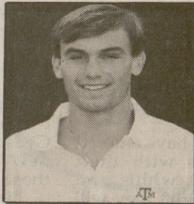


Tennis team faces No. 20 Rice, No. 2 TCU



CHRIS WHITLEY
Assistant Sports Editor

By Chris Whitley
The Battalion



Weaver

The flourishing Texas A&M tennis team may never have any bigger challenges than the two that await at Omar Smith Tennis Center this weekend.

The fate of their Southwest Conference and national contention will be on the line when the Aggies take on 20th-ranked Rice today at 1:30 p.m. and second-ranked Texas Christian on Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

A&M, who has a 15-3 record and a 3-0 SWC mark, is ranked 16th in the nation in the Volvo/Tennis Collegiate poll, their highest ranking since 1985. A win over both Rice and TCU will clinch the Aggies a tie for their first ever SWC team championship.

Aggie head coach David Kent said his team is cautiously optimistic about the opportunities that this weekend could bring.

"Like Thomas Jefferson said, 'There's no such thing as security, only opportunity,'" Kent said. "We've got opportunity right in front of us."

"We're in a position to win the conference and get invited to the NAAs. A lot of good things can happen."

However, Kent said defeating two of the best teams in the country, let alone the confer-

ence, will be quite a chore.

"Actually, Rice is pretty dog-gone good," Kent said. "TCU's just awesome. They could win the NCAA."

"We're looking forward to playing this weekend. You get to this point in the season, and it's all cake. But now, your destiny is in your own hands, so you just need to get out and play."

Rice is 7-6 on the season and 1-3 in the conference. The Owls are led by Steve Campbell, who was one of the top players in the SWC until he suffered an injury.

Kent said A&M must have a good performance from ace Mark Weaver against Campbell, along with the other singles players, to win.

"They've got very good depth," he said. "They're not

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A&M must stay with tradition, sweep 'Horns

The last time the Aggies and the Longhorns met in Olsen Field in 1991, Texas A&M shocked the baseball world with a three-game sweep of Texas - their first in 25 years.

The last time the Aggies and the Longhorns met this season, however, Texas returned the favor by winning two of three, including a whopping 13-2 defeat in the series finale.

This weekend, the two reunite in College Station as the top two teams in the Southwest Conference. Can Olsen work its magic charm again?

It better. Nothing else is working. A&M enters its most important series of the year in an overall slump. The team made the trip to Lubbock to play Texas Tech last weekend, but their bats didn't.

Not only did the Aggies lose two of three, but they managed only two runs the entire weekend. And only 13 hits.

The one game they did win was the series opener, and that was in ten innings, 1-0. The bats were as cold as the Lubbock weather.

Aggie ace Jeff Granger pitched fairly well against the Red Raiders, but Friday he will need a much better performance than the one he gave in the first Aggies-Longhorns meeting this season.

In the series opener in Austin on March 21, Granger gave up eight runs and two home runs in seven innings. It was a bad night for him despite the Aggies' eventual victory in ten innings.

For the ace pitcher in the rotation to have that kind of game is unsettling to a team fighting to stay in the conference race. He needs to deliver a strong outing Friday to give the Aggies some momentum through the weekend and, if anything, to rest the bullpen.

Also, they must beware of the offensive onslaught that comes with the return of Brooks Kieschnick. By himself, he could provide the Longhorns with enough runs to win if the Aggies continue hitting like they are.

Kieschnick was out for four weeks due to an injured ankle, and he still leads the Southwest Conference with 42 RBIs! Aggie pitching beware.

He leads a Longhorn batting order that A&M coach Mark Johnson said was as good an offensive Texas team as he had ever seen. Can you blame him? They scored 30 runs against the Aggies in Austin.

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Texas Longhorns vs. Texas A&M Aggies SHOWDOWN AT THE OLSEN CORRAL

Longhorns in town for battle of Texas baseball powers

By Anthony Andro
The Battalion

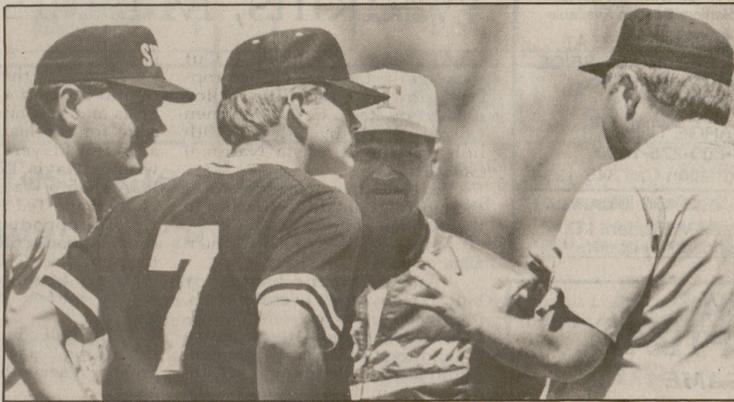
Texas A&M junior second baseman Eric Gonzalez may have best summed up the feelings of the Aggie baseball team going into this weekend's series against the University of Texas.

"I just hate those guys," Gonzalez said. "I just want to rub their faces in the dirt."

So goes the Aggie-Longhorn rivalry. A&M, 25-13, 12-9 in Southwest Conference play, hosts the first-place Texas Longhorns this weekend in a crucial series at Olsen Field.

"For a championship, it's pretty much a make or break weekend," A&M shortstop Jason Marshall said. "If we get down any further, we'd have to pray for a miracle."

"This weekend, we have to take of



Texas A&M coach Mark Johnson and Texas coach Cliff Gustafson discuss last year's bench-clearing brawl in Game Two of the series at Olsen Field.

HUY NGUYEN/The Battalion

business." The Longhorns come into the series with a 31-8 record. They are 18-4 in

SWC play and hold a 5 1/2 game lead over the Aggies. Senior third baseman Travis

Williams said this is the season's most critical series.

"It's the major point in our season, right here," Williams said. "We need to take three from them to get back in the race. We don't want to play for second place."

When the two teams met the first time in March, the Aggies beat the Longhorns 11-9 in the opener before dropping the next two games 8-1 and 13-2.

The A&M bats have been silent in recent conference play.

The Aggies have scored just 23 runs in their last eight SWC games and the team is hitting just .261 for the conference season.

The recent hitting slump has the Aggie players scratching their heads.

"It's hard to explain," said Marshall. "I think all teams go through a spot where they are not hitting. Hopefully, we have strong enough people to battle back and battle through it."

A&M junior Mike Hickey could provide some much needed hitting to the Aggies lineup. After injuring his hand earlier this season, Hickey has missed

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Young Aggies to run weekend A&M Relays

By Steve O'Brien
The Battalion

The 1992 Texas A&M track team, filled with freshman and sophomores, has matured quickly this season, coach Ted Nelson said.

But there's still some growing to do.

The Aggies host the Texas A&M Relays this Saturday at the

Anderson Track and Field Complex. Field events begin at 1 p.m. and running events begin at 5:30 that evening.

"We started out the year as a very young team," Nelson said. "We have a lot of freshman and sophomores on our team. We're winding down on the year, and we can't use that excuse anymore."

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Weekend Schedule

Events happening this weekend on the A&M campus.

Friday
Men's tennis vs. Rice 1:30
Baseball vs. UT 7:00
Harlem Globetrotters 7:30

Saturday
Men's tennis vs. TCU 1:30
A&M Relays All day
Baseball vs. UT 7:00

Sunday
Baseball vs. UT 2:00

Football team injury prone

Slocum holds scrimmage minus starters

By Steve O'Brien
The Battalion

After eight days of spring practice, two things are obvious about the Texas A&M football team. Injuries are making it hard for head coach R.C. Slocum to assess his team. And if next season's starting quarterback is among the four players fighting for the position now, he's keeping a low profile.

In a scrimmage on Thursday, the Aggies were without injured defensive linemen Sam Adams and Pat Henry. Both starting offensive guards from last year, Tyler Harrison and John Ellisor, were sidelined with injuries, and wide receiver Brian Mitchell is out with a broken foot.

"I was pleased with the scrimmage, although we had to control the tempo of it because we've got a bunch of injuries

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