

A&M men's tennis to face Red Raiders in conference meet

From staff and wire reports

The No. 25 Texas A&M men's tennis team will host the Texas Tech Red Raiders in a dual match at 12:30 p.m. today at the Omar Smith Tennis Center.

Head coach David Kent said A&M could not discount Tech.

"Texas Tech is a vastly improved team and they will be a challenge for us," Kent said. "They have talent throughout their lineup and don't have many weak spots. This is an important match for us if we want to keep pace with Texas and TCU, so we have to come out blazing against Tech."

A&M comes into the match with a 18-2 record (3-1 in the Southwest Conference), A&M's best start ever. But the Aggies fell to No. 25 after being ranked No. 22 by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association last week.

Individually, A&M senior Mark Weaver fell three places to No. 28 in singles and sophomore Blake Arrant fell out of the rankings after previously being ranked.

The doubles team of Weaver and Bernardo Martinez improved five spots to No. 24.



Heather Hayden (left) runs to third during the UTA Inter-Collegiate tournament in South Grand Prairie in February. Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Lady Aggies to play Southwest Texas, to honor seniors at final home game

By Kristine Ramirez
The Battalion

The ninth-ranked Texas A&M softball team will play its final home game against "scrappy" Southwest Texas State University in a double-header beginning at 5 tonight.

Seniors Jennifer McFalls, Kim Gonzalez and Sara Stout will be recognized prior to the first game.

The Lady Aggies are 42-16 after winning this weekend series against Sam Houston State University and St. Edward's University. They are 6-0 at the new Lady Aggie Softball Complex.

SWTSU is currently in a slump losing 14 out of the last 17 games they have played including a season-high 10 consecutive. Their record is 9-32-1.

Southwest Texas is lead by two freshmen who are the only players currently batting over .250. First baseman Kami Phillips is batting .284 and shortstop Meredith Curry is batting .275. SWTSU pitchers have posted a combined 3.67 earned run average.

Aggie Head Coach Bob Brock said it will be

difficult series against SWTSU. He said they always save one of their best games for A&M.

"They're always a scrappy little team," he said. "I'm looking forward to a tough double-header."

Brock said the team has had a tough schedule but they are still in pretty good shape.

He said Gonzalez and Christy Bunting will pitch and possibly Kassie Wilcox. Gonzalez leads the team with a 24-9 record and a 0.92 ERA. Gonzalez was ranked second in last week's national statistical rankings with 22 victories.

"She has done very well," he said. "She's not giving up may runs. She's having a great year."

Bunting is 22-13 with a 1.45 ERA and Wilcox is 8-5 with a 2.30 ERA.

Brock said the team is looking forward to tonight's games, especially because it is the last home game. He said the team is always excited to play at home especially in the new softball complex.

"We're looking forward to playing," Brock said. "We hope everyone will come out to see us."

Today's sluggers do not have drive, desire to break Aaron's record

Twenty years ago last week, an absolutely unthinkable thing happened, Atlanta Brave Hank Aaron shattered Babe Ruth's 41-year old career home run record of 714.

No. 715 for Aaron came off Dodgers' pitcher Al Downing in front of a packed house in Atlanta. Aaron went on to hit 41 more home runs in his storied career, bowing out with a career total of 755 dingers.

Twenty years after the fact, and Aaron's record looks just as unattainable as Ruth's mark must have in 1935 when the Bambino called it quits after a short stint with the Boston Braves.

Considering all the fantastic players who have come and gone in the 40 years between Ruth's retirement and Aaron's accomplishment, the Hammer's feat is simply amazing. Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Frank Robinson, Reggie Jackson and Mike Schmidt all made their runs at the top of

the list both before and after Aaron's achievement, but to no avail.

Fast forward to the 1990s, a decade that has been hailed so far as the playing grounds of a new breed of very young superstars. With the anniversary of Aaron's record-breaker last week, inevitably come the questions on who will be the one to break Aaron's mark.

The answer, in a nutshell, is no one. This doesn't mean that one of the current crop of superstars, mainly Ken Griffey Jr., Frank Thomas and Juan Gonzalez, could not conceivably break the record.

It won't happen because not one of the three will want to break it.

Why not? The answer, the one-word bane of the sports world in recent years, is money.

In the last ten seasons, the major league leader has averaged about 44.5 home runs. A player averaging that total (a phenomenal feat) would need 17 seasons to shatter

NICK GEORGANDIS

Sports writer



Aaron's mark. A more mortal player who averaged, say, 35 home runs per season would need 22 seasons to pass 755.

Who needs the kind of money that that many seasons of play would entail? The three superstars mentioned above all make around \$6 million a year.

Multiply that by 15-20 years, and you get around \$100 million, or the equivalent of a good-sized empire. Dedication to the

game is tough when a guy is pulling that kind of money.

With the average salary of a major leaguer going over \$1 million dollars a couple of years ago, even marginal players are able to enter the comfort zone of financial security at a relatively early age.

Whereas 20 years ago, those same players were attempting to constantly better themselves and attempting to hang around a team as a coach or manager to keep a constant paycheck coming in.

Even if money were not a factor, longevity would be.

Most players' appearances in the big leagues are fleeting. The recent marathon careers of Nolan Ryan, George Brett, Carlton Fisk and Dave Winfield are exceptions to the rule set by the thousands of other major leaguers whose playing days are cut short by injury and diminishing of skills.

But even longevity is no guarantee of huge career numbers. Winfield, a perenni-

al All-Star throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and now 43 years old, only reached the 3,000 hit plateau last season.

Winfield will need two or three more solid years to attain 500 home runs, not even two-thirds of Aaron's record.

Even Ryan, in his 27 seasons as a pitcher, barely passed the 300-win mark, and finished his career tied for 12th place on the all-time win list with 324 victories.

The bottom line of it all remains the same, even after 20 years.

Ruth will always be the Sultan of Swat, despite the fact that his two greatest records have been broken.

Gonzalez, Griffey and Thomas may be three of the greatest athletes to ever swing a Louisville Slugger, and will probably all end up in Cooperstown somewhere down the line.

But Aaron's record will be one for ages, lasting as long as the game of baseball itself.

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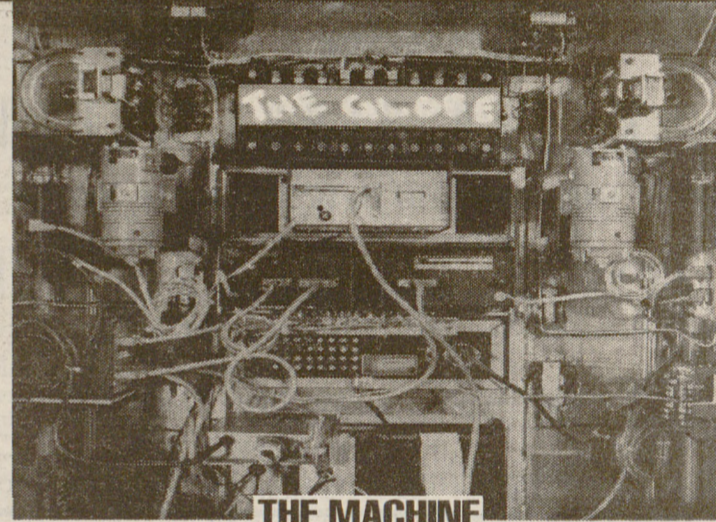
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