

Waltman brought prominence to A&M track



Linda Cornelius Waltman was the first woman to receive a full athletic scholarship at A&M.

By LARA L. ZUEHLKE
THE BATTALION

As the first female athlete at Texas A&M University to receive a full scholarship, Linda Cornelius Waltman left her footprints on the track and her name in the history books. She not only collected 10 school records, but also qualified for the 1980 Olympics.

Luckily for the Lady Aggie track team, Waltman decided to transfer to A&M as a sophomore, after becoming homesick at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. The Fort Worth native wanted to return to her roots, so she appealed to have her track scholarship transferred from UNLV to A&M for her remaining three years.

Waltman, a two-time All-American in the pentathlon, said she challenged herself as a child to excel in sports.

"I had two goals from the time I was a young girl when I started running club track," Waltman said. "One was to get a scholarship because my parents didn't have a lot of money, and I knew that if I went to a college or a university, it would have to be on a scholarship basis. The other goal was to go to the Olympics.

Those were things I always wanted to do."

Although Waltman's scholarship ended in 1979, she continued working with the Aggie track team as an assistant coach so she could practice with the team. She trained under the supervision of her husband, who was still working on his degree.

Waltman also sought help from A&M men's track coach Ted Nelson, who now coaches the men and women's teams.

"I wish I had her on my team right now, because she was so talented," Nelson said. "She could easily compete with them today."

Nelson said Waltman brought national publicity to the women's track team, proving that Aggies could hold their own on the track.

"She had the first real impact on the A&M women's track team and on the women's program," Nelson said. "When she made the Olympic Team, she showed that A&M's track program was for real."

Waltman said many of the top track and field female athletes came from the West Coast track clubs, but that she stayed in College Station to support her husband.

"Most girls would go to the West Coast to compete, and I had the opportunities to do that, but I chose to stay here," Waltman said.

"Sometimes I think back on that and wonder if that was a mistake, not to go to the West Coast to train. They had extensive training, rather than here where I had to squeeze in a workout between work and class."

Waltman said she represented A&M at the 1980 Olympic Trials as a member of the Texas A&M track club.

"I was glad that I stayed (in College Station) because it made me feel good to represent A&M," Waltman said. "They (Texas A&M) had always been really supportive of me."

However, Waltman could not show off her talents in the 1980 Olympics, because the United States boycotted the Games.

A&M teammate Sandra (Brown) Taylor said the team was upset when the games were boycotted because Waltman had worked so hard to qualify.

"We were all so excited for her that she qualified, but then we were disappointed when she wasn't able to go," Taylor said.

After the letdown of the 1980 Olympics, Waltman said she began training again, but she had lost the desire she once had.

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Matt 'Blanks' WSU Cougars, 3-1, to sweep series

By CHRIS FERRELL
THE BATTALION

The seventh-ranked Texas A&M Baseball Team used clutch hitting and got three strong outings from their starting pitchers, to complete a weekend sweep of the Washington State Cougars.

The Aggies had a field day with Washington State University pitchers, scoring 27 runs and collecting 36 hits in the series, with 13-2, 11-9, and 3-1 victories.

A&M batters came out of their shell and gained confidence for the upcoming Big 12 season.

"This is definitely a big boost for the team going into conference play next week against Baylor," junior second baseman Brian Benefield said. "Right now our confidence is high. Our hitters are going good now and if our pitching stays good, we should do well in conference."

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Brian Benefield
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In Friday's opener, A&M took advantage of nine Cougar errors and 12 strikeouts from freshman pitcher Casey Fossum to cruise to an easy victory. Fossum picked up his first victory in an Aggie uniform.

A&M also used a four-run second inning as a springboard for their 13 run performance. Freshman designated hitter Sean Heaney lead the Aggie assault, going three-for-five with an RBI and three runs scored.

Benefield was the star of Game two, going three-for-three with a RBI and two runs scored. The Aggies also got three hits piece from sophomore outfielders Jason Tyner and Steve Leonard.

Junior catcher Matt Garrick went deep for the second time this season as A&M jumped out to an 11-2 lead and held on as the

Cougars rallied for seven runs in the eighth inning.

Junior pitcher Ryan Rupe gave up two runs and four hits over six innings.

"Rupe could have gone longer, but we limited him to 100 pitches," Head Coach Mark Johnson said.

Benefield was the man for the Aggies again in Game three. He went two-for-three and hit a two-run double in the fifth which scored Tyner and Garrick.

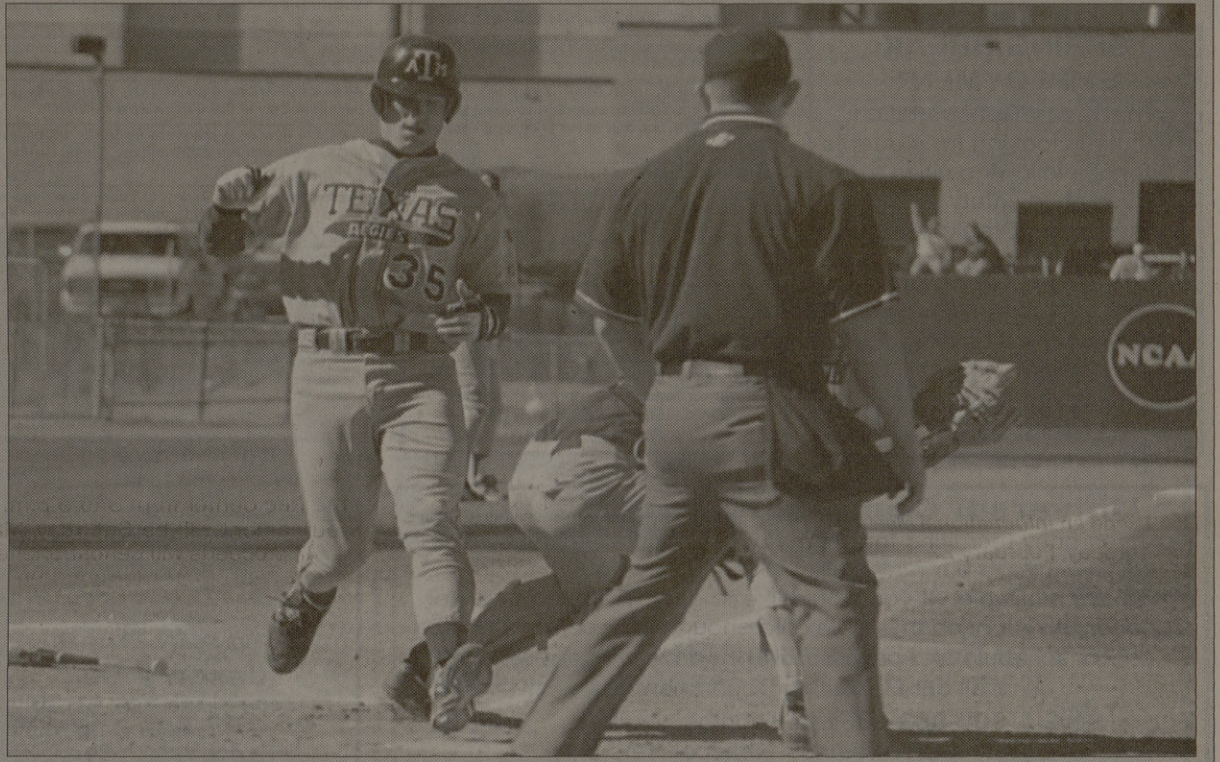
It proved to be all the offense starting pitcher Matt Blank would need.

We made some great defensive plays and scored a couple of runs," Blank said. "I just wanted to go out and pitch good. It's big anytime you can sweep a series."

Blank turned in the Aggies first complete game of the season.

"When Matt's got his two best pitches working, which are his fastball and change up, he's really effective, Benefield said. I've seen his pattern, once he gets it going, it's tough for those other hitters."

Blank's performance was the icing on the cake for a weekend that saw Aggie pitchers at their best.



Pat James, THE BATTALION

Sophomore **Steve Leonard** scores a run against Washington State in Saturday's game. The Aggies won 11-9.

Starters Fossum, Rupe, Blank go the distance, keep relievers in bullpen in weekend series

By JAMIE BURCH
THE BATTALION

Close the bullpen door and leave it shut. The Texas A&M Baseball Team (11-4) had little need for relief this weekend as the starting rotation pitched three impressive outings against Washington State University (1-10).

After failing to get a starter out of the second inning against the University of Nevada-Reno Feb. 17, the Aggie arms rebounded to post some impressive numbers. In the three-game series, the starters pitched a combined 22 innings, allowing four runs on 14 hits.

On Friday, left-hander Casey Fossum (1-1, 1.44 ERA) used his fastball, slider combination to hold the Cougar bats at bay. In seven innings, the freshman phenom allowed just one run on seven hits. Fossum struck out 12 batters and issued just two walks.

Junior infielder Brian Benefield said the Aggies will have to depend on strong performances from the front three throughout play in the Big 12.

"Starting pitching is going to be huge going into conference," Benefield said. "If we can get each guy to go five, six innings or more, like we did

this weekend, I think we'll be fine.

"We've got hitters. We're starting to come around and our starting pitching has been doing great."

Junior right-hander Ryan Rupe (2-0, 2.64 ERA), in just his third outing since his elbow surgery last season, pitched six strong innings, giving up two runs on four hits. Showcasing his accuracy, the right-hander struck out five batters without issuing any free passes.

Head Coach Mark Johnson said Rupe could have gone longer had he not been limited to a 100-pitch count.

Junior left-hander Matt Blank (3-0, 3.18 ERA) closed out the series in similar fashion. Attempting to capture the final



Fossum

Aggies finish up strong in final home game

Junior center Larry Thompson leads A&M to a 62-57 win over Baylor Bears

By CHRIS FERRELL
THE BATTALION

The Enforcer came to play. In his second start of the season, junior center Larry Thompson provided an inside force the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team had been looking for all season. This proved to be the difference as the Aggies (9-15, 3-11) won their final home game of the season, 62-57 over Baylor.

After coming up short in close home games all season long, the Aggies saved their best for last, scoring the final six points of the game to bring home the win.

"Its not that much of a difference," Head Coach Tony Barone said. "Except that tonight, I can go home and relax, watch Sportscenter and see us on the right side of the column. I'm more happy for the kids. For me, its part of my job, but for the kids its been tough. So I'm happy for them, and they deserved to win."

Baylor had an eight-point lead with five and half minutes left and then watched as the Aggies closed out the game on 17-4 run.

A&M took the lead on a layup by senior guard Tracey Anderson with 2:34 left in the game.

Baylor answered by reclaiming a one-point lead on a dunk by junior center Brian Skinner. Skinner then fouled sophomore forward Calvin Davis, who hit two free throws to give the Aggies the lead for good.

After a steal by Thompson, Anderson hit a basket which sealed the game.

"I knew he was going to pull up before he got the basket, and that's exactly what he did," Skinner said. "I couldn't do anything about it. It was either hope he went to the basket, or reposition my feet, and I didn't have time to reposition my feet. He just pulled up [and] he finger rolled it in."

A steal by Thompson to set up Anderson's basket was one of several key defensive plays the 6-foot-9 junior came up with.

"He's got wonderful athleticism - and you saw that tonight," Barone said. "He rebounded well, he scored also, got a couple of key buckets on Skinner late in the

game. I thought he was the difference in the game tonight from our standpoint, in terms of his defense."

Thompson's defense helped limit Skinner, the Big 12's fourth leading rebounder, to a career-low one board.

Despite scoring a team-high 13 points and pulling down a game-high nine rebounds, it was Thompson's physical play that gave Skinner the most trouble.

"They were playing physical," Skinner said. "They were, and the referees, I guess were trying to gain a little bit more control of the ball game. In the second half, they let us play a little more physical and they basically let us play."

The victory gives the Aggies some confidence as they finish the season with two big games.

"I think it means a lot for us," Davis said. "For one thing, being his (Anderson) last home game and also giving us some momentum going into our last

couple of games on the road at Texas and Texas Tech."

Anderson, who was recognized prior to the game during Senior Night festivities, said he closed out his career at G. Rollie White on a high note.

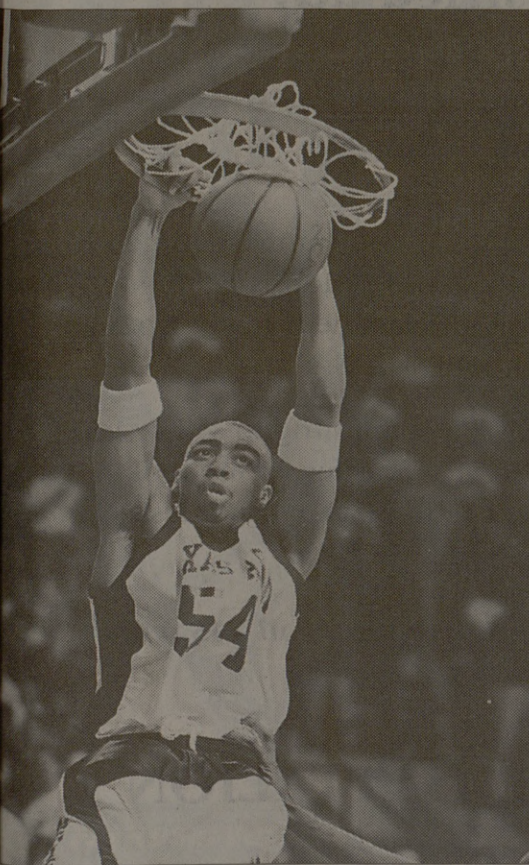
"If I had to end it all," Anderson said, "I'd end it that way on a win. I was in warm-ups and I noticed things I've never noticed before. Coach told me [to] try to soak it all up."

The basket also helped ease the pain of the Aggies' loss in Waco, a game in which Anderson had a chance to win and could not come through.

"It's pretty sweet just to get this win," Anderson said. "Especially on my last home game, and then the fact that I kind of blew the game up there."

Barone said the Aggies will miss Anderson both on and off the basketball court.

"Tracey comes up big every game for us," he said. "We'll miss Tracey, whether he's a basketball player or not. He's just a human being that touches everyone's life. And I was happy that he made the shot. He was crushed by the play that he made in Waco, and I guess this is a little vindication for him."



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

Junior center **Larry Thompson** slams one down against Baylor Saturday at G. Rollie White Coliseum.