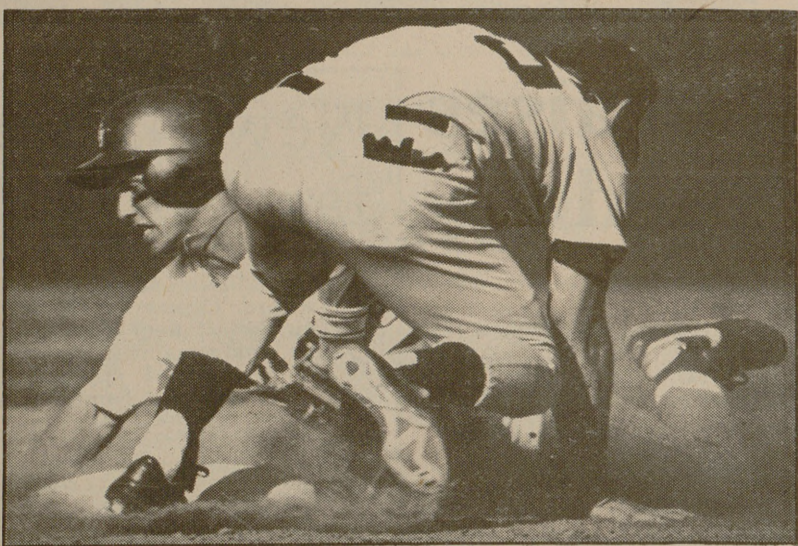
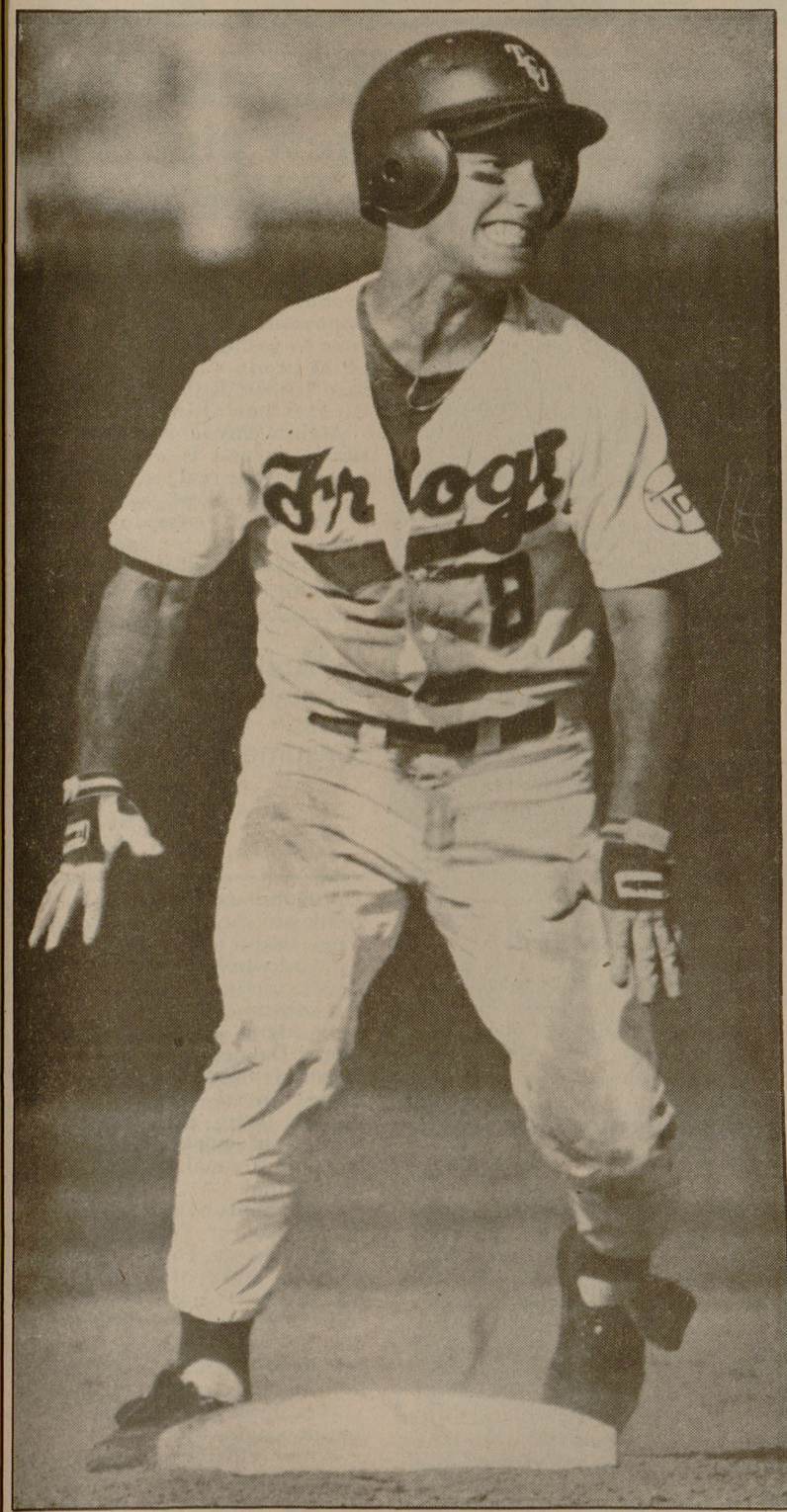


### Just a second too late



Photos by Jay Janner

Texas Christian outfielder Chad Shipes grimaces (left) after being tagged out by A&M second baseman Trey Witte (below) in the second game of Saturday's doubleheader. The Aggies de-

feated the Horn Frogs in the weekend series, 2-1. A&M will go on to face Houston with a game Friday and doubleheader Saturday in the last games of the Aggies' regular season.

#### Baseball America Top 25

Team	Record
1. Miami, Fla.	42-6
2. Stanford	38-7
3. Arizona State	39-11
4. Texas	41-12
5. Georgia	38-8
6. Southern Cal	31-15
7. Florida State	40-10
8. Wichita State	34-11
9. Arkansas	39-8
10. Loyola Marymount	36-10
11. Oklahoma State	36-12
12. Illinois	30-13
13. Texas A&M	42-12
14. UCLA	31-16
15. Georgia Tech	34-13
16. S. Illinois	32-8
17. Iowa	27-8
18. Mississippi State	31-13
19. Washington State	32-14
20. Louisiana State	35-12
21. Cal State Fullerton	25-16
22. San Jose State	35-11
23. East Carolina	38-5
24. Ga. Southern	37-10
25. North Carolina	36-10

## Spurs finding themselves atop NBA Midwest Division mountain

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — It took seven years, but the San Antonio Spurs finally returned to the top of the Midwest Division.

Sunday's 108-93 regular-season ending victory over the Phoenix Suns gave the Spurs the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference and their first division title since 1982-83.

"It's a very emotional time," said Spurs owner Red McCombs. "It means so much."

Particularly to McCombs, who used to own the Denver Nuggets, San Antonio's first-round playoff opponent.

Victory No. 56 gave the Spurs a pair of records that seemed impossible at the end of last season.

San Antonio's previous best record was 53-29 in 1982-83.

The Spurs also surpassed Boston's NBA record for a single-season turnaround, improving by 35 games over last year's dismal 21-61 effort. Boston's turnaround mark was 32 games.

"The most important thing is to go into the playoffs with the momentum we have," said Terry Cummings, who scored a game-high 27 points Sunday as the Spurs won their seventh straight.

Last year San Antonio finished the season with nine consecutive defeats.

The Spurs now have won six division titles, fourth

best in the league since the 1976 ABA-NBA merger. Only the Los Angeles Lakers (11), Boston (8) and Milwaukee (7) have had more success during that span.

"It's a tremendous feeling to win the division," Spurs coach Larry Brown said. "You can't be anything but excited."

Although out-scored by Kevin Johnson 24-9 Sunday, Spurs point guard Rod Strickland was a key to the Spurs' late-season success as they overcame a 4½-game deficit to catch Utah.

Acquired from New York for Maurice Cheeks, Strickland led San Antonio to an 18-6 record in the 24 games he started.

Guard Willie Anderson, one of only two Spurs players left from last year, said this season should silence skeptics.

"Everybody predicted we wouldn't be able to do anything. They said we didn't have enough experience. Well, we proved them wrong," he said.

Spurs center David Robinson, whose impact in his first pro season has him considered a Most Valuable Player candidate in addition to the runaway Rookie of Year, also basked in the victory.

"I've tried to stay focused. The most successful thing for me has been staying focused most of the year," he said.

## Aztecs try to rebuild fallen athletic empire

SAN DIEGO (AP) — San Diego State announced a plan Monday to bail out its deficit-ridden athletic department and explore withdrawing from the Western Athletic Conference to align itself with a league more geographically suited to San Diego.

Among the options under consideration are an application for admission to the Pacific-10 Conference or becoming a football independent with all other sports part of the Big West Conference, which also has 10 schools, including reigning NCAA basketball champion Nevada-Las Vegas.

"We look to these other options as any good managers would look to the future for our enterprise," San Diego State president Tom Day said. "We all seek to create for San Diego and for Aztec athletics the best environment for success. I believe exploring these other options is the wise thing to do."

Day added that any change in affiliation likely would take up to three years.

He said he planned to make a formal presentation to Pac-10 officials in June but stopped short of saying San Diego State was committed to pulling out of the WAC, a league the school joined in 1978.

"We have to take this one step at a time," said Day.

Jeff Hurd, an associate commissioner with the WAC, said the league understood San Diego State was acting to resolve financial problems but hoped they could be solved without a pullout from the conference.

"We prefer that San Diego State remain a member of the WAC because we feel they're an important part of it," Hurd said. He said how the other WAC schools respond to San Diego State's actions will be the subject of discussions during the WAC meetings in Tucson, Ariz., from May 5-8.

The 17-team athletic program at San Diego State is approximately \$600,000 in debt. Its revenues have failed to keep up with expenses, largely because of mediocre records and declining attendance over the past three years by its flagship football and basketball programs.

Athletic director Fred Miller also said the financial problems have been exacerbated by the school's affiliation with the nine-school WAC, the nation's most geographically diverse league with teams stretching from Hawaii to El Paso, Texas.

"We have to get out of this flying conference stuff," said Miller. "We can't afford it."

## Lady 'Horns overtake SMU to lead tourney

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Texas made a strong comeback Monday to soar past Southern Methodist University and take a second-day lead at the Southwest Conference Women's Golf Championship.

The Lady Longhorns trailed SMU by five strokes after the first round, but ended the day 11 strokes ahead of the pack after 36 holes.

The defending three-time SWC champions fired a 392 to push their two-day total to 616. SMU fell back with a 627 total, one stroke ahead of Texas Christian.

Junior Michiko Hattori of Texas shot a course-record 72 to aid the Texas comeback. Hattori, the nation's sixth-ranked collegiate player and tournament's defending champion, sank three birdie putts to jump to the top of the individual standings.

Her score eclipsed the old course record of 73 set by Helen Wright in the mid-1970s.

The final round of play in the women's championship begins Tuesday morning at 8 a.m.

## Atlanta coach resigns amidst controversy for failing to make playoffs

ATLANTA (AP) — Mike Fratello, under fire because his team failed to make the NBA playoffs, resigned Monday as coach of the Atlanta Hawks after seven seasons.

"For the best interests of the Atlanta Hawks and in my best interests, it's probably best for both of us if we part ways at this time," Fratello said at a news conference held with Hawks officials.

Atlanta, plagued by injuries and internal bickering this season, finished 41-41 despite winning six of their last seven games. They failed to make the playoffs for only the second time in Fratello's seven seasons and first in the last five years.

"Today is not a sad day," Fratello, with a career record of 324-250, said. "This is a day of moving on for the two sides."

The news conference followed the team's end-of-the-season meeting at the Omni. There had been speculation that Fratello would be fired, but Hawks president Stan Kasten said the departure was Fratello's decision.

"Mike came to the realization that this would be good for him," Kasten

said. "I support that decision; I agree with him."

Kasten said no decisions have been made about a new coach. Fratello's contract expired when Atlanta ended its season Saturday night with a 130-109 victory over Miami.

"No question this is my most disappointing season," Kasten said after the Miami game. "That this team is not going to be in the playoffs is unbelievable. I'm really having a difficult time with that."

"To think that Cleveland and Milwaukee are in the playoffs with a much worse injury situation than we had, and we're finished tonight. It's very distressing to me."

Doc Rivers, one of several Hawks players who missed playing time with injuries, said, "It's too fresh in my mind. I'm not ready to sort it out."

Dominique Wilkins said it was a slow start.

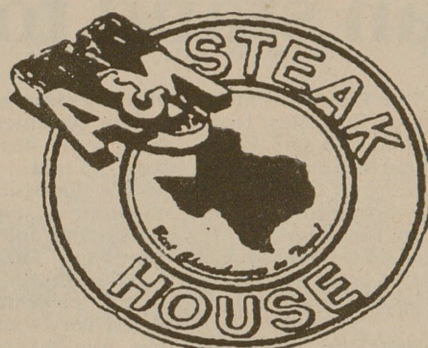
"No doubt in my mind if we played all season the way we played the last two weeks we'd be in the playoffs. If we'd play two more games at any point in the season we'd be in the playoffs."

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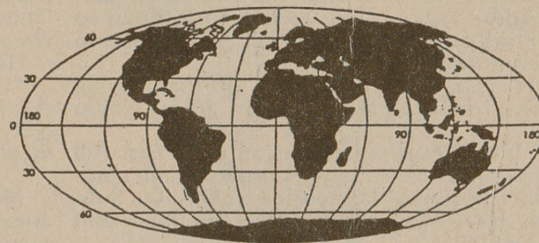
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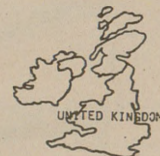
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