

## No. 16 Aggs host high-flying Owls

By ALAN LEHMANN  
Of The Battalion Staff

When the Rice Owls fly into Olsen Field this weekend to face No. 16 Texas A&M, they'll have vengeance on their minds.

The teams will meet for a 7 p.m. game Friday and a 2 p.m. doubleheader Saturday.

The Aggies beat Sam Houston 5-2 Tuesday to improve to 32-9 on the season and 4-2 in Southwest Conference play. A&M has beaten Rice 14 consecutive times dating back to 1985.

However, Rice looks tougher this season. The Owls are 25-15 and 5-3 in SWC action. They opened SWC play with a sweep of Baylor in Waco, and took two of three from Texas Christian before dropping two close games to conference-leading Texas.

A&M sophomore third baseman Travis Williams said that Rice will be harder to beat this season than last year, when A&M won 9-2, 4-1 and 6-3 in Houston.

"I think Rice is going to be tough," Williams said. "They've got some good pitching and some guys who can hit. We'll have our hands full."

"They got after us when we went up there last year. It was tough for us. These



Trey Witte (25) tags SHSU's John Carmichael out at second base in Tuesday's 5-2 A&M win.

Photo by Scott D. Weaver

### SWC Standings

Team	SWC Record
Texas (32-10)	5-0
Arkansas (28-5)	5-1
Texas A&M (32-9)	4-2
Rice (25-15)	5-3
Houston (29-13)	5-4
Baylor (24-14)	2-7
Texas Tech (24-18)	2-7
TCU (22-16)	1-5

are going to be three crucial games, so we're going to have to just get up and get after it."

Coach Mark Johnson agreed, citing Rice's showing against Texas earlier this year.

"The thing we're most worried about is that they're pitching the ball real well," Johnson said. "They're playing solid defense and are putting the ball in play. Against Texas, they had some opportunities to win the ball game — they outhit Texas."

Rice dropped a pair of games to Texas 2-1 and 5-2, and the third game was canceled because of rain. In the 2-1 loss, Rice starting pitcher John Polasek almost outdueled Texas ace Kirk Dressendorfer.

"They're a team that's destined to try to make something happen in this conference," Johnson said. "They feel like they're loaded, and they have a chance to beat us. It'll be a tough series for us because of the type of ball club we have."

"We have a good ball club, but we're not going to score a lot of runs, which means we can't afford to make little mistakes. Every inning, we're going to have to hook up well and concentrate well, the pitchers are going to have to do a good job and not give them the edge with a walk or a hit or anything."

So far this season, the Aggie pitching staff hasn't given up a lot of either. A&M pitchers have a combined .260 earned run

average and are allowing opposing hitters a weak .206 batting average.

Sophomore Ronnie Allen will pitch Friday for the Aggies. The righthander is 5-1 with a 1.75 ERA this season. Allen has been dominating, allowing only 41 hits and 17 walks in 62 innings.

Lefthander Rich Robertson will work the first game of Saturday's twinbill, and southpaw Pat Sweet will pitch the nightcap.

Robertson has been overpowering this season. The junior from Waller hurled complete-game shutouts at Texas Tech and Baylor to raise his season record to 7-0. His

ERA is a sparkling 1.09, and he's struck out 76 batters in only 58 innings, while allowing only 26 hits.

Sweet is 4-3 with a 4.39 overall ERA. The senior from South Gate, Calif. has shown good control, walking only 18 batters in 56 innings.

"It looks like in the Southwest Conference this year, more than the other years I've been here, it's going to be a dogfight," Johnson said. "Anybody can beat anybody, and there's been a lot of close ballgames. It looks like it's going to be that kind of conference race."

## Crenshaw finds 'Little Ben' putter

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — The 50-foot putt went dead into the hole like there was a homing device inside the ball.

Caddy Carl Jackson turned to Ben Crenshaw and told his Masters boss of 16 years: "I think 'Little Ben' is letting us know he wants to be in on the action."

"Little Ben," held hostage for almost four weeks by a thief, is not only back but the magic putting blade of former champion Crenshaw is being brought off the bench as a starter on Thursday in the 54th Masters at the Augusta National Golf Club.

The decades-old putter, a Wilson 8802, was stolen out of Crenshaw's golf bag after the Doral tournament.

For 27 days, the putter that helped Crenshaw win the 1984 Masters was a pawn in a quick buck scheme. Crenshaw offered a reward of \$2,000, no questions asked. There were no takers.

"I was worried, real worried," Crenshaw said. "I didn't know how I was going to play the Masters without it. Nowhere in the world of golf is putting such a major part of the game as it is at the Masters. I was just sick about it. I thought the putter was gone forever."

It's the same putter that Crenshaw used to hole a 60-footer on the 10th green six years ago, sending a message to the field that it was his year to win the green jacket.

But where had the putter gone which was the only club stolen out of Crenshaw's bag? Crenshaw's missing putter report to the police was going unanswered.

Suddenly, magically, it was returned to Crenshaw last weekend. It was the longest of longshots the way it happened.

"The friend of an aspiring tour professional recognized it for what it was and got it to me," Crenshaw said. "I offered him \$2,000 but he wouldn't take a dime. He said the putter had been sold and resold probably three times."

Crenshaw had worked for weeks trying to break in a new blade, a "Cleveland Classic" which looks a lot like the Wilson.

"I was starting to putt pretty good with the Classic and decided not to rush putting Little Ben back into the lineup until Tuesday," Crenshaw said. "Then that little devil let me know he was ready for the varsity."

Crenshaw has been using the putter since high school.

"I bet I've seen 200 Wilson models but this one is special, it just feels different," Crenshaw said.

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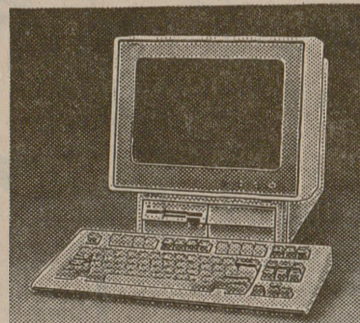
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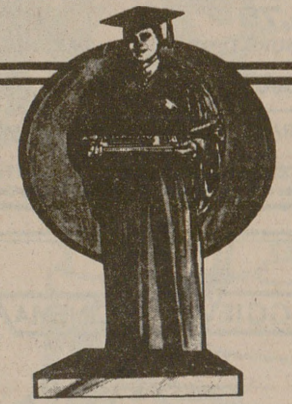
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