



**CHRIS WHITLEY**  
Assistant Sports Editor

## April showers hit Olsen Field in February

Fans of baseball around these parts probably would disagree with the great poet T.S. Eliot. He thought that "April is the cruellest month," but it just might be February. I'm sure Eliot knew what he was talking about. He just never toured the Brazos Valley during monsoon season.

Rain has plagued the area this year, and it has thrown a wrench into the Aggie baseball schedule. So far, six schedule changes have been made and two road trips have been cancelled in just the first three weeks of the season.

Admittedly, bad weather comes with the territory. The outdoor nature of the sport makes it susceptible to its share of rain in most baseball venues. Unless you put a fiberglass shell around the field and call it the OlsenDome, there's not much that can be done.

On the other hand, the situation was worsened when the season was moved up to the first weekend of February. The reason for this was to allow for the increase in Southwest Conference games from 21 to 36.

The increase in games was because of Arkansas' departure from the SWC — another reason to blame Arkansas.

The rain cut down the Aggies' practice time, which might account for their sluggish beginning to the season. It was the cancellation of the opener against Stephen F. Austin that forced A&M to start off the season in a conference game on the road, which is not the ideal way to start a season.

Consequently, they won only one out of three games and started the year on a down note.

A&M rebounded very well last weekend against Houston, but then in the final game of the series, the rain came pouring down. The Cougars came back and took the lead before the Aggies rallied late to win after the clouds had cleared.

It was intriguing to see the Olsen Rowdies show up in full force for the first game of Saturday's doubleheader, which incidentally was delayed three hours because of rain from the night before.

They stayed for an exciting finish when Rob Trimble's base hit won the game in the last inning. Then, the majority of the crowd left. Did they know that there was another game?

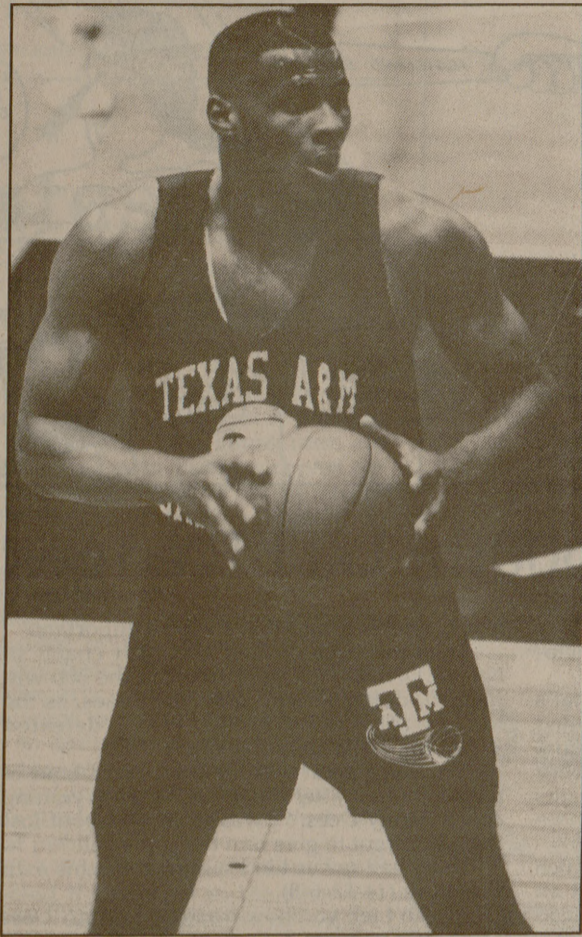
They may have, but the Aggie faithful saw the rain clouds coming.

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# Johnson returns to A&M practice

## Freshman ready to play rest of season

By Chris Whitley  
The Battalion



RANDALL NICHOLS/The Battalion

Damon Johnson took part in his first official practice Thursday after sitting out six weeks with a foot injury.

The A&M basketball team has had to live without Damon Johnson for six weeks. Even tougher, Damon Johnson has had to live without the team.

Yet Thursday brought encouraging signs that the two will be reunited soon.

Johnson, the 6-foot-5 freshman forward, had his first official practice since a foot injury sidelined him for most of the Southwest Conference season.

A&M's leading scorer suffered a deep bruise in his left foot against SMU on January 11. He played in the Aggies next game against Texas three days later, but was forced to leave the game at halftime after the injury became more serious.

Johnson only went through warmups during the practice session Thursday, but he said it was a good feeling to be able to run and jump again on a basketball court.

"It feels great," Johnson said. "I was kind of nervous, especially with the layups. I felt if I got a few layups, I'd be all right."

"After I got my first layup as fast as I could and as hard as I could and found that I didn't feel any pain, then I didn't have a worry in my mind anymore."

### Before the Injury

**SWC (3 games)**  
Scoring average.....17.0 ppg.  
High game.....25 pts vs. TCU  
Field goal percentage.....60 %  
Rebound average.....12.7 rpg.

**Season (13 games)**  
Scoring average.....16.8 ppg.  
High game.....27 pts vs. Auburn  
Field goal percentage.....54.9 %  
Rebound average.....8.8 rpg.

A&M head coach Tony Barone said he is glad to see Johnson back in uniform, yet he still handles the player's situation delicately.

"The injury is an injury that we have to be very careful with," Barone said. "The stress fracture is not something that we take lightly. It's not something that we want to rush him back to, in terms of playing."

Barone emphasized that the fracture has healed and has some amount of strength, but Johnson has not been given a medical clearance to play. The Aggies will play the University of Houston in Holfienz Pavilion tomorrow at 2 p.m., but Johnson is not expected to see action.

"He will not play Saturday," Barone said. "Sunday, we will look at practice with him and make a de-

cision after the practice whether he'll be available for the rest of the season or not."

In the last month and a half, Johnson has sat on the bench and witnessed the 5-18 Aggies lose nine of the last 11 games. The Aggies were 3-10 before he was sidelined.

"It's been really frustrating," Johnson said. "We've been coming really close in these games, and you know you can't do anything about it because of a fractured foot."

"You know that you could have made a difference in the game. That's probably the most frustrating feeling of all."

Barone said it has been difficult for Johnson to watch the action from the bench, but he said the freshman has tried to remain an active member of the squad.

"I think he's handled it amazingly well," Barone said. "Inwardly, he's a kid who's very serious-minded. This has hurt him dramatically — not being able to play."

"What we did was we essentially made him come to practice, and we made him go on most of the road trips. Because we felt that if you separate him from the team, you start feeling sorry for yourself."

Pains actually started developing in Johnson's foot in the Aggies' game

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## A&M men's tennis defends 6-0 record

### Kent hopes Aggies respond to SWT pressure

The Battalion News Services

The Texas A&M men's tennis team puts its six-game winning streak on the line this afternoon when the Aggies take on Southwest Texas State University at the Omar Smith Tennis Center.

The matches begin at 1:30 p.m. With a win, the Aggies would improve their record to 7-0, their best start ever under coach David Kent.

Kent ranks seventh in career wins among active NCAA Division I coaches. He said the reason for the Aggies quick start has been their response in pressure situations.

"These guys raise their level of play

up a notch when the match is on the line," Kent said. "There's not an ounce of quit in this team, and that keeps us in every match."

"We've got experience at the top of the lineup and talent throughout — that's a good combination."

The Aggies No. 1 doubles team of Mark Weaver and Bernardo Martinez have performed especially well in pressure matches.

Three of the Aggies victories have been decided in the tandems doubles match. This season, the combination is 4-0 in dual match competition.

"Mark and Bernardo haven't been playing together for very long, but they already have an uncanny feel for each other," Kent said. "They seem to know what the other is thinking and they're very comfortable together on the court."

A&M won't have much time to rest after today's match. The Aggies host the University of Northeast Louisiana Saturday at 1 p.m. at the Smith Tennis Center.



David Kent

## Three ranked teams await A&M in Minnesota tourney

### Baseball team risks six-game winning streak

By Doug Foster  
The Battalion

Head coach Mark Johnson and his Texas A&M baseball team will finally be able to compete in a weekend series where rain cancellation is not even a concern.

Johnson and his squad are traveling to Minneapolis, Minn., this weekend to participate in the Oscar Mayer Baseball Classic, which is held in the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

A&M will open the classic today against Mississippi State, and will take on Florida State on Saturday. The Bulldogs are ranked eighth in the nation by Baseball America, and fourth by Collegiate Baseball. The Seminoles are fourth in Baseball America and are the No. 6 team in the Collegiate Baseball poll.

The Aggies will complete the weekend Sunday by taking on the host team University of Minnesota. The Golden Gophers are ranked 23rd in the Colle-

giate Baseball poll. Johnson said his team has everything to gain by playing the tough competition.

"It's real exciting to be going to the Metrodome," he said. "We will be playing all ranked teams and they are all teams that we might not play otherwise, and I think playing teams as solid as these will just make us a better ball club."

The coach also said it will be nice to know the Aggies will be able to complete the tournament despite the weather conditions.

"No matter what happens we will play, and that is good," Johnson said. "The weather is always good in the dome. I think the only change our team may have trouble adjusting to is the roof, because I understand it's sometimes tough to find balls looking into that roof. There are a lot of unknowns about going

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92¢ Nachos

**N THE RUTZ**

### TENSION HEADACHE?

Individuals with moderate to severe Tension Headaches wanted to participate in a 4-hour headache relief research study with an investigational medication in tablet form. Flexible hours. \$75 incentive for individuals who are chosen and complete the study. Daily, till 6:30 776-0400. Weekends 361-1500.

### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STUDY

Individuals either on or off high blood pressure medication needed to participate in a high blood pressure research study involving an investigational oral medication and an investigational intravenous medication. \$600 incentive paid to those chosen to participate upon completion of the research study.

### SKIN INFECTION STUDY

Individuals age 13 and older wanted to participate in a research study for bacterial skin infections such as: abscess, infected burns, boils, infected hair follicles, impetigo, and others. Investigational oral antibiotic in capsule form. \$100 incentive for those chosen who complete the study.

### ASTHMA STUDY

WANTED: Individuals, age 12 and older, with mild to moderate asthma to participate in a clinical research study for 15 weeks with an investigational medication in capsule and inhaler form. \$400 - \$500 incentive for those completing the study.

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