

SPORTS BRIEFS

Gonzales finishes first for fourth time

LAREDO (AP) — Texas A&M senior Anthony Rodriguez fired an even-par 72 Sunday to capture the Border Olympics golf tournament with a 3-day total of 211, five under par for the tournament and three shots ahead of the next two finishers.

Bud Still of Arkansas and Scott Rowe of Northwestern tied for second at 214.

Rodriguez became the nation's first collegian to win four tournaments this year. It was his second straight triumph, following his victory March 6-7 in the Louisiana Classics.

Arkansas defended its team championship, finishing 13 strokes ahead of Texas A&M. Three shots farther back were Kent State, Southwest Louisiana and Northwestern.

Lakers win 100th game over Rockets

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers, playing with their regular starting five healthy for the first time in 7 1/2 weeks, used 27 points by Vlade Divac and three clutch jumpers by Sedale Threatt down the stretch to beat the Houston Rockets 107-96 Sunday night for their fourth straight victory.

Two games after Cedric Ceballos returned to the roster from a 22-game stay on the injured list, the Lakers welcomed back top draft pick Eddie Jones after he missed 18 games with a sprained right shoulder.

It was the first time Ceballos, Jones and their combined 36-point averages were in the same game since Feb. 1. Ceballos had 20 points and Jones added 12, as coach Del Harris used both players in a reserve role.

Clyde Drexler scored 21 points and Hakeem Olajuwon added 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Rockets, who absorbed their 100th career loss to the Lakers — including eight in the playoffs.

Ex-Baylor basketball coach goes to court

WACO (AP) — Former Baylor basketball coach Darrel Johnson heads to court Monday, but it's not for a game of roundball.

Johnson goes on trial in federal court with five co-defendants on charges of participating in a mail and wire fraud scheme involving recruitment of five junior college basketball players.

Johnson is accused in the multi-count indictment of rigging correspondence-course exams and fixing grades to help five basketball players gain eligibility to Baylor.

He has pleaded innocent.

"I don't feel like I've done anything wrong," Johnson told the Waco Tribune-Herald last year. "I'll leave my fate to the collective judgment of the people involved."

Johnson's attorney, Garvin Isaacs, doesn't deny that the Baylor program may have violated NCAA rules or that it could have broken federal law. But he said Johnson was unaware of any wrongdoing.

The indictment last November came a day after Johnson, 39, was fired as basketball coach by Baylor administrators.

Lady Aggies capture NWIT

□ Lisa Branch scores 28 as A&M comes from behind to defeat Northwestern State.

Staff and Wire Reports

Texas A&M junior point guard Lisa Branch added another line to the resume Saturday night.

Branch scored 28 points, her third-highest point total ever, as she led the Lady Aggies to an 85-81 victory over Northwestern State in the National Women's Invitational Tournament championship game.

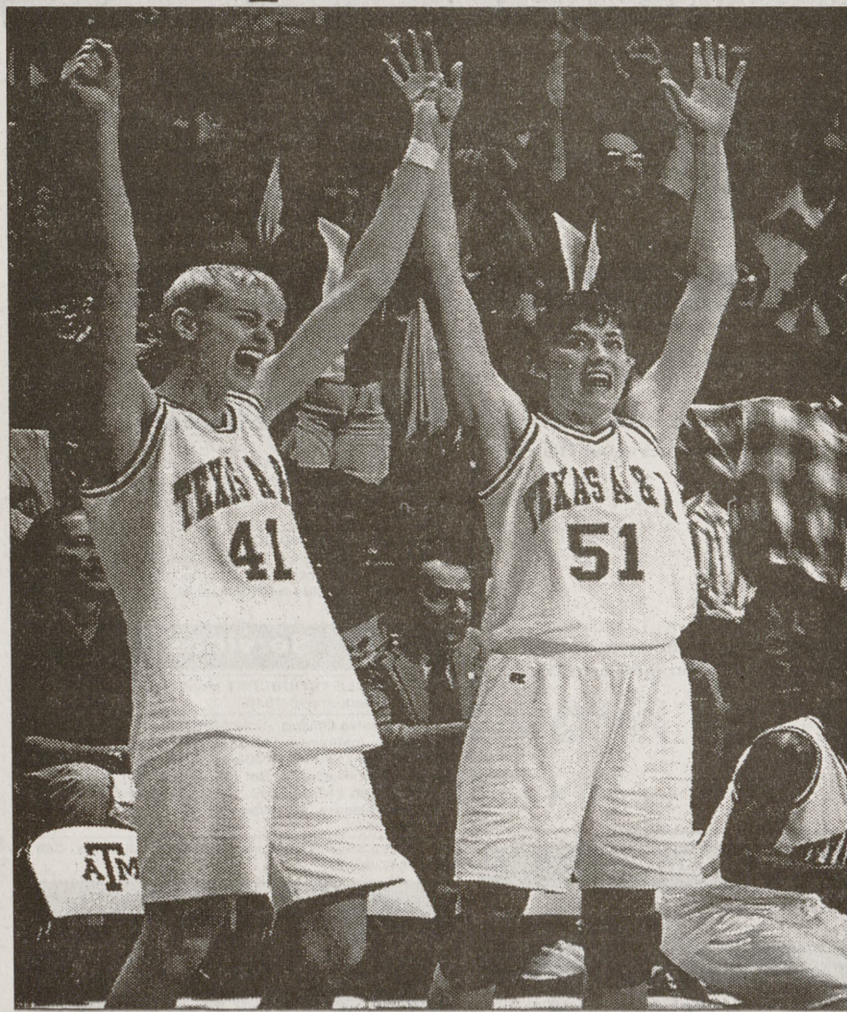
At one time down by as many as 16 points, the Lady Aggies rallied to within one point at 35-34 at halftime.

Branch also added eight assists and six rebounds as A&M won their third game in as many days before a crowd of 2,550 at the Amarillo Civic Center.

The Lady Aggies finished the season with a 21-9 record while Northwestern State ended their year with a 25-7 mark.

Branch made four free throws in the final 23 seconds, including two with two seconds remaining to ice the championship for A&M.

Also turning in key performances for the Lady Aggies were sophomore center Marianne Miller hit for 17 points and hauled down nine rebounds and junior post Martha McClelland who added 12 points.



Senior forward Debbie Biermann (#41) and sophomore Marianne Miller (#51) celebrate one of Lady Aggies regular season victories. The team won the NWIT title on Saturday.

Hatchell named as Big 12 commissioner

□ SWC commissioner is chosen over Kansas' athletic director Bob Frederick.

IRVING (AP) — The Southwest Conference's Steve Hatchell was named Sunday the new commissioner of the Big 12 conference, which will begin play in 1996.

Hatchell and Kansas athletic director Bob Frederick met a final time with presidents and chief executive officers of the universities on Sunday at a hotel near the Dallas-Fort Worth airport.

Hatchell, 48, was sports information director at the University of Colorado and later was director of the Big Eight Conference's service bureau and associate and interim commissioner.

His strengths are his bowl ties, marketing, and television and broadcast contacts.

The interviews Sunday were the deciding factor in what Jon Wefald, Kansas State president and search committee chairman, had called a "close race." Seven votes were needed to select the new commissioner.

The schools of the Big Eight plus Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and Baylor of the Southwest Conference will create the Big 12. The Big 12 will begin business operations on July 1, 1996.

The 12-member screening committee that interviewed

four semifinalists unanimously recommended Hatchell and Frederick Wednesday to the university presidents. The two dropped off the final list were Dan Beebe, Ohio Valley commissioner, and Patty Viverito, Gateway commissioner.

The 55-year-old Frederick has been Kansas athletic director since 1987. He also is chairman of the NCAA Division I basketball tournament selection committee and was involved in negotiating the tournament's television contract.

Frederick has helped Kansas maintain national basketball prominence and improve its football program. During the 1992-93 academic year, Kansas under Frederick became the second NCAA school to participate in a bowl game, the Final Four and the College World Series in the same season.

In 1983, Hatchell left the Big Eight to become commissioner of the Metro Conference. In 1987, he became the Orange Bowl's executive director before his appointment as SWC commissioner. During Hatchell's Orange Bowl tenure, the payout increased to \$4.2 million per team.

Hatchell represented the Big 12 in recent months during negotiations for a five-year football television contract worth more than \$100 million and for agreements that will guarantee the new league berths in five Tier II bowls — the Cotton, Holiday, Alamo, Copper and Aloha.

Baseball team drops two of three to Rice Owls

□ Rice overpowers the Aggies in the twinbill on Saturday.

Staff and Wire Reports

The Texas A&M baseball team seemed to have everything riding for it going into Saturday's doubleheader against Rice University at Olsen Field.

Not only had the Aggies defeated the Owls in the series opener Friday night but they had also defeated the Owls 16 straight times at Olsen Field.

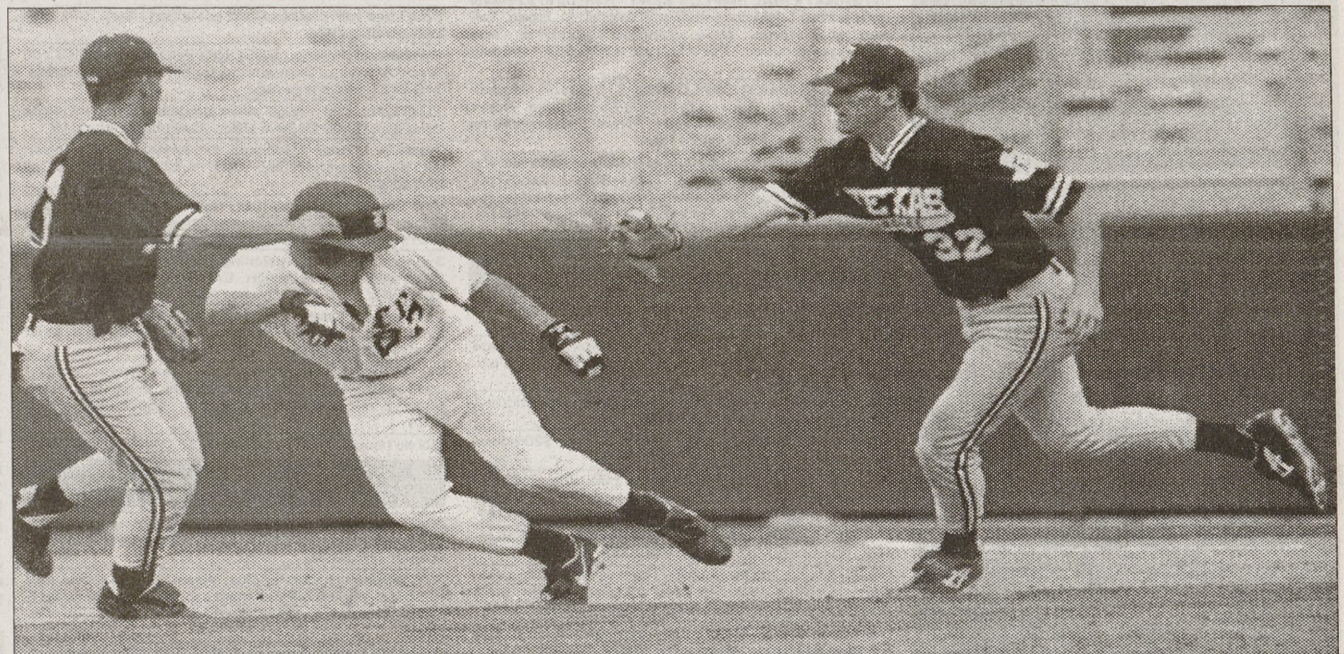
In the first game, freshman pitcher Shane King pitched well enough to win, but the Aggies bats could not score after putting up three runs in the third inning. John Curl's three-run home run provided all the offense the Aggies would get in the first game.

In the second game, A&M's bullpen simply could not get anyone out in a 13-7 defeat. Starter John Sneed gave up four runs in four innings, but he actually was one of the lucky ones on Saturday.

Spencer McIntyre entered the game and gave up four earned runs in one and two-thirds innings and was followed to the mound by senior Brian Parker and junior Tim Clarkson, neither of whom could get an out while giving up a combined three earned runs.

Offensive fireworks were provided for the home crowd by junior outfielder Chad Allen who connected on a solo home run and by hot-hitting junior first baseman Jeff Bailey who went 2-5 at the plate and drove in two runs.

The Aggies now stand at 3-4 in the Southwest Conference and will play at Houston on Friday night beginning at 7 p.m.



First baseman Jeff Bailey reaches out to tag Rice's Lance Berkman, who left early from first, as second baseman Mark Stratta gets out of the way.

One of baseball's finest at Olsen Field

Texas A&M baseball fans got to see a genuine major league baseball player this weekend.

Well, almost. In the great line of father-son connections such as the Griffey's and the Bonds comes the one with enough local ties to allow a ray of sunshine through the stormy cloud of the strike.

His name is Jose Cruz Jr. and he plays center field for the Rice Owls. If you went to the doubleheader on Saturday afternoon at Olsen Field, you are

very familiar with Mr. Cruz's work by now. In two games, he lit the A&M pitchers up for a 5-of-6 day with four runs scored, five runs batted in, one home run and one stolen base.

Just another day at the office for the man who may very well be the best player in the nation and the No. 1 overall pick in the June major league draft.

If you're from Houston, or just a Texas baseball fan, you know who old Jose Cruz Sr. is. If you went to a game at the Astrodome anywhere from 1978 to 1987, you have heard the chant of "Cruuuuuuuuz!!!" every time "Cheo" came to the plate.

More often than not, Cruz Sr. delivered, leading the Astros in RBIs, batting average or home runs several times, and always leading in the class de-

partment. His last game with the Astros was a heartbreaker for me. Astros' owner John McMullen, the bane of all that is good in Houston sports, had made it clear that salary cutbacks would include the release of Cruz in favor of younger, cheaper players. Did I mention they would be cheaper? In his final game, Cruz came up with two outs in the bottom of the ninth with men on base and a chance to win the game.

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NICK GEORGANDIS
SPORTS EDITOR

NATIONAL WOMEN'S INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS

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