, Head Coach Terry Holland got Sampson to commit to Virginia, a program that was mediocre, at best, in the Atlantic Coast Conference. Sampson was the savior. He was going to make the Cavaliers a contender in the



Steven Merritt
Assistant Sports Editor

already competitive ACC as well as an influence in the recruitment of other blue-chip players.

The Virginia athletic department was already preparing for the onslaught of media coverage. The press had found its candidate for the hyped player of the year award.

He became a dominant force in the conference and throughout the country, both on and off the court. His size and

agility were the marvel of opposing coaches and players. It was Holland's chance to make a name for himself, to put Virginia on the basketball map, to win it all in the NCAA tournament.

But it never happened. Granted, the Virginia basketball program improved considerably during the Sampson years, but it had nowhere to go but up. The recruiting improved as did the national exposure for the program and the school. But the bottom line became winning the big one for many Virginia faithful, and the Cavaliers couldn't do it.

Obviously, one reason behind this failure was that Sampson couldn't do the job alone — he needed help from the other starting four. But the other starting four weren't that bad. Guard Jeff Lamp had one of the best field goal and free throw percentages in the ACC.

The one factor that many might not have considered in the analysis of Virginia's problems at the time was that the team was

only as good as its record. This is primarily because the great and unstoppable Ralph Sampson was overrated.

He could be stopped. He did have weaknesses. It was the age-old problem that has plagued teams since the beginning of organized sport — the franchise player who doesn't produce.

The hype that followed Sampson through college stayed with him as he entered the National Basketball Association, where many felt his talents would be better suited. Once again, Ralph proved everyone wrong.

His arrival in Houston signaled what was to be a step toward the establishment of a dynasty for the Rockets, as the pairing of Akeem Olajuwon and Sampson promised to be one of the most dominating low-post pairings in the NBA.

But Sampson was never happy in his role as a power forward while Olajuwon garnered the publicity as center, making the dream pairing impossible. His point

totals dropped as well as his defensive play, prompting then Rockets' coach Bill Fitch to question Sampson's motives concerning his attitude toward the team.

He didn't simply accept his role with the team and try to work with the other players, but somehow felt that he needed to be the center of it all for the Rockets. Fitch thought otherwise.

Now Sampson is struggling to fit in with Golden State, which felt the acquisition of Sampson would only boost the Warriors' hopes in the Western Conference. He returned from the third knee operation in as many years at the end of January and has tried to produce for coach Don Nelson, who restructured his lineup with quicker players when Sampson left.

But it is ironic, however, that sometime in the future the team is going to need a center, a person to take charge, produce and be the key player. That's what Sampson has always wanted, but now he might not be physically able to take that challenge.

Class Council Newsletter

CLASS OF '89

CLASS AGENTS

FUNDRAISING

Spring Induction Banquets

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 4th & 5th, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Room 224, MSC
On Tuesday and Wednesday, April 4th & 5th, the Association of Former Students will host the Spring Induction Banquets in our honor, inducting May '89 and Summer '89 graduates into the Association. Each eligible senior may attend either night, but not both. December '89 graduates will be invited to the Fall Induction Banquets to be held in November. This FREE steak dinner should not be missed as we will be joining the past 1,028,998 graduates and friends of Texas A&M who continue to support our great University.

Tickets are required for attendance and will be available from 8:00a.m. - 5:00p.m., March 28th, 29th, & 30th at the ticket table located at the Flag Room in the MSC. You must present your I.D. to receive a ticket. If you must cancel, please return your ticket so that another senior will have the opportunity of attending. As seating is limited each night, tickets will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis. Voting for Class Agents will be held at each banquet. Don't miss 'em - the beginning of the rest of our lives as FORMER STUDENTS! Whoop!

Senior Weekend

Friday and Saturday, April 28th & 29th

SENIORS, get ready for the greatest weekend of your life. Our Class will proudly celebrate the 1989 Ring Dance while observing the 100th Anniversary of the Aggie Ring, "A Century In Gold". Senior Weekend guarantees to be memorable, from the Senior Bash on Friday night to the Ring Dance on Saturday night, plus more!

SENIOR BANQUET The Banquet will be held at the University Hotel & Convention Center. The evening begins with a Cash Bar from 6:30-7:30p.m., followed by dinner. Our guest speaker, Clayton W. Williams, Jr. '54, will highlight the evening and a slide show, reflecting our Senior Year, will end the banquet. If you'd like to add pictures to the show, please drop them off in the Class of '89 cubicle in the MSC Student Programs Office.

As there are a limited number of seats available for the banquet, tickets will be on sale only from March 27th through April 26th to ensure that everyone is served.

RING DANCE This special event each of you has been waiting for is finally here. It will be held from 9:00p.m. until 1:00a.m. in the MSC and Rudder complexes. Entertainment will include The Ed Gerlach Orchestra for the big band music in the Rudder Exhibit Hall and The Change will play in the MSC Ballroom. Piano bar entertainment will be provided by Jim Aman on the 2nd Floor of Rudder Tower.

Pictures will be taken from 1:00p.m. until 1:00a.m. Saturday in the Rudder Auditorium. Packages are \$15.00 and \$10.00. Come early to avoid the lines! After the last waltz at the dance, continue the celebration at the University Hotel & Convention Center with your own get-togethers. Rooms have been blocked for us for April 29th, Saturday night only. Reservation cards will be available when you purchase your weekend tickets and mailed to you if you mail in your ticket order, or you may make your own reservation by calling the hotel. Be sure to tell the hotel you are Class of '89 in order to get your room discount. The cost is \$30.00 per room. This is the first time ever a class has been able to do this, so let's take advantage of a great deal. Maybe the Class of '89 is starting another Senior Weekend Tradition!

HOW TO GET TICKETS Tickets for Senior Weekend will be on sale March 27th through April 26th at the Rudder Box Office. Prices are:
Senior Bash - \$5.00 per couple
Senior Banquet - \$30.00 per couple
Ring Dance - \$35.00 per couple
Use MASTERCARD, VISA, cash or check.

For just \$65.00 you can get the WEEKEND PACKAGE, including all three events. Order by mail using the order form enclosed. Orders must be received by April 10th to ensure you receive your tickets.

Senior Class Gift Committee

The Senior Class Gift Committee is pleased to announce the winners of the class gift.

1. Monetary gift to the library
This gift will be used to purchase collections of materials (books, periodicals, etc.)
2. Centennial Ring Sculpture
This gift commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Aggie Ring. The sculpture, which is cast in bronze & gold plated, is 12 in. in diameter. It will sit on a marble base. The sculpture will be located in a visible area.

Class of '89... It's time to vote for your Class Agents. These are the people who will be responsible for representing our class at A&M, keeping you up-to-date on everything dealing with A&M by sending you newsletters, raising money for our class, and planning our five year reunion. Any member of the Class of '89 may vote on the Class Agent candidates March 28-30 at a table in the MSC for the Senior Induction Banquet, or graduating Seniors (May or August) may vote at the Senior Induction Banquet, April 4 and 5.

CLASS OF '90 AWARENESS

Melinda Palmer, Awareness Chairman, has effectively worked towards her goal of increased communication between Class Council and the Class of '90. Along with her committee, she coordinated a Class Gift Awareness Week and is now working with Boot Dance Committee on an awareness week for their event. Great job, Melinda and committee!

BOOT DANCE

This year's Boot Dance promises to be the best one ever! Thanks to the hard work of Co-chairmen Louis Mayer and Don McCale and their terrific committee, preparations for Boot Dance are coming along perfectly! Meetings are held every Mon. night at 8:30 in Lounge "B" on the Quad. All are welcome! Boot Dance will be held on May 13 in Rudder! Whoop! Watch for more details coming soon during Boot Dance Awareness Week!

CLASS BALL

Class Ball was held jointly with the class of '91 on March 3 at the University Inn. Attendance exceeded expectations and the dance floor was always hopping! Congratulations to Tracy Hammerstein, Class Ball Chairman, and her committee on an outstanding job! Party Pics can be ordered and formal pictures can be picked up in the MSC the week of March 20-24!

CLASS GIFT

Class Gift Chairman, Kristin Hay, and her dedicated committee have been working closely with the Class of 89 and the Ass. of Former Students in order to better plan for our Class Gift. A Class Gift Awareness Week was held earlier in the semester and suggestions were taken. For those of you with fresh ideas for our Class Gift, it is not too late! Kristin would love to receive your suggestion in her box in the class of 90 cube in the SPO, on the second floor of the MSC!

A big pat on the back to Karen Hodge, Fundraising Chairman, and her devoted committee on the \$4,000 profit from Elephant Walk t-shirt sales! Whoop! This much needed money will go towards furthering our programs and funding our Class Gift. The next project in the works is the designing of the Boot Dance t-shirt in conjunction with the Boot Dance Committee.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Special Events Committee was formed to increase Class of 90 participation in Texas A&M activities. Tony Vordenbaum, Special Events Chairman, recently coordinated our involvement in Big Event and is now working on increasing communication between Junior Leaders involved in different organizations.

SCRAPBOOK

Our superb Historian, Sharon Brunner, would appreciate any photos or mementos from your junior year. These can be placed in her box located in our cube in the Student Programs Office, 2nd floor MSC. She would greatly appreciate your contribution to the scrapbook!

And lastly, the following individuals deserve special recognition for all their hard work which went in to making this year a success: Katherine Smith, Pres.; Mike Campbell, Vice Pres.; Jason Kappel, Sec.; Kathleen Broderick, Treas.; Jennifer Evans, Social Sec.; and Sharon Brunner, Historian. Gig Em!

If you have any questions concerning any of this material, please call Denise Arledge, Class of '89 President, at 693-6439 or 845-1515.