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Lady Aggies drop match to SHSU

By **SCOTT WUDEL**
Of The Battalion Staff

HUNTSVILLE — Texas A&M volleyball coach Al Givens says he wishes he had a degree in psychology so he could help his team through the problems they are having on the court.

The Lady Aggies handed Sam Houston State their ninth consecutive win last night, 15-11, 15-5, 15-4.

The Lady Aggies lost their fourth straight match and move to 3-10.

A&M's offense hit the ball long all night and the defense gave the Ladykats many opportunities.

The Aggies as a team posted a .06 percent attack percentage, converting only 29 of 116 kills, with 22 errors.

The Ladykats converted over 28 percent of their kills and kept the Aggie defense diving for balls throughout the match.

"I guess the underlying word is it's just frustrating," Givens said after the game. "I think we have better talent than we show, and we just struggle to arrive at any level of consistency."

Before the Lady Aggies knew, the Ladykats had put eight points on the scoreboard in the first game of the match. The A&M starters appeared tentative and not ready for the SHSU team that was out to win its ninth straight match and improve its record to 17-3.

But A&M cut down on its errors and ran off eight straight points of their own, highlighted by two Diane Robertson blocks. During the streak Givens yelled at his players from the sideline to take one point at a time.

The Lady Aggies grabbed the lead but could not hold it. The error bug hit the Aggies again and the Ladykats gained momentum, running off five straight points to win the game.

A&M never got on track in the next two games. The SHSU defense seemed to stop every Aggie kill that didn't go long.

Amy Cummings and Kim Mitchell made repeated attempts to kill balls into the hole of the Ladykats defense, but most shots landed out of bounds. One resulted in the fifteenth point for the Ladykats.

In the third game, A&M appeared to be getting its game together and playing more relaxed. The Lady Aggies held off SHSU at a 3-3 tie but found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time ... again.

The Ladykats found open spaces in a confused Aggie defense and succeeded in finishing each point.

The Lady Aggies were only able to put one more point on the scoreboard the rest of the way as Ladykats held serve on their last five points of the third game to win the match.

Givens said he was surprised at the Lady Aggies performance last night because the team had practiced well all week and he thought the team was ready after a good pregame warmup.

"We've lost here with better teams than we have now," he said, crediting the Ladykats performance.

"But when you're losing you've got to evaluate and get to look and see why something's going wrong," Givens said.

A&M golfers finish fifth

Texas A&M's men's golf team took fifth place out of eighteen teams Wednesday at The Woodlands Intercollegiate at the Tournament Players Course.

A&M posted a two-day total of 606, after shooting identical 303's on both days of the tournament. The Aggies finished 11 strokes behind champion Houston.

"When the team was playing well they were playing exceptionally," head coach Bob Ellis said. "We weren't rusty, we just weren't playing consistently well."

Agie freshman Marco Gortana led A&M with two rounds of 75 to finish 12th overall. Senior Bobby Gee tied for 18th with two rounds of 76, senior Mark Miller tied for 26th with 77-76=153.

Junior Shane Bertsch tied for 38th with 75-80=155 and sophomore Brent Brown shot a disappointing 86 on Tuesday but came back strong with a 76 yesterday to finish in a tie for 65th.

Bengal's PK thrives on consistency

CINCINNATI (AP) — No big deal, this consecutive-game scoring record. Even Jim Breech says as much.

But there's something to be said for a kicker who has produced in every game of his NFL career, regardless of the competition, the score or the weather.

"When someone gets 300 wins or 3,000 hits, it shows they're not only a great player but they're someone who's been consistent," the Cincinnati Bengals kicker said. "The one thing I would want to be remembered for as a kicker is being someone who was consistent over the years."

That he's been. Since entering the NFL in 1979 with Oakland, Breech has produced at least one point in every one of his games. His 46-yard field goal Sunday in the Bengals' 41-7 victory over New England gave him 152 consecutive games with a score, one more than the mark set by Fred Cox with the Vikings from 1963-73.

Breech's personal streak goes back farther than that. In college at California, he also scored in every game.

"I've scored in every game I've played," Breech said. "I've always had the luxury of playing behind great offensive teams."

That's been true in Cincinnati, which has gone to the Super Bowl twice with Breech as the kicker.

Breech signed with Cincinnati during the 1980 season, two weeks after the Bengals lost to Buffalo 14-0. It was their last shutout of the '80s while Breech was the kicker. They lost 34-0 to Cleveland in 1987, but that was a strike-replacement game.

He was unaware of his streak until it was called to his attention about two years ago. He's also closing in on another personal goal — 1,000 points. He's five shy.

"All of these things are happening together. It's kind of fun," said the 34-year-old Breech. "When I was 27 or 28, I'd say, 'Boy, I'd love to score 1,000. All of a sudden, it's here. That's exciting.'"

Ryan's pitching not reflected in some teammates' efforts

ARLINGTON (AP) — It just doesn't seem right, does it? To look back at Nolan Ryan's incredible season and wonder what might have been.

You think of Ryan and you see Ruben Sierra racing into foul territory to catch the final out of Ryan's record sixth no-hitter on a cool summer night at the Oakland Coliseum. You hear A's manager Tony La Russa talking afterward. Something about how there can be dignity in defeat.

You see Ryan's teammates carrying him off the field and you hear about the bottle of champagne he leaves unopened in his locker while he celebrates with his family over a couple of pizzas back at the hotel.

You see Ryan's 14-year-old son Reese walking with him from the center field bullpen at Milwaukee County Stadium July 31, the night Ryan recorded his 300th victory. Father and son, wearing matching uniforms and matching smiles.

You also can't help but notice the grimaces and gyrations between all those fastballs. You see Ryan stalling for a breather as he tries to overcome the discomfort of a stress fracture in his lower back, a strained Achilles tendon or a tightened hamstring.

You also see Ryan taking a shot off Bo Jackson's bat, one that misses his glove and caroms off his chin, slicing his lower lip with a two-inch gash he can stick his tongue through. He changes his usually white but now red-blotched jersey twice because the blood won't stop pouring out of his mouth.

But you don't see him come out of the game or even call timeout, much to the dismay of the opposing Kansas City Royals. Ryan said he didn't want to "let a little thing like a cut lip keep me from doing my job."

That's Nolan, all right. You'd know him anywhere. "That's what makes this so hard to take," Rangers manager Bobby Valentine said. "Here's a guy who pitches his heart out every time he takes the mound. He keeps us in the game, gives us a lead and we blow it or we don't get any hits."

Like during the last six weeks, when Ryan was pitching like it was 1973 all over again. And his teammates were playing like they were in the minors all over again.

Take Monday night. Ryan takes a no-hitter into the sixth inning against the California Angels, and finally settles for a four-hitter, walking two and striking out 11. He loses 3-2 and his record falls to 13-8.

Ryan has yielded only 12 runs in his last six starts but is 1-1 over that stretch. In his last eight starts, he has a 2.01 ERA but is only 2-2. In those games, the Rangers have scored two or fewer runs five times.

Still, you won't find him criticizing his bullpen or his batters.

"That's just part of it," the 43-year-old Ryan said. "They scored a lot of runs for me early in the year. I won some games early that I didn't pitch as well in."

Ryan said he would like to have some of those games in his victory column, but "you really gotta pay more attention to your consistency. I think the second half I was throwing better and more consistent than the first half, even though my record doesn't show it."

Rafael Palmeiro said the Rangers are frustrated at not getting their ace the support he deserves. "I wish I could figure it out," he said. "It's very frustrating. Frustrating for everybody. He throws a great game and we just don't score."

Rangers pitching coach Tom House quotes Yogi Berra in searching for an answer.

"What was it he said, 'The harder we try, the worse we get?' Something along those lines," House said. "The guy goes out there and gives you everything he's got, day in and day out, and you want to do well for him. Sometimes it just doesn't happen."

"If you go back over his career, this type of thing happens to him a lot."

Ryan will finish his 23rd season Sunday against the A's during fan appreciation day at Arlington Stadium. As of Tuesday, he held the major league lead with 221 strikeouts, despite a May 18-June 5 stint on the disabled list. Opposing batters are hitting a major league low .185 off him.

House talks about how Ryan would've, could've, should've won six more games this year. If only his bullpen could have held onto leads he left them.

In Monday night's loss 3-2 to California, Ryan walked off the field and flung his glove in disgust after the ninth. Then he took a swipe at a water cooler.

"He was angry," House said. "But, here again, he was mad at himself. He sets his standards so high. He will leave the clubhouse tonight, the page is turned. His mental and emotional makeup is equally as strong as his physical makeup."

Ag cross country competes in Virginia

Texas A&M's youthful cross country team will meet some top Eastern competition Saturday morning as they travel to Williamsburg, Va. for the William & Mary Cross Country Invitational.

Head coach Barry Colburn said he's taking his top seven runners to compete against William & Mary, Liberty, North Carolina State and

North Carolina-Wilmington on Saturday.

"We'll be taking a young team to compete against some very talented Eastern teams," Colburn said. "This meet will definitely be a challenge for our squad."

"I'm confident that we will get a great performance from each of the young men this week."

Of the seven running the 8,000-meter race at the Dunbar Farms, four are new to the team. Greg Marmolejo, Tyson Mosley, Jason Reed and Marc Stokes are looking to gain some valuable experience.

Donnie Bodron, Scott Garvin and Ross Stooksberry complete the team and are the only returning members from last year's team.

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