

ANTHONY ANDRO
Sportswriter

Fab 5 too much for Final Four

Now that the field of 64 basketball teams has been narrowed down to four teams, predictions become a little easier. Or do they?

Duke is the odds-on favorite to win the tournament. They have been the best team in the nation all year and have made it to the Final Four for the sixth time in seven years. But a back-to-back champion? Let's hope not.

Sure the game last Saturday night against Kentucky was one of the best games in years, but the game also showed that Duke has some faults. They can be beat and the Wildcats almost proved that.

If it wasn't for a Grant Hill pass to Christian Laettner, it would be the Wildcats in the Final Four and not the Blue Devils. Laettner hit the turnaround fadeaway jumper from the free throw line and Duke escaped with a one-point victory.

And what about Laettner? Whether or not you think Laettner will be the next Danny Ferry or Jay Bilas and flop in the NBA, you have to give him some credit. He has been a great college basketball player for four years and being named a two-time All-American has proved that.

But will he be enough to carry Duke to their second straight national title. Maybe not? Duke still has to get by Indiana before it makes it to the title game. This could be a title game in itself. There is a lot being made of the fact that this will be a coaching dual between the mentor, Indiana coach Bobby Knight, and the pupil, Duke coach Mike K.

But the only factor that will decide who wins Saturday's game is the

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Aggies handcuff Mavericks

A&M pitcher Clemons puts away UTA

By Doug Foster
The Battalion

As Texas A&M starting pitcher Chris Clemons breezed through the batting order of the University of Texas-Arlington on Tuesday, all he asked of his offense was a few runs to put the game away.

After four innings of silence from the Aggie bats, Clemons got more than he needed from his teammates. A&M exploded for two runs in the fifth and six runs in the sixth to turn a pitching duel into an 8-2 Aggie victory at Olsen Field.

The freshman from McGregor pitched seven innings and gave up only three hits in helping the Aggies move to 24-11 on the season. The Mavericks fall to 23-9.

Clemons, who is 5-1 on the season, said all he had to do was keep his control and his defense would be behind him.

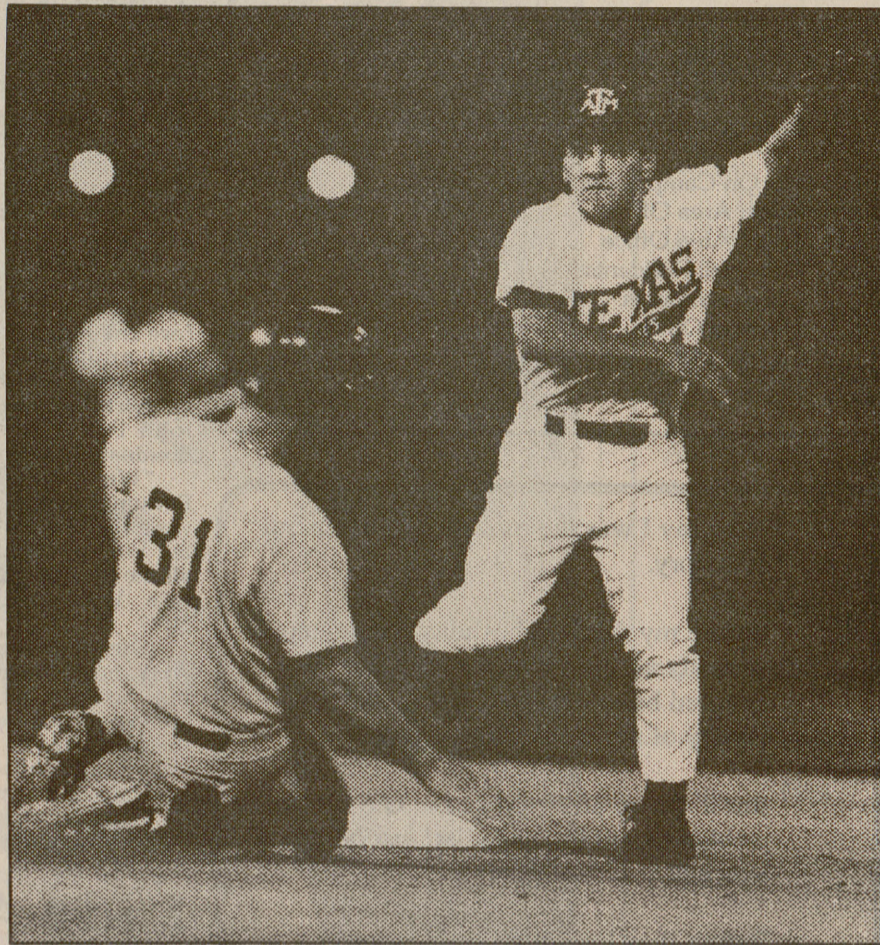
"I just felt like I needed to throw strikes and go right after them," Clemons said. "When I did, my defense was there to come through for me on the hard hit balls. It's a lot easier when you have a defense like that behind you. Our infield is second to none."

The Mavericks never sent more than four batters to the plate in a single inning against Clemons. Freshman Trey Moore relieved Clemons in the eighth, and Jason Hutchins pitched the ninth for the Aggies.

A&M head coach Mark Johnson said Clemons has been improving in each performance. He said Clemons could start to challenge for the final starting position in Southwest Conference games.

"Chris is really moving up," Johnson said. "That third spot is not solidified yet, and we need someone who can get out there and last. He's starting to move up the ladder, and he's for sure in as a long relief man right now."

"He's throwing strikes and keeping the ball down real well, so he could start



KARL STOLLEIS/The Battalion

A&M's Eric Gonzalez attempts to turn a double play Tuesday night in the Aggies 8-2 victory over UT-Arlington at Olsen Field. Gonzalez, who normally plays left field, got the out at second base before UTA's Brad Dodge could reach the base.

to compete for that final spot," Johnson added.

The win was also highlighted by the return of the Aggies leading hitter, right fielder Scott Smith. Smith, who had missed 17 games with a broken bone in his right foot, made his return a pleasant one by going 1-for-3 with a two RBI'S, both of which came on a two-run homer to left. That homerun proved the third and fourth runs, which proved to be the game winners before UTA came back to score two in the final inning.

The Aggies broke open a scoreless tie in

the fifth when Brian Thomas reached on a fielder's choice. Second baseman Eric Gonzalez then singled to right, moving Thomas to third, and Thomas scored after Maverick right fielder Charley Llewellyn's errant throw past third base. Gonzales later scored on a wild pitch. The game was put out of reach in the sixth when A&M rallied for six runs. Catcher Rob Trimble led off the inning with a single to right. Smith then took an 0-1 pitch from UTA starter Eric Kunz

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Smith's return boosts team

By Doug Foster
The Battalion

Texas A&M right fielder Scott Smith gave his teammates a taste of what they had been missing during the last 17 games on Tuesday - his clutch hitting and RBI capabilities.

Smith, who had been out of the Aggie lineup since Mar. 2 with a broken bone in his right foot, made his triumphant return to Olsen Field Tuesday against the University of Texas-Arlington. His reentry into the lineup provided an instant impact as Smith went 1-for-3 with two RBIs, both of which came on a sixth-inning home run.

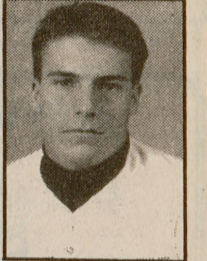
That home run proved to be the game-winning hit as it scored the third and fourth runs for the Aggies. Smith's performance also moved his team-leading batting average to .366.

Smith said he was not looking for the home run, but that he just made good contact with the pitch, and it worked out for the best.

"I was waiting for a pitch I could hit well, and he just hung one," he said. "I wasn't trying to hit it out, I just turned on it. I knew it was out, I was just hoping that it would stay fair."

In Smith's first at bat of the evening, A&M head coach Mark Johnson called on him to lay down a sacrifice bunt. Smith said that helped him to get comfortable and get rid of the butterflies of returning.

"My first at bat, I think coach just wanted to get me involved in the game by having me bunt," he said. "That relaxed me a little bit, so I'm glad I got into that



Smith

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NEW WORLD. NEW EUROPE. NEW DEFENSE?

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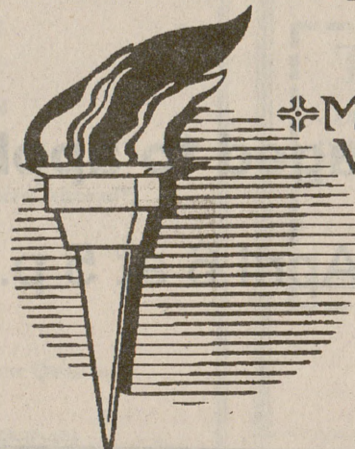
Tamás Katona, Under-Secretary of State of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry.

Vitaly Shlykov, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee on Defense of the Russian Federation

Jean-René Gehan, Counselor for Political and Military Affairs, French Embassy.

Dr. Antoni Kaminski, Director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs.

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