Sports

Tuesday, March 2, 1993

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The Battalion

Steve Kenney's road to recovery

Injury in Anaheim, rehabilitation have tested defensive back

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Young pitching staff the force behind 14-0

Those sweet smells drifting across railroad tracks are ones success Texas A&M's baseball team

has blossomed like a rose over at Olsen Field, sporting a 14-0 record and a No. 3 ranking.

PLUMER The pollen for the bloom Assistant Sports Editor has been provided by the

pitching staff. Heralded as the strength of the team by head coach Mark Johnson before the season started, the pitchers have done noth-

MICHAEL

started, the pitchers have done noth-ing to defray those expectations. "Before we got rolling, I thought our pitchers would be the base of this team," Johnson said. "As the season has gone on, the pitching has improved and there is a key reason for thet for that. "No injuries."

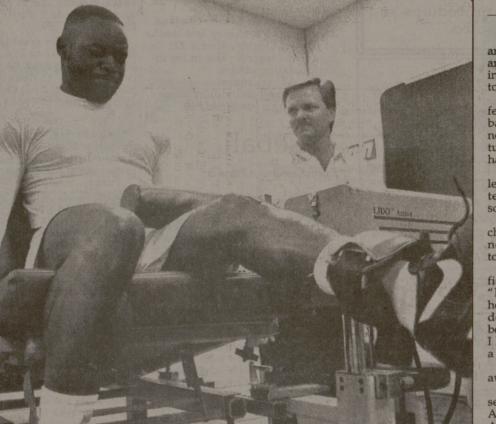
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That suffering bug has not bitten the pitchers like it snapped at the in-field earlier this year. For a relatively inexperienced group that was searching for an identity, staying away from pain was paramount. So far, so good, as evidenced by a

few numbers A&M's staff leads the Southwest Conference with a 2.01 earned run average. Junior left-hander Kelly Wunsch posted a career high ten strikeouts Saturday against Pan

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CRAIG FOX/The Battalion Rehabilitation Specialist Danny Kniffin observes defensive back Steve Kenney as he works out his repaired left knee. Kenney tore his anterior cruciate ligament in August.

By MICHAEL PLUMER

Kyle Field is quiet these days. No fans are screaming, no shrill officials' whistles are heard, and the cannon is not unleash-ing titanic booms, signifying Texas A&M touchdowns

Underneath Kyle Field, there is a dif-ferent story to be told. A&M defensive back Steve Kenney is making plenty of noise. He is striving to regain the opportunity to play again, sweating through rehabilitation

Grunting and groaning to repair his left knee's torn anterior cruciate, he is attempting to capture a chance to make some lifelong memories. When Kyle Field is full of fanatics,

cheering his every move. When the cannon could be unleashed because of a touchdown he scores.

"I can't wait to get back out on the field and compete again," Kenney said. "I never got a chance to play for the home folks, which is something I want to do. My injury was very disappointing because last year I was a sophomore and I had a chance to start for three years for a top-ranked defense. "Then, all I had worked for was taken

away with one blow.

With about five minutes left in the second quarter at the Pigskin Classic on August 26, 1992, against Stanford, a 10-7 A&M win, Kenney's world came to an

abrupt stop. "Everything happened in slow mo-tion," the soft-spoken Kenney said. "I was running towards the play and I was coming close to the running back. (Free safety) Patrick Bates and (linebacker) Lar-ry Jackson made the tackle and started rolling.

"They rolled me over and my leg was weak. I thought I had broken it as I

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Aggies ready for Southwest Texas

> **By WILLIAM HARRISON** The Battalion

As Ash says in "Army of Darkness," "Hail to the King, baby." So go the Aggies

The 14-0 Aggie baseball team takes a second shot at Southwest Texas State today in a double-header at Olsen Field after beating them soundly a few weeks ago in their own park, 9-2

Ranked 4th in the nation by the USA Today/Baseball Weekly poll, A&M is off to its best start since 1989, when A&M coach Mark Johnson's team went 26-0.

Johnson acknowledged his team's start, but said he wanted to keep it in a daily perspective.

"Southwest Texas State has a good club, (and) we'll have to continue to play well in the field and get good pitching and timely hitting," Johnson said.

and timely hitting, Johnson said. The Aggies have provided both lately, sweeping their three-game weekend se-ries with UT-Pan American. After Friday's 4-2 win, A&M took both ends of Saturday's twin bill, manufactur-ing three runs out of three hits and some UT-Pan Am miscues to win 3-1 in the first game, and broke through in the secfirst game, and broke through in the second game as freshman Chad Alexander broke out of an .087 batting slump with a towering, three-run shot to left for the bulk of A&M's 4-2 victory.

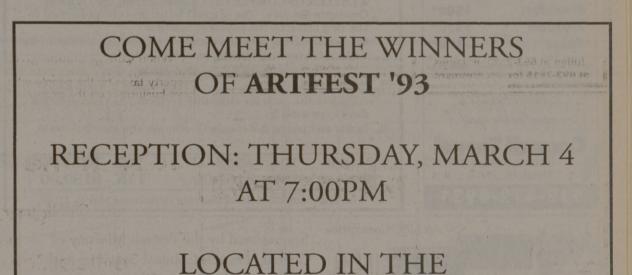
A&M's pitchers gave up four runs for the weekend, only two earned.

A&M is 4-0 on the current home stand, their longest stretch of the season at Olsen with eight games yet to be played through the upcoming weekend against Southwest Texas, Maine and Illinois State.

A&M's hitting corps is led by senior center fielder and co-captain Brian Thomas, sounding most of A&M's batting thunder with four home runs and a .419 batting average. Thomas also leads the team with .614

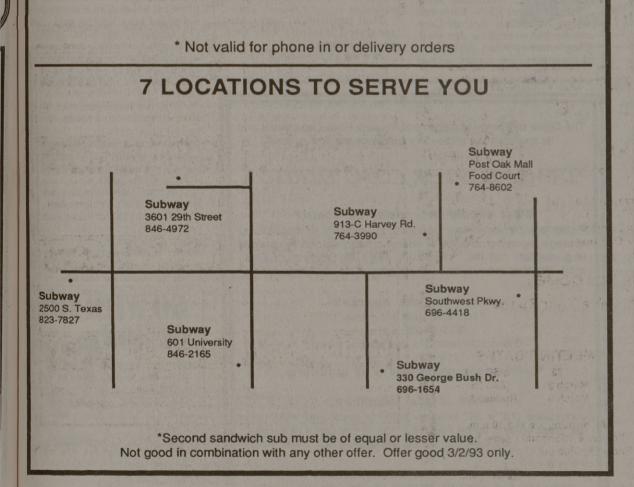
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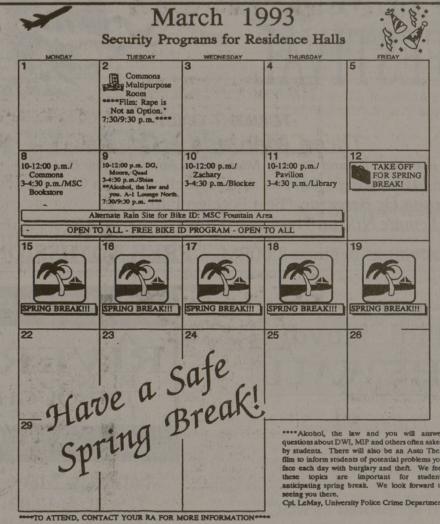
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