

SPORTS

Baseball: Last point of no return



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SPORTS EDITOR

Baseball, did you ever pick a bad time to come back. The 1995 baseball season turned a month old Sunday, and things are so screwed up that the Chicago Cubs were leading the Central Division with a strong 18-10 record entering Sunday's action. The people of the Windy City probably haven't even noticed however, as they continue to try to cope with the amazing defeat of "Da Bulls" and his Royal Airness at the hands of Shaquille O'Neal and his Orlando Magic.

When Chicagoans do turn their attention to the diamond, they are probably wondering what the heck is wrong with the ultra-talented White Sox who are languishing in fifth place with a pathetic 10-16 record.

The strike crippled baseball far worse than either the players or the owners suspected it would. The fan base, which had continually dwindled during the years of huge free-agent salaries, is gone, driven away by the greed of the men on the field and the men behind the scenes.

It's even tough to be an Astros fan these days, especially with distractions like the Rockets battling the San Antonio Spurs in the Western Conference Finals every other night and the A&M baseball team trying to stay alive for a hot at Omaha and the College World Series.

Not only are the Astros pulling their typical hot-and-cold bit of win one, lose one, win two, lose eight - but even worse - Jeff Bagwell .190 with one-sixth of the season already gone. That's right, last year's National League Most Valuable Player and the holder of nearly every Houston single-season record is on the wrong side of the infamous Mendoza Line.

No one knows what's wrong with Bags. If it wasn't for the hot-hitting Derek Bell, the Astros could challenge mighty Pittsburgh for the NL Central cellar. The Astrodome is looking more like the Grand Canyon than a baseball stadium. The place is so big that what few fans do show up are so spread out that they can't

Aggies a 'two-step' from College World Series

□ The A&M baseball team wins twice to move within two wins of Omaha.

CORAL GABLES, Fla. (AP) — Freshman John Sneed tossed a six-hit shutout and sophomore outfielder Chad Allen banged a three-run homer to help Texas A&M defeat North Carolina 7-0 Sunday and advance to the championship game in the Atlantic II Regional.

The Aggies play undefeated Miami at 1 p.m. today in the double elimination tournament. If Texas A&M wins, a second game would follow to see who will go to the College World Series.

Miami (45-14) is making an attempt to go to the series for the 14th time.

North Carolina (39-23) lost two games Sunday, losing earlier to Miami, 8-4.

Second-seeded Texas A&M (43-21-1) won two games on Sunday, starting with a 4-2 victory against Florida International.

Sneed picked up the win for the Aggies, his first nine-inning complete game of the season. He had nine strike outs, a season high for him.

Allen's home run, his 10th of the season, came during a five-run outburst in the sixth that put Texas A&M ahead 7-0.

The Aggies were aided by an improved defense. After making 11 errors the first two games, they didn't make any in two games Sunday.

North Carolina went through six pitchers. Starter Scott McCallister didn't make it out of the first inning.

McCallister gave up a leadoff homer to Allen and left with the bases loaded, trailing 1-0. He was replaced by Jim Wallace, who started Sunday's first game against Miami.

Wallace lasted only two innings. He was lifted after giving up a run-scoring single to senior Robert Harris that opened a 2-0 Aggies lead.

North Carolina's third pitcher, Corey Richardson, worked the next 1 2-3 innings, keeping the Aggies hitless but also issuing four walks.

North Carolina threatened in the fifth, trailing 2-0. The Tar Heels loaded the bases against Sneed, but Hanes Torbett grounded into an inning-ending

double play. North Carolina lost leadoff hitter and first baseman Mike Stoner in the third inning to a pulled leg muscle. Stoner, who hit a home run against Miami earlier in the day, was injured running out a ground ball in the first.

In A&M's earlier game, junior first baseman Jeff Bailey stroked a two-run homer, boosting the Aggies to a 4-2 victory over Florida International. FIU finished the year with a 50-11 record.

Junior Dean Mitchell (8-1) got the win for the Aggies. He worked seven innings, giving up 10 hits and striking out seven. Senior Brian Parker was credited with his fourth save of the season.

The loser, Rich Palacios (9-1), had won 15 straight games, starting in the 1994 season.

Florida International took a 1-0 lead in the first on a double by Manny Vazquez, scoring Dorian Speed from first.

Bailey's two-run homer, his ninth of the season, scored junior outfielder Chad Alexander and put Texas A&M ahead 2-1 in the third.

Alexander hot on with a fielding error by FIU third baseman Malcolm Warfield.

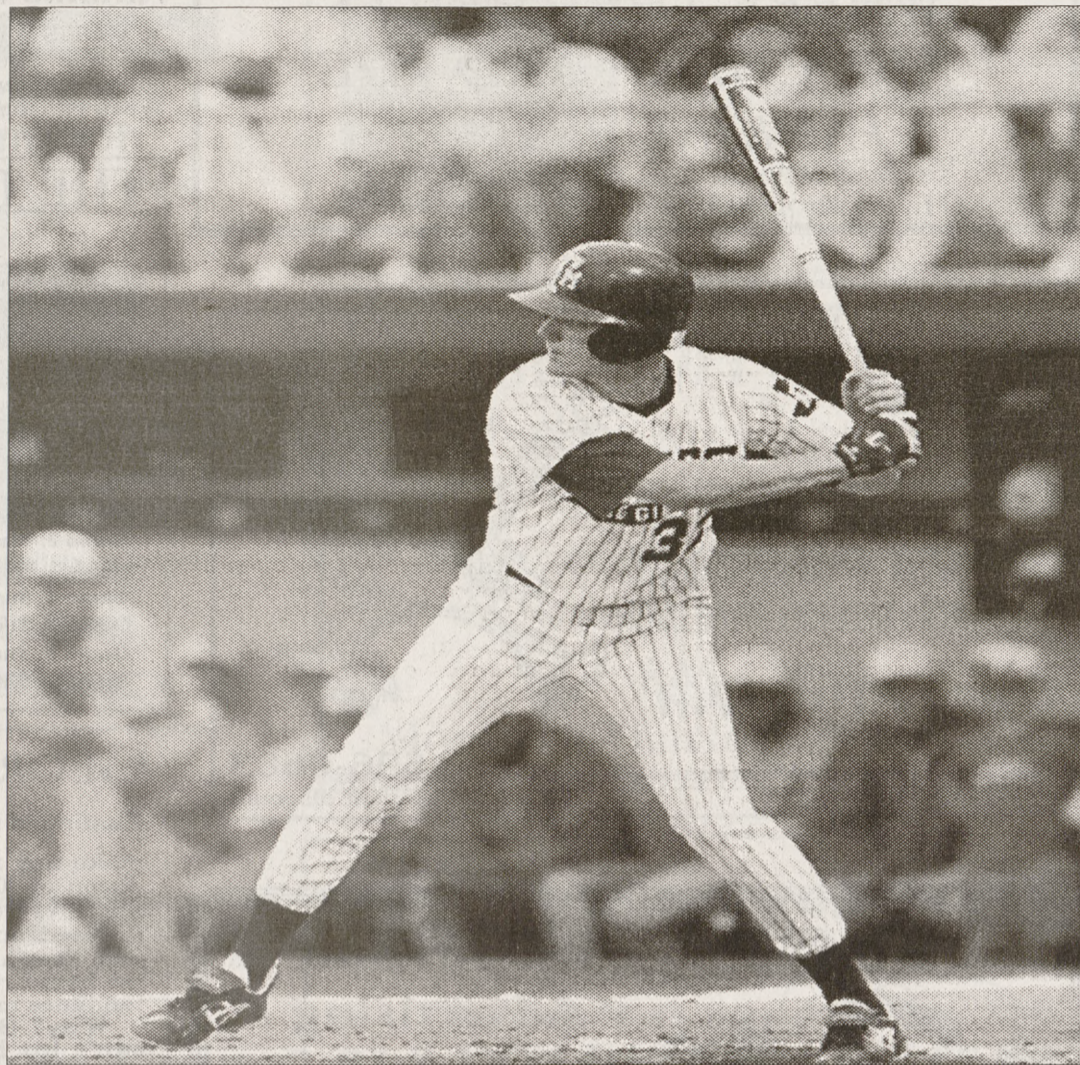
The Aggies took a 3-1 lead in the fourth when sophomore infielder Rich Petru doubled and scored on junior catcher William Shiflett's single.

Florida International closed to within 3-2 in the seventh when Warfield drove in Vazquez from second with a single. Warfield then tried to score from second on a high-bouncing infield single by Juan, but was cut down at the plate by shortstop Robert Harris.

Texas A&M made it 4-2 lead in the eighth. All-American senior John Curl led off with a single, knocking Palacios from the game. Curl took second on a sacrifice, then scored on a single by sophomore outfielder Sean Alvarez.

The Aggies will attempt to return to the College World Series for the second time in three years. In 1993, the Aggies compiled a 53-11 record while winning the conference crown for the first time since 1989.

In 1993, A&M hosted and won the Central I Regional, winning four straight games to advance to the championship in



Senior first baseman John Curl led the conference in homeruns with 18 and was named first All-American DH.

Omaha. After beating Kansas 5-1 in their first game, the Aggies lost back-to-back games to Louisiana State and Long Beach State and were eliminated.

Picked in several top 25 polls entering the 1994 season, A&M had an extremely disappointing campaign, dropping to 6-12 in the SWC and 31-22 overall. The Aggies lost key pitchers Kelly Wunsch and Jeff Granger from their 1993 team to the major

league draft.

This season, A&M bounced back to a 12-6 conference mark and finished as the runner-up to SWC champion Texas Tech in the SWC Conference Tournament two weeks ago. Tech received a No. 1 seed in the regional held in Wichita, Kan. Both Rice and the University of Texas, the other two teams in the SWC Tournament, received at-large bids to regionals.

A&M track and field trio looks to bring home the gold



Junior Anjanette Kirkland flies over a hurdle during practice at Anderson Track Complex.

□ The NCAA Championships begin Wednesday in Knoxville.

By David Winder
THE BATTALION

When the Texas A&M track and field team went to the University of Tennessee for the NCAA Outdoor Championships in 1969, Aggie sprinter Curtis Mills set a world record in the 440-yard dash.

When the Aggies return to Knoxville this Wednesday for the 1995 NCAA Outdoor Championships, A&M head track coach Ted Nelson will be satisfied with just first-place finishes.

"It was a real turning point for Texas A&M track," said Nel-

son, an assistant with the 1969 team. "I hope that it would happen again. It was very exciting."

This year, Larry Wade (110-meter hurdles) and Neri Kennedy (javelin) from the men's team, and Anjanette Kirkland (100-meter hurdles) from the women's team are among the favorites to take home NCAA crowns.

Wade currently holds the third-fastest time in the 110 this season, .07 seconds behind the front runner.

"I don't think there are any favorites going into the race," Wade said. "The winner is going to be the one who is willing to run."

"I've had a lot of problems at the end of the outdoor season. Winning nationals would be the icing on the cake."

Kirkland has only been beat-

en by another collegiate once this season in the 100-meter hurdles. Both Kirkland and Julian Russell of Florida State had the exact same times, but Russell was declared the winner when the judges looked at the photo finish.

"Anjanette has been running well," Nelson said. "She has a great chance at being an All-American and a national champion. Tying Russell gave her a real boost to her confidence. She said she was feeling drained that day, and she still ran a great race."

Kirkland said she cannot afford to worry about Russell.

"I'm not going to be looking at just her," Kirkland said. "It's going to be a fast race. I'm subtle, but I have always had confi-

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