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Aggies

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hero as he hit a monster shot to center field to give the Aggies a 3-2 lead in the sixth. Lefthander Jeff Granger was then put in to save the game, but he ran into some control problems. Bearkat third baseman Bobby Johnson singled home two runs after two Granger walks and a single. In the bottom of the seventh Billy Harlan coaxed a walk and was sacrificed to second by Robert Harris. Thomas then hit the game-winning home run, moving Granger's record to 10-1.

"Brian Thomas and Robert Harris showed up tonight for us - they played real tough," A&M coach Mark Johnson said. "We had some real clutch hits and plays tonight."

In the first game, A&M jumped out to an early lead as Thomas hit

his first home run of the evening with both Harlan and Harris aboard. Sam Houston came right back to tie it up in the top of the second as catcher Rudi Garcia hit a three-run homer.

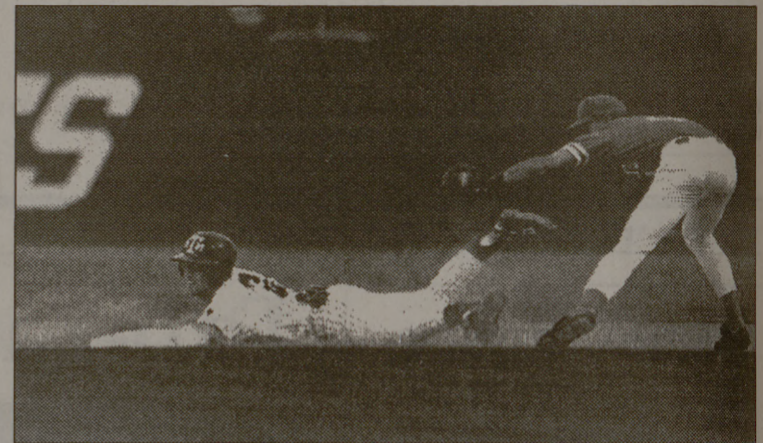
Thomas gave the Aggies the lead again with a massive two-run homer over the center field wall. The Bearkats tied the score in their next at-bat when first baseman Brian Bittiker's error allowed two runs to score. After trading runs, the Bearkats



Thomas

scored the winning run on Brian Parker's wild pitch.

"Sam Houston always plays us tough, and we know that," Johnson said. "We might be a little flat coming off the conference weekend series, but you have to give them credit.



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Robert Harris, a shortstop for A&M, looks for the umpire's call after attempting to steal second base against Sam Houston.

"I don't think we being ranked number one was a factor in our play tonight, at least I don't feel that way. It probably serves more to juice other people up than it does us."

The Aggies will try to bounce

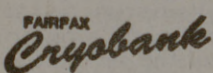
back tonight when they take on Texas Southern in a single game at Olsen Field at 7:00. The game will feature the second and final 25-cent hot dog night of the season.

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Norwood

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after the College World Series.

True, true, true. Partially.

Ask any coach and he'll tell you that the top of the heap is a much greater high in mid-June than it is in mid-April. A national championship is the ultimate goal of everyone from the coaches to the grounds crew. Nevertheless, a number-one ranking during the season is a source of pride for teams like A&M that have flirted with greatness but have had trouble making it through that first date.

No matter how long the Aggies stay atop the polls, the rea-

son they are there is pretty obvious. Yet again, it can be explained by a cliché - good pitching and defense.

A&M coach Mark Johnson's starting rotation of Jeff Granger, Trey Moore and Kelly Wunsch is among, if not the, most potent in the nation. The trio has combined for a 23-1 record, a staggering figure even in the college ranks. Chris Clemons and John Codrington have provided quality starts when needed, with Rob Trimble and Brian Parker stabilizing a bullpen that has been shaky at times.

The Aggies' play in the field has been the definition of solid. Not error-free, mind you, but who's is?

Second baseman Eric Gonzalez and shortstop Robert Harris

have fortified the middle infield a year after both played at different positions. Brian Thomas has braved the swirling Olsen Field winds to become a spectacular centerfielder, and Stephen Claybrook, the team's quietest contributor, has been an anchor in right.

Of course, it always helps for a team to have players like Billy Harlan and Claybrook who can seemingly steal bases at will. Neither does it hurt to have a lineup that's putting the ball over the fence at an unexpected high rate.

Maybe it was just me, but it seemed to be more than a coincidence that at the same time the first of the three polls came out on Monday afternoon, Home

Sports Entertainment was airing its 10th anniversary show. Included in that show was John Byington's SWC Tournament-winning homer into the left field bleachers against Texas in 1989. When that shot was replayed, it was goose bump city.

The resemblance of the '93 squad to that '89 team is almost eerie. Talent at every position, veteran leadership and a flair for the dramatic are their common traits.

This year we may get to see another NCAA Central Regional at Olsen Field. This time, though, there might not be another Ben McDonald to put a roadblock in front of the Aggies' route to Omaha.

And that's no cliché.

Gonzalez

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Gonzalez added that team chemistry and camaraderie have boosted the team's overall demeanor.

"All of us are close," she said. "We are like a family, which I

think helps us on the field."

Gonzalez says her dominating pitching is due mostly to A&M coach Bob Brock and former A&M star Shawn Andaya.

Andaya knows' top hurler for the 1987 national championship squad.

"They have really pushed me," she said. "They've helped me a lot."

Gonzalez hopes she can learn

from Andaya the secrets to lead the Lady Ags to another championship in 1993.

"I'm trying my best to help the team get to Regionals and then hopefully the College World Series," she said. "I also have a lot of respect for the seniors, and I (at least) want to go far for them."

The A&M softball team has five remaining regular season games, all of which are double-

headers. The University of Texas-San Antonio series, originally scheduled for tomorrow at Bee Creek Park, has been postponed due to scheduling problems. After a tournament in Tennessee this weekend, the Lady Aggies will return home to play two against UT-Arlington on April 21. Action will begin at 5 p.m. at Bee Creek.



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