

Thursday, April 6, 1989

Ags down Bearkats again Knoblauch, Thompson keys to 9-6 victory

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

HUNTSVILLE — Kirk Thompson extended his hitting streak to 25 games as No. 1-ranked Texas A&M defeated Sam Houston State 9-6 Wednesday in non-conference action.

The Aggies improved to 35-1 on the season, while the Bearkats dropped to 24-15.

Thompson was issued a base on balls by Sam Houston starter Jerry Tyson to start the game. He stole second and Terry Taylor knocked him in with a single to give A&M a quick 1-0 lead.

Chuck Knoblauch and John Byington walked to load the bases and Tyson left was pulled with no outs.

Reliever Kevin Baker hit A&M's Eric Albright to force in Taylor. Knoblauch scored on a sacrifice by Mike Easley.

After the Aggies scored three runs in the first inning, Thompson led off with a double in the top of the second and Terry Taylor followed with a two-run home run.

Thompson walked in the fourth

for A&M and Knoblauch hit a two-run home run, his fifth of the year, to put A&M up 7-0.

Aggie Update

● **Score:** Texas A&M 9, Sam Houston State 6.

● **Record:** 35-1.

● **Ranking:** First.

● **Next games:** Friday and Saturday at Rice in Houston.

Knoblauch highlighted the Aggie attack by going 2-for-4 on the day with two runs batted in.

Chris Burton hit a two-run home run for the Bearkats in the bottom of the fifth after Greg McGill walked, to close the gap to 7-2.

A&M's Tim Herrmann raised his record to 3-0 with the victory, while Sam Houston's Jerry Tyson fell to 0-2 with the loss.

Herrmann worked four innings and allowed two hits, one walk and struck out five. A&M used five other pitchers to close out the game as A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson

followed his plan to work several pitchers to keep them fresh for conference action.

"I thought Tim Herrmann did a good job of taking it right to the batters," Johnson said. "He was aggressive and had good command of his pitches."

A&M continues Southwest Conference play Friday and Saturday in Houston against the Rice Owls.

Kerry Freudenberg, Sean Lawrence, Ronnie Allen, Anthony DeLaCruz and Scott Centala all saw pitching action in the final innings for A&M.

A&M scored another run in the seventh when Andy Duke clubbed his sixth home run of the season over the left field wall.

The Bearkats closed to within 8-6 in the eighth before A&M added an insurance run in the ninth when Byington tripled and scored on a sacrifice fly by Eric Albright.

Centala worked out of ninth-inning jam to end the game as a pair of singles to open the inning were negated by a rally-killing double play.

Hickey: A&M women's sports can reach national prominence

By Stan Golaboff

SPORTS WRITER

Ever since Title IX was approved back in 1972, women's athletics has been fighting an uphill battle for funding, respect and an equal opportunity.

As part of the Education Amendment of 1972, Title IX was intended to prevent schools receiving federal funding from discriminating on the basis of sex. Within months, women's athletic programs sprang up all over the country. No longer were women forced to play sports only through sports clubs.

At the University of Texas, school administrators made an early commitment to women's athletics. Today, Texas has the top women's program in the country. They have a \$3.3 million budget, a 1,600 member booster club and national powerhouse teams in volleyball, basketball, swimming and track.

When one considers the rivalry between Texas and Texas A&M, one would assume that A&M would have

also made an early commitment to women's athletics. However, it has not been until recently that the administrators at A&M have made the commitment.

In 1984, A&M lured the head women's basketball coach of Kansas State, Lynn Hickey, to A&M to be the head coach for the Lady Aggies and the athletic director for women's athletics.

Hickey did not have an easy task. The budget for women's athletics was \$951,636 in 1984 and only A&M's softball team was considered a national power. Since then, Hickey and her staff have built — with the support of the administration — a program that many think can compete nationally.

The softball team won the national championship in 1987 and last year Melinda Clark and Alissa Bell became the first Lady Aggies named as NCAA All-Americans in track.

Donna Roper was a preseason All-American in basketball. Volleyball Head Coach Al Givens and Swimming Head Coach Mel Nash have fielded competitive teams the last

couple of years. "We have made a lot of headway in women's athletics here at A&M since 1984," Hickey said. "People now know that we exist and that administration has helped us as much as they can."

Many coaches in the Southwest Conference agree that A&M has the potential to compete with Texas, especially in basketball, the most visible sport in women's athletics.

"The only school I see with the resources to do it (catch Texas) is A&M," Houston Women's Basketball Coach Greg Williams said.

A&M does seem to have the resources to be competitive. The women's athletic budget for 1988-89 is \$1.6 million. A&M has a full-time director of promotion, a full-time sports information assistant and has some games broadcast on local radio.

A&M also has its own booster club, the Maroon Club, and has some corporate sponsors like Coca-Cola and Domino's Pizza.

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American pros should be playing basketball in the Olympics

If all goes well on Friday, the 1992 U.S. Olympic basketball team in Barcelona, Spain, could contain NBA superstars like Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, Dominique Wilkins and Larry Bird.

That's right, professional basketball players coupled with some of the country's top college talent on a team that could potentially dominate international basketball.

All that separates this dream from reality is the vote of the Federation Internationale de Basketball (FIBA), a 178-country organization that will decide on Friday whether to allow NBA players to participate in world-class events, including the Olympics.

What's ironic about this situation is that officials involved with the FIBA support the move, while the NBA and the American Basketball Association USA (ABAUSA),



Steven Merritt
Assistant Sports Editor

the ruling body of U.S. international basketball teams, have been extremely low-key in their support of the plan.

Boris Stankovic, secretary-counsel of the FIBA, said that the time has really arrived in basketball to stop the hypocrisy in the distinction between amateur and professional players. Stankovic said that

amateur players do not exist in the real sense of the word.

International competition has not been good to the U.S. basketball program over the years, especially the past five.

The basketball final in the 1987 Pan-American Games was supposed to be a cakewalk for the U.S. team, but it was soundly defeated by a Brazilian team that was led by Oscar Schmidt, a guy who reportedly makes \$300,000 playing in Italy.

Then the 1988 Olympics rolled around, and the team built by John Thompson was supposed to be invincible. The long awaited matchup between the U.S. and the USSR was set.

The U.S. team was the best in years, and what happened? The Russians won with what seemed to be purely amateur talent. But in fact, the Russian players were subsidized by the government.

It was no big secret that many Soviet athletes were paid, but the basketball players that won the gold medal in 1988 reportedly received \$30,000 each from the Soviet sports federation.

Dave Gavitt, commissioner of the Big East Conference and president of the ABAUSA, said that he also sees hypocrisy in the system, but that current members of the ABAUSA are opposed to open competition.

This opposition by ABAUSA member organizations such as the NCAA, NAIA and AAU is probably warranted if the NBA players are allowed to compete. But once guidelines are established, there should be no reason why the so-called amateur and professional players couldn't coexist.

Granted, there will be problems to iron out if the pro players are accepted, but these problems aren't beyond a solution.

Questions as to whether the next Olympic coach should be from the NBA or a college, or what the correct ratio of college to pro players would be justified, is secondary to a bigger concern — injury to the pro player. That's the big reason why allowing the professional player to compete is not as big of an issue as everyone thinks.

Not many pro basketball players are going to jeopardize their careers playing international basketball. If the pro players are accepted, the situation will probably be more appealing to the younger, inexperienced players. Veterans like Magic Johnson and Bird will probably be more concerned with finishing their careers without major injury than playing in Buenos Aires.

So let the pros play, it's just a way for the United States to keep up with the international Joneses.

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