



Tim Moog/The Battalion

Senior Beth Gerken rounds second base as the Lady Lumberjack infielder awaits the throw from the outfield.

Softball: Beth Gerken plays last home game

Continued from Page 11

The game was extra special for Gerken. The senior from Rescue, California was playing for the final time at home as a Lady Aggie and was recognized in a ceremony following the first game.

"I was very honored by the ceremony and glad that my friends could be here tonight to see me play in my final home game," Gerken said. "The fact that we went out a winner tonight made the occasion a little extra special."

The sentiments were acknowledged by Brock, who has coached Gerken over the last two seasons.

"Beth is one of those players that is worthy of the title of team captain," Brock said. "She is a hard worker and team leader who doesn't say very much but just goes out night in and night out

and gets the job done." The Lady Aggies will close out the season with road series against McNeese State, Louisiana Tech, Southwestern Louisiana, and Southwest Texas. Success in these games will be instrumental to the team qualifying for the regional playoffs.

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Arrant: Losing does not sit well with determined tennis player

Continued from Page 11

At the SWC tournament last weekend Arrant and his doubles partner Bernardo Martinez defeated Texas Christian University's Paul Robinson and David Roditi, the top doubles team in the nation. Arrant and Martinez had lost to them earlier this season but were looking forward to the chance to defeat them at home.

"It was just great," Arrant said. "When we get on our courts we knew we could get them. We smoked them."

We killed them. We didn't just hang in there. We got them 8-4. Coach has never had a team do that before, but I'd rather be the number one team in the nation."

Determination is what drives Arrant's game. Arrant will remember every point he loses and think about it until he improves

that area of his game. "I hate to lose," Arrant said. "I will never give up. I don't like leaving the court and thinking that the other guy is a better player than me."

Kent said that Arrant's inability to accept defeat is what makes him a stronger player.

"All players moan and groan about the points that they miss," Kent said. "It spurs them on and helps them reach another plateau. It is definitely an attribute. He hates to lose and that's how he makes progress."

Arrant has a powerful serve and overhead which gives him the strength to play the top players that he faces as the No. 1 singles player.

"He has good timing, strength and power," Kent said. "You have to have these otherwise

other players will just bulldoze you. He also has mental strength because everyone he plays is good as well."

Arrant said that if he wants to become a better player he will have to work on his volley.

"My volley has got to improve," Arrant said. "It has cost me crucial points. I keep thinking back when we played Minnesota and had match point. I hit a backhand volley floater and I hit it out. If I had some of those type of points back I would have five more wins. It haunts you but it helps to work harder. Determination is my strongest point."

After college, Arrant will see if he can make it on the professional tour.

"I will try it for two to five years to see how it goes," Arrant said. "I just want to get an idea of how I would do. Some players do well in college but not on the tour and some do not do well in college but do well on the tour. I'll try my hardest so I can say that I at least tried."

New 'Astros' down Padres

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Tony Gwynn passed out hats to fans, the Famous Chicken beat up Barney and baseball returned to San Diego.

The paid crowd of 38,124, however, saw the Padres lose 10-2 to Houston on Wednesday night, spoiling the debut of new manager Bruce Bochy and three starters who came over in a 12-player deal with the Astros on Dec. 28.

There were scattered boos when the Astros were announced. The Padres, who drew 42,251 for last year's opener, were cheered when they were introduced, but booed during Houston's five-run eighth inning.

Jeff Bagwell, one of the few Houston stars not included in the blockbuster trade, hit the first of three Houston home runs, had three RBIs and several nice defensive plays at first base.

Bagwell hit a two-run homer on the first pitch he saw from loser Andy Benes in the third. Bagwell sustained a broken bone in his left hand when hit by a pitch from Benes two days before the players' strike began.

Connor and crew overcome overwhelming odds

Stars and Stripes will now race against New Zealand's Black Magic.

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Dennis Connor caught an incredible break from his hometown's fluky wind on Wednesday, made up a 45-length deficit on the last leg and sailed into the finals of the America's Cup for the sixth time. America3's mostly women's crew on Mighty Mary seemed to have an insurmountable lead of 4 minutes, 8 seconds turning onto the downwind spinnaker run to the finish.

But while Mighty Mary sailed into a wind hole, Connor took a flyer out to the right side of the course, caught a wind shift and

rolled into the lead about halfway down the three-mile leg. Stars & Stripes won by 52 seconds even though it blew out its giant spinnaker on the last third of the leg.

Connor eliminated both Mighty Mary and PACT 95's Young America and will face Team New Zealand's Black Magic 1 in the best-of-9 America's Cup match beginning May 6.

Connor is a four-time America's Cup winner, the most recent being in 1988 when he turned back New Zealand's rogue challenge.

In 1992, America3's male crew eliminated Connor in the defender finals.

Stars & Stripes' crew, one of the most experienced in the regatta, broke out in wild celebration.

On Mighty Mary, there were tears followed by stunned silence.

It was a wild comeback for Connor in more ways than one. He was all but eliminated from the semifinals, but his rivals let him back in via a back-room deal that made this a three-boat finals.

The deal was struck hours before Connor lost what was supposed to have been a sudden-death sailoff on April 4 against Mighty Mary, whose crew wasn't told about the deal because America3 officials thought they'd lose their edge.

The big loser is Young America, which was the overwhelming defender favorite with a 21-7 record after the semis. Its part of the three-boat bargain was to get two bonus points entering the finals. But Young America

collapsed, going 3-5 in the finals.

While his opponents struggled, the veteran Connor got Stars & Stripes up to speed by winning five of six races in the finals. He lost to Young America on Monday, then had to beat Mighty Mary on Wednesday.

America3 started the regatta as the first women's crew in America's Cup history. But with only a 5-15 record after four round-robins, America3 replaced J.J. Isler with Dave Dellenbaugh as tactician and starting helmsman. Dellenbaugh was a member of America3's Cup-winning team in 1992.

Mighty Mary and Young America shared weather information and helped each other tune up the last four days in an attempt to oust Connor.

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