

Wednesday, April 19, 1989

Ags take two from Lumberjacks

Neumann's clutch hitting helps A&M overcome upstart SFA

By Jerry Bolz

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

It was the encore that nobody asked for—and nobody expected. After taking two dramatic games from Texas Sunday, the No. 1-ranked Texas A&M baseball team pulled out one more dynamic finish

Aggie Update

- **Score:** A&M sweeps a doubleheader with Stephen F. Austin by scores of 7-5 and 6-5.
- **Record:** 46-2.
- **Ranking:** First.
- **Next game:** A&M travels to Fort Worth for a three-game series with Texas Christian. The opener is Friday at 3 p.m. followed by a twinbill Saturday beginning at 1 p.m.

to win a doubleheader from Stephen F. Austin Tuesday at Olsen Field.

The victory pushed the Aggies to 44-2 on the year and dropped SFA to 9-33.

The Aggies came into the twinbill flat after the emotional games against Texas and the Lumberjacks took advantage of A&M's lack of drive, jumping out to a 5-0 lead in both games.

But the Aggies managed to salvage the first game 7-5 and rallied from a ninth-inning, 5-3 deficit in the second game to win 6-5.

Left fielder Jim Neumann drove in second baseman Terry Taylor with no outs in the last inning to win the nightcap.

"I just told myself to sit back and drive the first pitch and end the ballgame," Neumann said. "We have the confidence we can do it no matter who's at the plate."

A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson said winning in the last inning was easier since the team has done it before.

"It's always a plus when you come from behind because it gets built in their memory bank," he said. "The guys responded again tonight."

Freshman pitcher Sean Lawrence (2-0) got the win for the Aggies in the nightcap after coming on in relief in the sixth inning. Lawrence struck out the first eight batters he faced and finished with 10 strikeouts in four innings. He gave up only one hit and no runs.

A&M was sluggish coming out in the first game and SFA jumped out to a 1-0 lead as Raul Garcia scored from third on a throwing error by A&M starting pitcher Tim Herrmann.

SFA built on the lead in the third on two doubles. Paul Brewster rang a two-base hit to the gap in left-center field and scored when Garcia hit a shot over Neumann's head in left to make it 2-0 SFA.

In the fourth inning, the Lumberjacks got to A&M reliever Kerry Freudenberg for three more runs. Mike Innerarity opened the in-

ning with a double and scored on a double by Blake Boydston. Designated hitter Kevin Kelley cleared the bases with a two-run homer to left field and SFA led 5-0.

A&M came alive in the bottom of the fourth as third baseman John Byington walked and Mike Easley put the ball over the right field fence for his eighth homer of the year. A&M was only down by three, 5-2.

The Aggies turned up the heat in the fifth inning, getting the first two batters on base. Taylor walked and Chuck Knoblauch singled to set the stage for Byington, who had homered in three straight games. He was up to the call again, tying the score 5-5 with a towering shot over the left field fence, his ninth homer of the season.

The inning continued to be profitable for the Aggies as two batters walked and Neumann hit a single through the right side to give A&M a 6-5 lead.

Taylor hit his 15th home run of the year in the sixth inning for an insurance run.

Freudenberg got his first win of the season in the opener.

A&M pitcher Randy Pryor, who has missed most of the season with a knee injury, got his third start of the year in the second game.

SFA got to Pryor in the first inning of game two, taking him for three runs on a hit and five walks. Brad Gilbert relieved Pryor with two outs in the inning.

The Lumberjacks built on their 3-0 lead against Gilbert in the fifth inning. Jeff Dungen singled and Steve Jeffus walked and each runner advanced on a bunt attempt by Michael Teal.

Gilbert threw a wild pitch and Dungen scored from third. Jeffus scored on a sacrifice fly by Boydston to SFA a 5-0 lead.

Andy Duke and Taylor singled for the Aggies in the sixth, followed by a Byington sacrifice and a Kirk Thompson single to score Duke. Neumann produced for the Aggies again, doubling to left field to bring home Taylor and Thompson.

A&M was down 5-3 and the crowd of 3,807 was sniffing for another Aggie comeback.

But the Aggies were held scoreless in the next two innings and their left-on-base total rose to 13.

Meanwhile, Lawrence was terrorizing SFA hitters, striking out all but one starter.

But the seemingly inevitable rally began in the bottom of the ninth as Easley and Duke singled to start the inning and Easley moved to third on a wild pitch by SFA reliever Wayne Boering.

Taylor tied the score 5-5 on a triple to the gap in left-center and the crowd went wild. The stage was set again for Byington to drive in the winning runs, but SFA Coach Pete Smith signalled his pitcher to intentionally walk Byington and Thompson to load the bases.

Neumann came up and knocked reliever Randy Davis' first pitch into left field for the game winner.

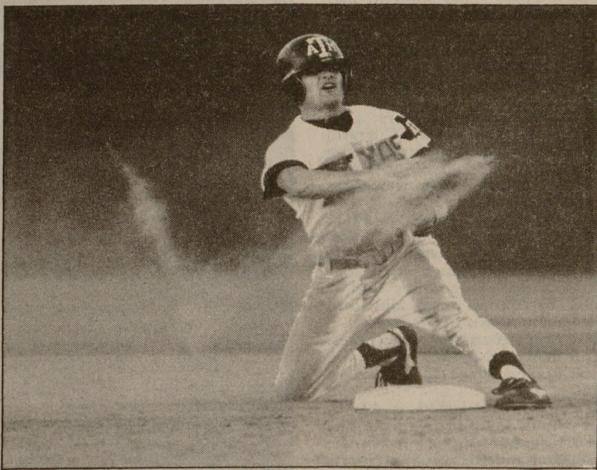


Photo by Frederick D. Joe

A&M shortstop Chuck Knoblauch reacts angrily after being thrown out attempting to steal second base in game one.

Rangers sale OK'd by League owners

ARLINGTON (AP) — George W. Bush, the managing general partner of the Texas Rangers, said on Tuesday his group will write Eddie Chiles a check on Friday to transfer ownership of the American League franchise.

"It's about an \$80 million transaction," Bush said. "Eddie's check will be for a lot more than I've got."

American League owners on Tuesday approved the sale of the Rangers to a group headed by Bush and Rusty Rose. Bush said there are 12 major partners and about 20 "small players" in the deal.

He said the current Rangers' front office is safe.

"Mike Stone is the president and chief operating officer and I don't intend to end that," Bush said. "Tom Grieve (general manager) is the baseball man and nothing will change there."

Bush said, "It's apparent that this is a well-run organization and this club is well-budgeted."

"There is a thin line between being a meddling owner and someone who shows concern. We hope to be the concerned type. We will not be hip shooters."

The Rangers are off to a 10-2 start, best in the club's 17-year history.

"I'll take credit for that," Bush quipped.

Bush said he will still work in the

oil business besides the hours he puts in with the Rangers. He will have three offices, including one in Arlington Stadium.

"I will still be preoccupied by the energy business and I think politics will still be part of my life," said Bush, son of the President.

Bush would not name all the partners in the Rangers' ownership. "Some expressed a desire not to be named," Bush said.

Bush said he and Rose will call the shots but added, "we're not dictators for life. We can be removed."

He said he and Rose were "stewards of trust" in the agreement.

Asked how he and Rose could be removed if there was a disagreement among the minor partners, Bush admitted "it would take a mighty rebellion inside. It would take major discontent."

Bush said the new owners won't be free spenders.

"Unfortunately, the Texas Rangers are one of the poor boys of baseball," Bush said. "We'll treat this as a business. We'll listen to the experts on the ways to spend money on salaries, etc."

"But this isn't a toy. It has to be run like a business."

Bush said the Rangers want to do a market study survey.

"I've not seen a sophisticated market survey on expanding Arlington Stadium," Bush said.

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Gretzky, Kings spice up NHL playoffs

With the National Basketball Association playoffs rapidly approaching it is easy to understand why many people might have missed the beginning of the National Hockey League's annual hoedown, the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

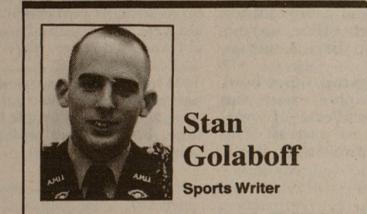
There are several reasons why the NHL playoffs usually doesn't create a ruckus nationally. However, this year could be different.

The first strike against the NHL is that the Stanley Cup Playoffs have the dubious honor of being the only playoffs that are longer than the revised NBA get-together scheduled for next week. The NHL allows 16 of its 20 teams into the playoffs and while the NBA lets 16 teams in also, all the NHL series are of the best of seven variety.

Another factor that limits interest in the playoffs is the lack of television exposure the league gets. The league used to have an exclusive contract with ESPN. However, this year the league decided it wanted more money for its games and opted for the smaller SportsChannel. While they may have gotten more money, exposure plummeted by almost 75 percent.

The main reason why many Americans could care less about the NHL and the Stanley Cup is because the American teams routinely get their clock cleaned by the Canadian teams.

It used to be the Montreal Canadiens who ruled the league. In fact, the Canadians hold the



Stan Golaboff
Sports Writer

record for consecutive Stanley Cup wins and the most Stanley Cup titles. Montreal's name appears on the Cup more times than any other team in the league, American or Canadian.

After a short respite in the early eighties, when an American team named the New York Islanders won four consecutive Cups—a feat only Montreal can match—Canadian dominance returned.

This time it was the Edmonton Oilers led by Wayne Gretzky that was ripping the league to shreds enroute to four titles in five years.

Despite these liabilities, the outlook for this year could be better not only for American teams, but the sport in general.

Last year, when the outgunned and outclassed Boston Bruins took on Edmonton for the Cup, America rallied around them and made them America's darlings.

Unfortunately for Boston, national pride could not overcome raw talent and the Oilers won again.

This year the Montreal Canadiens will be severely tested by the Bruins and then they will have to play the winner of the Pittsburgh-Philadelphia series. Both the Penguins and the Flyers have the talent to knock Montreal for a loop. The Penguins have Mario Lemieux, the next Gretzky, and the Flyers have about as much tradition as the Canadians.

The other Canadian team, Calgary, does not have the playoff experience, but does have the talent. Only the Kings, led by Gretzky, should challenge them, because neither St. Louis nor Chicago should even be in the playoffs.

No matter who ends up fighting it out for the Cup, the absence of powerhouse teams such as the Oilers, the New York Rangers, the Detroit Red Wings and the Washington Capitals, should raise fan interest in both the United States and in Canada.

Then maybe the Olympics won't be the only time hockey takes the spotlight.

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