

Doran trying to avoid 1989 nightmare

GISSIMMEE, Fla. (AP) — Houston second baseman Bill Doran tried hard, very hard, to put 1989, the worst season of his career, into perspective this winter.

"It wasn't the end of the world, I don't know anyone who ever died from a slump," Doran said, the twinkle back in his eyes following an off-season of eradicating 1989 memories.

"Compared to other things going on in society, my problems were very small even though I was probably worse at my job than anybody else in America last year."

Doran may have felt his slump was terminal while it was happening. He hit .266 with eight homers and 49 runs batted in prior to the All-Star break. In the second half, he hit .131, no homers and drove in nine runs.

Doran's dilemma was compounded by his own personality; he's the spark the Astros have relied on in the past because of his intense style of play.

"When the season is over and you see your team is six games out and then you look at your year," Doran said, "you realize if I could have had a normal year, we'd be a lot better off."

"I kind of felt responsible for what happened. I care about that and it was tough for me to swallow."

Doran started the year at a .394 clip and appeared to have fully recovered from off-season arthroscopic knee surgery. From May 16-24 he had his season best hitting streak of nine games, batting .459.

Then the bottom fell out. He went six for 78 between July 17 and Aug. 17 and watched his batting average fall from .261 to .228.

He drove in his final run of the season on Aug. 19, going the final 22 games without an RBI.

"I couldn't accept the fact that was what Bill Doran was capable of doing," Doran said. "If I'm not capable of doing any better, then it's time for me to go home for good."

"It was either get back to normal or quit, and I'm not a quitter."

Doran took a month off after the end of the season, then went to work on his swing, watching video tape, analyzing and working with a batting-T set up in his home.

"It didn't take an Einstein to look at my swing and know it was all wrong," Doran said. "I couldn't swing the way I did last year if I tried. It was a terrible swing."

Doran said he was hooking, or coming out around the ball, thus leaving a hole in his swing that pitchers could exploit.

"The way I was swinging, there were only a few pitches in certain areas that I was able to handle," Doran said. "If you give major league pitchers that big a hole to go to,

they'll get you out and that's what happened."

Doran's career best season was 1987 when he hit .283, played in all 162 games and was named the club's most valuable player by the Houston chapter of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

He played in a career low 132 games the following year, hampered by back, shoulder elbow and hamstring injuries.

It has been suggested that Doran's aggressive style of play could shorten his career if he continues to abuse his body.

"It's the only way I know how to play," Doran said. "If it shortens my career, so be it. I couldn't do it any other way if I tried."

Manager Art Howe expects Doran to return to his normal role this season.

"I know the kind of player Bill Doran is and what you saw the last half of last year wasn't it," Howe said.

Sports Focus: Running

Senior citizen organization runs for science

'50 + '4 Science



Mimi Abernathy (l), a physical therapist at the A.P. Beutel Health Center, jogs across the A&M

Golf Course with her mother, Mary Sicilio (r). Senior citizens now jog in the name of research.

found that older runners, male and female, had about 40 percent more bone mineral — and no more tendencies toward osteoarthritis in their knees — than seniors who don't exercise.

"Before this, it was generally thought that people who spent a lot of time running would invariably damage their knees," said Peter Wood, a biochemist, former Fifty-Plus president and co-author of the study.

Wood said good mineral density was important, especially for women, because it helped prevent problems like dowager's hump or osteoporosis.

Researchers also have found that Fifty-Plus members consumed 40 percent to 60 percent more calories daily than their sedentary peers — but had higher levels of the "good" cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein cholesterol), which has been associated with a relatively low risk of heart disease.

The group's most recent survey found that 85 percent of its members were men. They averaged 59.8 years old, have been running for 13.7 years and covered 26.4 miles per week. Forty-five percent had completed a marathon (26.2 miles) and the vast majority had run at least one 10-kilometer (6.2 miles) race.

Fifty-Plus women averaged 58.8 years, had been running for 9.5 years and covered an average of 21.2 miles a week.

Fifty-Plus now is looking for a corporate sponsor to help increase its membership and attract a wider group of scientists.

"We'd like to expand membership, and get some really good long-term studies going," Johns-gard said. "Bring in some young, hot-shot epidemiologist who can study us until we're all dead. We are too old to do the really long-term stuff."

Several members cited the research emphasis as the reason they joined Fifty-Plus.

"The research they're doing is not only interesting, it's important," said Bob Binzer, 67, of Madison, Ind. "It's inspiring, and you get good advice from the organization."

Binzer was referring to the association's quarterly newsletter, which summarizes research involving members and publishes health and sports-related articles.

Battalion file photo by Frederick D. Joe

Associated Press

Athletes run for many reasons, but members of the Fifty-Plus Runners' Association have found a new one: They run for science.

Of course, the members run for all those other reasons, too: keeping fit, losing weight, improving their heart and lungs, dealing with tension or depression, or becoming or staying com-

petitive.

Their personal goals dovetail nicely with researchers' desires to learn more about the effects of extended physical activity on older people.

"We see this organization as a role model, a pioneering group. It's a whole new lifestyle for older men and women," said Keith Johns-gard, president of Fifty-Plus and a professor at San Jose

State University in California.

Fifty-Plus is not a club. Sponsored by the Center for Research in Disease Prevention at Stanford University, its goal is to gather a list of highly active seniors for researchers to plumb. Fifty-Plus has 1,600 members.

Topics already being studied include how continued physical exercise affects osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. Researchers have

Lady Aggs travel for back-to-back SWC show downs

By VINCE SNYDER
Of The Battalion Staff

The Lady Aggies tennis team will play two Southwest Conference opponents over the next two days, as they compete against Texas Christian and Texas Tech for advancement in the conference standings.

The team will travel to TCU today where the first serve is set for 1:30 at the Mary Potishman Lard Tennis Center. The Lady Horned Frogs are 10-8 and 2-2 in SWC dual match play.

TCU has lost its last two SWC outings as they fell to Houston, 3-6, and Rice 0-9. Texas Christian is ranked #23 in the latest Volvo Tennis/ITCA national rankings.

"We can't let the fact that TCU has lost their last two games affect our play," A&M Coach Bobby Kleinecke said. "We need to remember that they are a ranked team and they play us tough."

After the TCU game, the Lady Aggies will then travel to Lubbock for another 1:30 start at Texas Tech Varsity Courts on Wednesday.

Tech is 16-5 and 1-5 in SWC play. They are coming off a 1-2 weekend with a win against University Texas-San Antonio, 8-1, and two SWC losses to Baylor, 6-3, and to Houston, 8-1.

"Tech always plays us tough on their home courts, and the weather is an equalizer," Kleinecke said. "With Susan Williams injured we are going to have to dig down deep and hope our character carries us through."

The Lady Aggies have improved their record to 8-13 for the year fol-

lowing their 2-1 record this past week. A&M is 3-2 in SWC matches this season, and is ranked #24 in the latest Volvo Tennis rankings.

A&M's last match play was Sunday against Trinity who they defeated by a 5-4 victory.

"We had tremendous singles play from our players," Kleinecke said. "After the one hour rain delay we came out playing very focused tennis."

A&M's Churchwell/Stanely were the only doubles team to win their matches.

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