

sports GLANCE

Nashville voters to decide on Oilers May 7

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The NFL's Oilers will find out May 7 if Nashville voters want them to relocate to Music City.

The Metro Nashville Election Commission set May 7 as the date for a special election on whether voters want the city to issue bonds to pay for its \$149 million share of the \$292 million relocation deal.

Both the Oilers and state and local governments already have approved the package that would bring the NFL team to Nashville and a 65,000-seat stadium starting with the 1998 season.

But voters opposed to using city funds forced a referendum. The Oilers agreed to wait for the outcome of any referendum as part of their deal.

49ers sign insurance running back Vardell

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — The San Francisco 49ers bought some insurance at running back, signing former Stanford hero "Touchdown" Tommy Vardell to a two-year contract.

Vardell, selected by the Cleveland Browns in the 1992 draft, missed much of the past two seasons while recovering from a serious knee injury. He will serve as insurance in case star fullback William Floyd, also recovering from a knee injury, isn't ready when the NFL season opens.

Vardell's contract, signed Tuesday, reportedly calls for \$1.45 million over the two years, with a \$400,000 signing bonus, a \$200,000 salary this season and an \$850,000 paycheck in 1997, with a \$200,000 workout bonus also possible in the second year of the pact.

Haka Bowl will be played in New Zealand

Bowl games named for fruits, flowers and even yard-care products have come to be accepted by football fans. A bowl named for a Maori war dance is the latest to be added to the list.

The Haka Bowl, pairing the third-place finisher in the Pac-10 against an at-large team, will be played in Auckland, New Zealand, on Dec. 27.

Teams for the game, the first non-All Star football bowl outside the United States since 1937, will split \$3 million. The game will be played at 50,000-seat Eden Park and televised by ESPN (Dec. 26, 8 p.m. EST).

The creator of the game is former NFL player Riki Ellison, who was born in Christchurch, New Zealand.

"This will mark the first overseas college bowl game and we are thrilled to bring the game to my homeland," said Ellison, the former linebacker who won three Super Bowl rings with the San Francisco 49ers during a 10-year NFL career.

Gymnastic Finals to be held Saturday at Read

The Texas A&M Gymnastics Club Team will host the Texas Gymnastics Conference Championships Saturday in 307 Read Building.

The competition, which begins at 2:00 p.m., will feature college gymnasts from around the state tumbling-off for a title.

Competing Saturday are Texas A&M, the University of Texas, Texas Tech, Southwest Texas State and Incarnate Word College.

The Texas A&M team is attempting to live up to the reputation it received last year when it won the National Championship.

Returning for A&M this year are two All-Americans, Denise Bean and Michelle Bergeron.

As an added bonus, Olympic gold medalist gymnast Henrietta Onodi will give an exhibition performance.

Saturday's competition marks the last home meet for the A&M Gymnastics Team. There is no charge for admission.

SCORES ROUNDUP

- NBA**
- Toronto 107, Charlotte 89
 - Orlando 112, Boston 90
 - San Antonio 112, Washington 101
 - Miami 102, Detroit 93
 - Atlanta 98, Vancouver 93
 - New York 102, Indiana 99
 - Sacramento 122, Milwaukee 97
 - Utah 107, Philadelphia 84
 - L.A. Clippers 110, Minnesota 96
- NHL**
- Montreal 3, Hartford 2
 - Detroit 4, Toronto 3, OT
 - Boston 2, New Jersey 1
 - San Jose at Winnipeg, (n)
 - Calgary at Chicago, (n)
 - Dallas 2, St. Louis 1

Aggies have high hopes for NCAAs

Eight A&M swimmers and divers will compete over the next week

By Wes Swift and Nicole Smith
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M men's and women's swimming and diving teams will plunge into national competition when they compete in the 1996 NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships.

Swimmers Julie Bates, a senior, Jennifer Guillory, a junior, Danee Mastagni and Stacie Karnes, both sophomores, and freshman diver Jamie Spychalski will represent A&M today through Friday at the women's championships at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Robb Pantano, a junior, sophomore Kyle Marden, freshmen Jerrod Kappler and Ryan Slater, and one-meter diver Jarrod Flores will carry the A&M mantle for the men's team as they compete at the men's championship at the University of Texas in Austin on March 28-30.

Head Men's Swimming Coach Mel Nash said his charges are in good shape for the meet, and are mentally preparing themselves for the stiff competition.

"The guys were already physically prepared to compete," Nash said. "It was just a matter of focusing them mentally to be up against the best. They have to realize that this meet is different from all of the others, but at the same time swim like they always have, at their best."

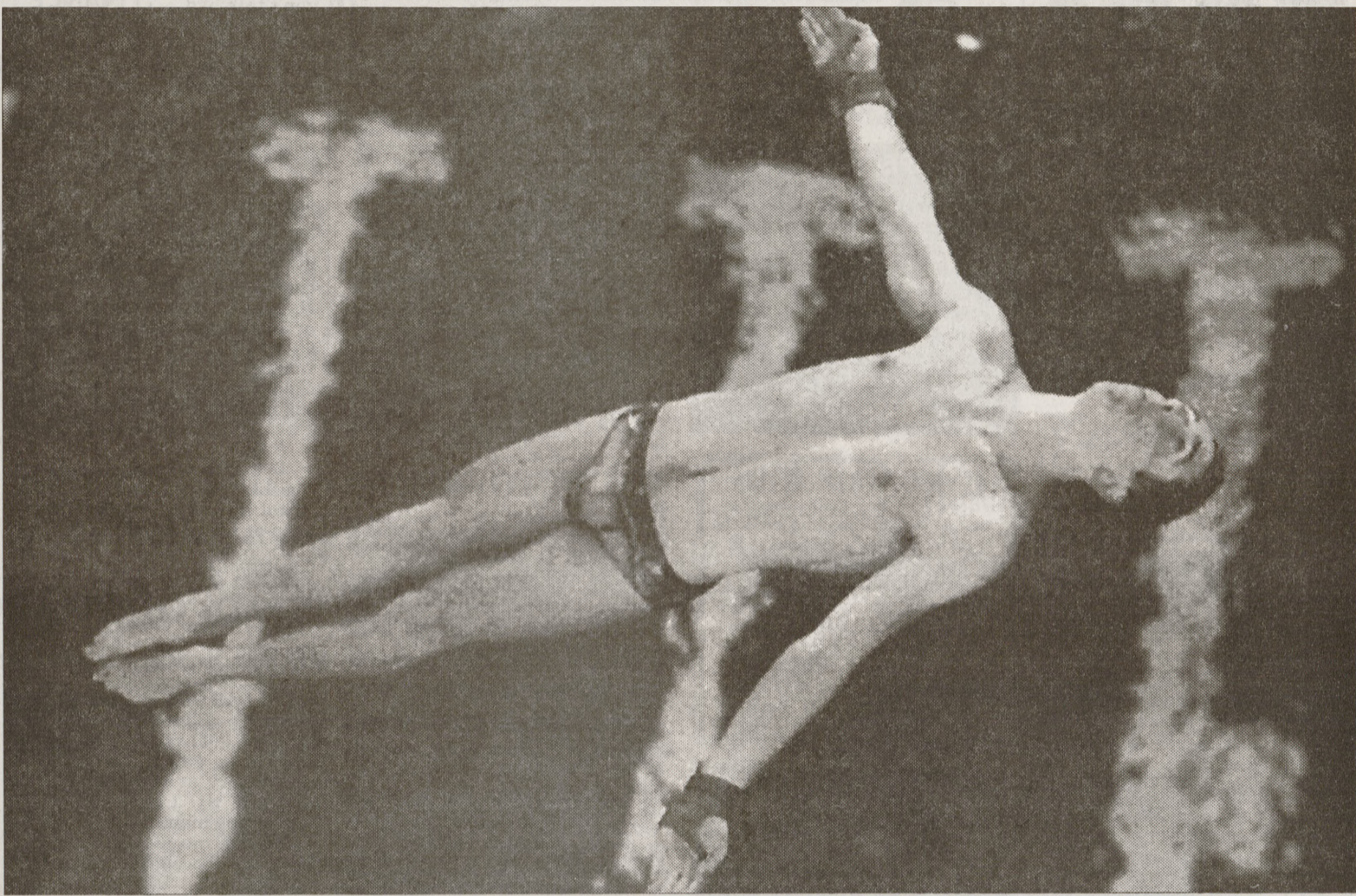
Out of the 50 teams represented, Nash said, some of the toughest competition will come from "The Big Five," schools — Stanford, Texas, Michigan, Auburn and Tennessee.

Going into the meet, the Aggies are ranked 18th — a dramatic improvement on last year's 33rd rank. In addition, every swimmer is ranked in the top 30 of their event.

The Lady Aggies also go into their meet with a solid team.



Texas A&M swimmer Danee Mastagni explodes out of the water in the 200-meter breaststroke at the Southwest Conference Championships.



Texas A&M diver Mark Naftanel descends through the air en route to a first-place finish in the men's platform diving competition at the Southwest Conference Championships at the Texas A&M Natatorium in the Student Recreational Center.

Three of the four women swimmers are making repeat trips to the NCAA meet, with the only Guillory making her first appearance.



Texas A&M swimmer Stacie Karnes rifles through the water in the 500-meter freestyle at the Southwest Conference Championships.

Guillory, Mastagni and Karnes rank among the top 10 in the school's history. Bates leads the squad in NCAA meet appearances with two and holds the A&M all-time mark in the 100-meter freestyle at 50.39 seconds.

Don Wagner, A&M head women's swimming coach, said that even though the A&M

squad is not large in number, it is skilled.

"All of these swimmers can score in at least one event," Wagner said. "We are not a big group, but I am confident in our ability to do well."

In addition to the swimmers, the two divers hope to make a splash in the meets. Flores is making his second consecutive

trip to the NCAAs, after placing 14th in last year's competition and earning All-America honorable mention honors. The sophomore from Spring will dive in both springboard competitions.

A&M diving coach Ken Wright said Flores is pumped up about returning to the competition.

"Jarrod's goal now is to go back to the NCAAs and become an All-American a second time while representing this school in a manner that will make Texas A&M proud," Wright said.

Another of Wright's divers, Lady Aggie Jamie Spychalski, makes her first trip to the NCAAs after becoming the first A&M women swimmer to win a platform diving title.

Wright said Spychalski also has lofty goals for the meet.

"She won the Southwest Conference championship on the platform and then won the Zone D title, and her goal now is to score in the event at the NCAAs."

Aggie Tennis Team faces tough road trip without top player

By Stephanie Christopher
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Men's Tennis Team has moved into the nation's Top 25, but will be hard pressed to stay there this weekend with a tough road trip ahead.

The 22nd-ranked Aggies will travel to Coral Gables, Fla., opening their schedule up today at 1:30 p.m. against the Buckeyes of Ohio State.

The Aggies will follow the Buckeyes with Miami on Friday and Florida International on Saturday.

The Aggies are going into these matches very confident, having defeated perennial powers Michigan and Arkansas in the past two weeks.

Texas A&M Head Tennis Coach David Kent said if the Aggies continue to play as they have been, they can beat anyone.

"We will be playing good teams this weekend," Kent said. "We must play well and continue to do what we do best and we should be fine."

Kent said there is one thing that could hurt his team this weekend.

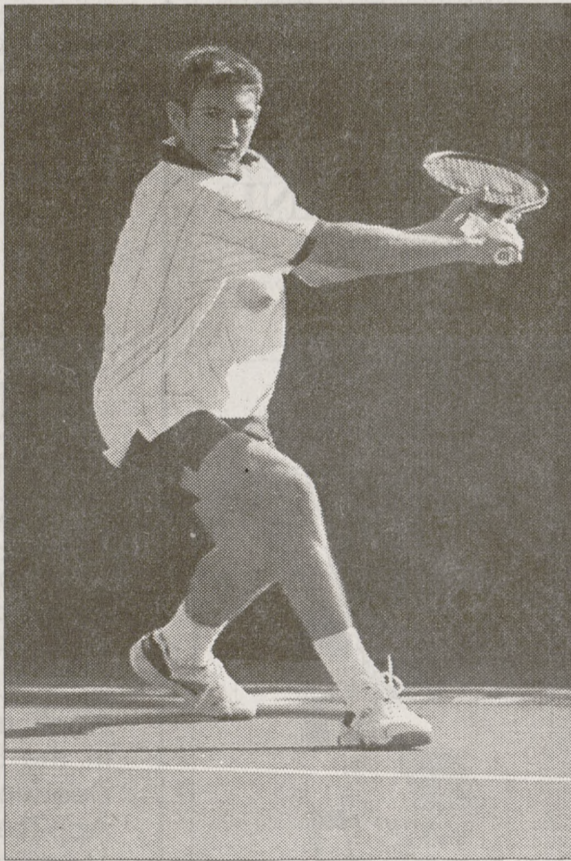
"Our senior number-one player Blake Arrant twisted his ankle on Sunday," Kent said. "We are not sure if he is going to play, but he is a very dedicated player and if he can play, then he will."

Kent said if Arrant does not play, great senior leadership will keep the team afloat.

"Our seniors on the team are great leaders and motivators," Kent said. "So if Arrant doesn't play, I know guys like Eduardo Martinez and Eric Horan will do a great job and show their senior leadership."

Arrant said his ankle was 75 percent better than it was, but it is still not in playing shape.

"I hope that I am able to play on Thursday," Arrant said. "I will not make any decision to play until an hour before the game. That will give me every opportunity to know weather or not I am capable."



Texas A&M senior Blake Arrant is doubtful for this weekend's action in Florida.

Aggie Softball Team sweeps pair from Bears

Staff and Wire Reports

The Texas A&M Softball Team continued its uncanny dominance of the Baylor Bears Wednesday night, sweeping a doubleheader in Waco.

In the first game, Lady Aggie senior pitcher Erin Field completely dominated the Bears, holding them to just three hits while pitching a complete-game shutout in A&M's 4-0 win.

The Lady Aggies jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the second inning when catcher Marianne McGuire's single plated right-fielder Kim Weldon.

It was the only run the Lady Aggies would need.

In the second game, the Lady Aggies' bats came alive and pounded Baylor for nine runs.

Baylor starter Vicki Hennigan was pounded for three runs on five hits in just three innings before being lifted.

The relief from the Baylor bullpen was simply more fodder for the Lady Aggies' cannons.

Reliever Stacey Allison was pounded

by Texas A&M for six earned runs on seven hits in her four innings of work.

The Lady Aggies' attack was spearheaded by Field, who moved to first base and designated hitter for the second game.

Field went 3-for-3 at the plate, blasting a home run, driving in two runs and scoring two more.

The doubleheader sweep improved the Lady Aggies' record to 22-6 on the year while the Lady Bears stumbled to 16-16.

Lori Gioco picked up the win in the second game, improving to 8-2 on the year for the 13th-ranked Lady Aggies.



Texas A&M infielder Heather Hayden makes a diving stab during a recent game.

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