

Baseball

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with good pitching consistently. During the Aggies' hot start, they reached double digits in runs in 11 out of 24 games, consistently blasting their opponents' pitching staffs.

In the six recent losses, A&M has totaled just 28 runs — for an average of 4.7 per

game, compared to 8.8 runs during the team's torrid 24-8 start. A&M's best offensive outing of the losing streak — nine runs against Texas Tech on March 24 — was vastly overshadowed by the Red Raiders' record day of 26 runs on 29 hits.

Pitching will be the most scrutinized area of the Aggie attack in the first game of the doubleheader when sophomore righthander Jamie Smith takes the mound.

Smith has been consistently

inconsistent this year, compiling a 2-3 record and a 5.68 earned-run average so far this season.

On the plus side, Smith is averaging 8.2 strikeouts per nine innings this season, easily leading the Aggie team in that category.

In the second game, A&M will turn to their opening-day starter, senior Dean Mitchell.

Mitchell has been one of the most successful pitchers for A&M so far this year, entering today's action with a perfect 2-

0 record on the year and a team-leading 3.60 ERA.

Despite its recent slump, the A&M offense is still having one of its finest seasons to date. As a team, the Aggies are batting .332 and slugging at an impressive .502 clip.

A&M is led by two newcomers to the team, junior transfer rightfielder Johnny Hunter and freshman designated hitter Jason Tyner.

Hunter has been crushing the ball all season long and leads the team with a .421 bat-

ting average. His slugging percentage — complemented by seven doubles, four triples and six home runs — is .768.

Tyner has wowed fans and opposing players with both his speed and his bat control. After collecting five hits in the first game of Saturday's doubleheader, Tyner has settled in at .404 for the year.

He has struck out just five times in 161 at-bats (the most on the team) and leads the team with 26 stolen bases.

With 14 games left, Tyner

has a shot at breaking the time A&M stolen base record of 36 set by former Aggie current Minnesota Twin Chad Knoblauch in 1989.

After the doubleheader, Aggies will be off until Friday when they host SWC rival Texas Christian University in the first game of a three-game series at 7 p.m. at Olsen Field.

Following the TCU series, A&M will play just one non-conference game while finishing out the 1996 SWC season.

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