

Hot-pitching Aggs hope to roast Frogs

Home cookin' to be served from mound

By ALAN LEHMANN
Of The Battalion Staff

The hot-pitching Texas A&M baseball team hosts Texas Christian this weekend in a key Southwest Conference matchup.

The series opens with a 7 p.m. game at Olsen Field and closes with a 2 p.m. doubleheader Saturday.

Ranked 12th in the ESPN/Collegiate Baseball poll, the Aggies (40-11 and 8-4 in SWC play) come into the weekend with a new record to their credit. The A&M pitching staff has already thrown 12 shutouts this season, and has nine games remaining.

The 1979 team turned in 11 goose eggs and featured future major-league pitchers Mark Thurmond, Steve Davis and Mark Ross.

Although the Frogs are 3-9 in SWC action, A&M coach Mark Johnson said he isn't taking them lightly. The Horned Frogs beat the Aggies 4-2 in the series opener last year in Fort Worth.

"We are not going to overlook TCU," Johnson said. "They're a good, scrappy ballclub. If they get some hits to fall in, they could beat us all three times."

The Aggies looked good Tuesday night as they thrashed the Texas Southern University Tigers 6-0 and 9-0 in a late twinbill.

In the nightcap, Tim Holt was 2-for-3 — both doubles — with three runs batted in. Six pitchers combined on the shutouts that topped the record.

Holt was switched from his usual leadoff slot to ninth in the batting order. He said that he didn't mind



Battalion file photo by J. Janner

Junior pitcher Rich Robertson will take his 9-0 record on the mound in the first game of Saturday's doubleheader with TCU.

and proved it by sparking the Aggies to 18 hits in the doubleheader.

"I don't mind the switch," Holt said. "I'll do anything that I need to do to help the team."

Holt, who was hitless in the lead-off role in the Texas series last weekend, said he accepted Johnson's decision. He added that batting ninth helps him get more fastballs.

Johnson said the change is not necessarily permanent.

"It will depend on how things go in practice," Johnson said. "I will be looking at a lot of players this weekend."

Johnson said injured right fielder Dan Robinson will get his doctor's approval to practice Monday. Although Robinson will be limited in

his motions, he has been taking batting practice since last Monday.

One thing that is set is the Aggie pitching rotation for the weekend.

Ronnie Allen (6-2, 2.00 ERA) will face Britt Shoptaw (5-6, 3.56 ERA) Friday night.

Allen lost to Texas ace Kirk Dresendorfer last Friday 5-1. It wasn't Allen's fault, however, as he retired the first nine Longhorns he faced. His defense fell apart when the game was on the line, and A&M couldn't recover from the four-run Texas fourth inning.

Rich Robertson (9-0, 1.50) will face Jared Shope (6-3, 6.79) in Saturday's opener.

Robertson, who beat Texas 5-3 Saturday, is closing in on the A&M season strikeout record. He already has 91 K's in 72 innings and is currently in third place. Clint Thomas holds the record with 109 whiffs in 109 innings in 1976.

Pat Sweet (5-4, 4.04) will throw against David Bentancourt (6-3, 4.82) in the nightcap.

Sweet lost a 2-1 heartbreaker to the Longhorns Sunday. He held Texas to one run through eight frames, the Aggies gave him almost no run support and he lost when he gave up a ninth-inning single to David Lowery.

Johnson gives credit to pitching coach Jim Lawler for keeping the Aggie team ERA down to 2.43 on the season. Six of the nine A&M pitchers have an ERA lower than three, and four of the 12 shutouts have been combined efforts.

In the absence of Robinson, who led the team in several offensive categories for two weeks after he left the lineup, David Rollen and Travis Williams lead the Aggies at the plate.

Rollen, a junior transfer from Panola Junior College, is hitting .310 with seven home runs and 32 RBI. He leads the team with 13 doubles and six game-winning RBI.

Williams, a sophomore third baseman, has a team-leading eight home runs to go with his .307 average. He leads the team with 38 RBI and 31 runs scored.

SWC netters prepare for conference tourney

From Staff and Wire Reports

The Texas A&M men's tennis team will need all its strength this weekend as it enters the Southwest Conference Championship Tournament this weekend in Houston. Hosted by Rice at the Jake Hess Tennis Center, the tournament features all eight SWC tennis teams.

The 17-6 Aggies finished the regular season 3-4 in conference play, clinching fourth place to face Texas Tech in the first round of competition Friday at 1:30 p.m.

Earlier in the season, A&M crushed the then Volvo/Intercollegiate Tennis Coaches Association 24th-ranked Red Raiders 8-1 in College Station. The sole Aggie loss came in a close No. 1 doubles competition when the team of senior Gustavo Espinosa and sophomore Blake Barsalou fell to Tech's Matt Jackson and Alan Christopher 6-1, 6-7, 6-4.

"We beat Tech earlier this season, but it's hard to beat them twice in the same year," head coach David Kent said.

A&M hopes it can count on its No. 1 and 2 singles players seniors Shawn O'Donovan and Gustavo Espinosa to keep them in the single-elimination tournament, playing their last SWC matches of their colle-

giate careers.

O'Donovan has compiled a 17-3 overall record this season and is 5-3 in the conference. Rated 48th in the Volvo/ITCA's latest rankings, O'Donovan faces Matt Jackson of Tech whom he defeated 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 when the two teams played in the regular season. With continued impressive play, a bid for the NCAA Championships next month is not far from O'Donovan's grasp.

The 16-7 Espinosa has a 4-3 conference record and is on a winning streak. Winning six of his last seven matches, Espinosa faces Red Raider Fabio Walker at the No. 2 singles position this weekend.

Aggie freshman Scott Phillips could be a solid anchor for the team at the No. 6 singles spot with a 15-3 season record, 4-1 in the conference. Phillips has finished the regular season strong, defeating all opponents in his last eight matches.

"We've had a lot of positives this season like Shaun O'Donovan playing so well and Scott Phillips coming on so strong at No. 6 singles," Kent said. "We're excited about the tournament."

The winner of the A&M/Tech match will go on to face the winner of the Texas and Baylor match. The Longhorns have the No. 1 position in the conference and are undefeated in SWC play.

Houston's Olajuwon atop list of six players fined by NBA

NEW YORK (AP) — Six players were fined \$10,750 by the NBA Thursday for their roles in separate incidents in games the past week.

The largest fine was \$5,000 imposed on Houston's Akeem Olajuwon for pushing Sacramento's Greg

Kite in the face with both hands during a game at Houston Tuesday night. Olajuwon was ejected after the third quarter incident.

The fines were assessed by Rod Thorn, the league's vice president for operations.

Nuggets send Rocket hopes plummeting with OT win

HOUSTON (AP) — Denver's Lafayette Lever attempted only two 3-point baskets Thursday night, but he sank both of them and that was enough to beat the Houston Rockets in overtime 130-127.

Lever launched a 3-point shot with 4.9 seconds to go in regulation to force overtime, and his 3-point basket with 58 seconds left in overtime put the Nuggets ahead for good.

"Yeah, I'm the hero tonight but there are going to be nights when I miss," Lever said. "I have missed in games in the past."

"When you have the open shots on this team, we take them." Houston was leading 127-125 when Lever hit his go-ahead 3-point basket.

Nuggets coach Doug Moe wanted the 3-point try rather than playing for a tie.

"I felt it was time to take a gamble," Moe said. "We used too much energy not to take a chance to win it right there."

"At the half, I was so excited I couldn't stand it. We could have been blown out. I felt if we could keep it close, we would put the pressure on the home team."

The victory spoiled a career-high 52-point performance by Houston's Akeem Olajuwon, who also had 18 rebounds before fouling out with seven seconds left in the game.

"It seemed like they capitalized on all of our mistakes," Olajuwon said. "Fifty-two points is nice but I'm not really enthused right now."

"Denver doesn't make mistakes down the stretch. They have tremendous confidence shooting from the outside."

Gee receives SWC honors

From Staff and Wire Reports

Bobby Gee of the Texas A&M men's golf team was named Southwest Conference Spring Athlete of the Week.

The 6-0, 165-pound junior from Midland received the individual title at the Southwest Conference Championships, April 14. Gee finished the 54-hole tournament with scores of 76-70-72 for a 2-over-par 218 on the Hills of Lakeway golf course in Aus-

tin. On Tuesday, Gee was selected to the 12-player All-SWC men's golf team.

"With his great tournament win, it's just another positive for him to be selected all-conference," A&M coach Bob Ellis said. "We have struggled a little bit this year and I was pleased to see it close this way with Bobby playing the way he is."

Gee goes on to play in the Southwestern Bell Colonial Tournament next month.

Spurs trounce Utah 102-93, setting record for turnaround

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The significance of victory No. 54 was not lost on San Antonio guard Willie Anderson.

One of only two players back from last year's disastrous 21-61 season, Anderson was all smiles after the Spurs beat Utah 102-93 Wednesday night and moved into a tie for first in the Midwest Division.

The victory gave the Spurs the NBA record for greatest single-season turnaround, a 33-game improvement with two games left to play. Rookie Larry Bird triggered a 32-game turnaround for Boston in 1979-80.

The victory over Utah also broke the Spurs' all-time record for wins in one season.

"It's very special," Anderson said. "Last year was a nightmarish season. When you go through a season that horrible, you expect to go through another one. That makes this one that much sweeter."

Hot-handed heroics in Austin Coody, Douglass lead Legends

AUSTIN, (AP) — Charles Coody scored a hole-in-one and an 18th-hole eagle as he and Dale Douglass combined for a 13-under-par 59 and a 5-stroke lead Thursday in the Legends of Golf.

Coody scored his ace with a 7-iron on the 142-yard third hole and capped his first-round heroics in this better-ball event with a 15-foot putt for an eagle-3 on the 18th hole.

The 1971 Masters champion also scored five birdies at Barton Creek, a new venue for the 13-year-old event that is credited with providing the impetus for the start of golf's Sen-

iors Tour in a dramatic, televised playoff in 1980.

The 59 also tied the tournament 18-hole scoring record, set by Orville Moody and Bruce Crampton in the 1987 event at Onion Creek, a par-70 course.

"I rode him hard, but I won't put him up wet," Douglass said. "Charles played an absolutely great round. It's hard to help somebody shooting 63 on his own ball."

The duo, which had a 60 in the last round of this event a year ago, played the front side in 29, picked up four more birdies on the back

and then pulled away with Coody's 4-iron second shot that set up his eagle putt on the final hole.

Chi Chi Rodriguez scored five of his team's eight birdies, including those on the 17th and 18th holes, as he and Dave Hill put together a 64 and a share of second place.

They were tied with Miller Barber and Tom Shaw, a last-minute replacement for Arnold Palmer. Palmer had to withdraw due to a court appearance in Orlando, Fla.

The defending champions, Al Geiberger and Harold Henning, led a group of four teams tied at 65.

Dallas secures playoff spot in 111-102 win

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Rolando Blackman scored 12 of his 21 points in the third quarter Thursday night as the Dallas Mavericks clinched the sixth seed in the Western Conference playoffs with a 111-102 victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

The Mavericks will face third-seeded Portland in the opening round of the playoffs.

Dallas' Derek Harper scored half of his 18 points in the third period. The backcourt duo combined to hit 16 of 20 shots.

With Blackman and Harper hitting 9 of 10 field goal attempts, Dallas broke a halftime tie, shooting 68.2 percent in the period, and took an 85-74 lead into the fourth quarter.

Dallas built a 26-18 lead with 11:44 to play in the second quarter. Sparked by reserve Richard Anderson, the Hornets rallied to tie the score 52-52 at the half. Anderson capped a 7-2 spurt with a left-handed dunk to give the Hornets their first lead at 35-34 with 7:02 to play in the half.

The Hornets played without starting point guard Tyrone Bogues, who hyperextended his right knee in Charlotte's win over Miami Wednesday night. Dell Curry missed his fourth straight game with a sprained ankle.

Armon Gilliam led the Hornets with 20 points and Anderson had 19.

Coffeehouse

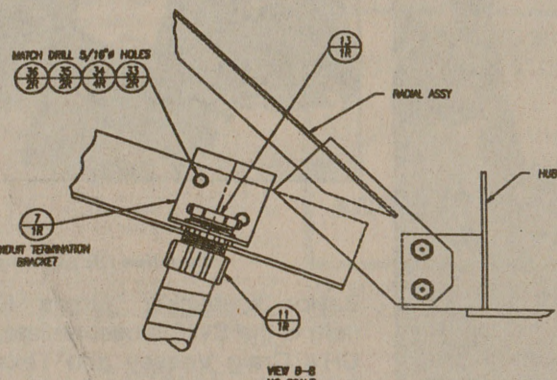
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