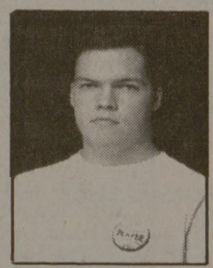


## Stewart keeps Athletics alive for another day

Dave Stewart gave the Oakland Athletics a reprieve Monday afternoon against the Toronto Blue Jays with his best start in recent memory, allowing two runs over nine spectacular innings. But how much longer can Tony LaRussa's A's play above their heads?



**DON NORWOOD**  
Sports Writer

1992 is the A's year of living dangerously, a season in which role players who normally would have spent all of their time either floundering on the bench or laboring in Tacoma's Triple-A obscurity have picked the team up by its bootstraps time and time again. Oakland's unexpected defiance of the Twins and White Sox, the American League West's preseason darlings, restored LaRussa's image as a baseball genius, and restored the roar for Oakland A.C. — After Canseco.

But the challenge now for the A's might be too much. Toronto entered the AL championship series with the much-deserved reputation as a team of chokers, talented players who fold up like aged pup tents against the likes of Oakland and Minnesota. And no late-season trades for people like Mike Flanagan or Tom Candiotti have ever come close to changing that.

But for the team with the most talented pitching staff in the majors, the past few months have seen it go through the only tight divisional pennant race, as Milwaukee and Balti-

See Norwood/ Page 8

## Michalke ends career during midseason

### Knee injury forces senior to call it quits

By K. LEE DAVIS

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

Recurring knee injuries, pain and surgeries have ended the career of Texas A&M volleyball player Raychelle Michalke.

After Michalke was unable to play in A&M's loss to the University of Texas on Oct. 7, she asked for a week off to recover from the chronic pain she was experiencing that seemed to be getting worse, not realizing she would never play another game for the Lady Aggies.

Michalke said that team trainers and head coach Al Givens conferred on Oct. 8 on her continuing injury problems, and decided that it would be in the best interests for her if she were to retire from the game.

"Basically the situation was out of my hands," Michalke said. "When I was told that I should retire I was very upset because part of me wanted to finish my senior season, which I had looked forward to for five years."

But Michalke said that she was realistic enough to know that Givens' decision, however painful it would be to her emotionally, was the correct one.

"Another part of me was relieved because I wasn't able to play up to my potential, or run and jump the way I could before the injuries came," Michalke added.

Givens said he felt the best decision for Michalke and her team was made, and that he had no choice in suggesting that she end her career.

"I had to take this decision out of her hands, and do what was best for everyone," Givens said.

Michalke said that ending her career was not easy to deal with, but she knew that with the seriousness of her injury, it was something that eventually must come.

"Every athlete dies two deaths, and the

first death is always the hardest," Michalke said.

Michalke's right knee has less than ten percent of its lateral meniscus remaining, and the cartilage under her kneecap has deteriorated to the point that it is rubbing bone to bone.

Michalke said her knee problems started during her senior year in high school when she damaged it playing volleyball for Schulenberg High.

She had her first of three surgeries soon after the injury, and another one followed during her redshirt season at Texas A&M.

Michalke had another surgery before A&M's 1991 season, only recently realizing there would be more problems to follow.

"It is probably safe to say that I will have more problems with the knee, but I have a lot to be happy for and a lot to live for," Michalke said.

Givens said that a decision had to be made for Michalke, since she would never stop playing if it was left up to her.

"She (Michalke) loves to play so much that she would never quit, but physically it was even hard for her to walk across campus," Givens said.

Givens added that Michalke was one of A&M's best and most experienced players, and said that replacing her in the lineup would be a difficult task.

"We lose an outside attacker and a real aggressive player in an area where we thought we had a lot of depth," Givens said.

Givens characterized injuries as being an undesirable part of the game, one that every coach and player inevitably had to deal with.

"For any athlete, the risk of injury is assumed, and every athlete does have to assume that responsibility," Givens said.

Michalke, a senior kinesiology major working on a minor in health, will be allowed to stay on scholarship and has al-



A&M outside attacker Raychelle Michalke (4) spikes the ball across the net in a win over Lamar in 1991. Michalke is ending her career in volleyball because of a recurring knee problem.

ready earned her fourth varsity letter this season.

She will also remain with the team during practice and games, but will not play.

"I will fill whatever role is needed at this point," she said.

Michalke will start her student teach-

ing next fall and said should be able to lead a normal life.

"Being part of the A&M team was one of the best things in my life," Michalke said. "And looking back five years ago when I signed my letter of intent, had I known what was going to happen, I wouldn't have changed a thing."

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