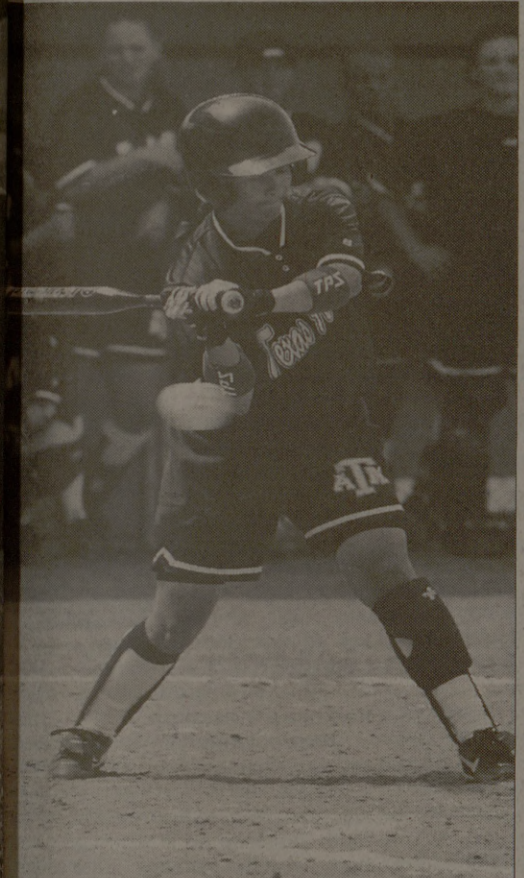


# Lady Aggies split two Big 12 doubleheaders

By JAMIE BURCH  
THE BATTALION

Instead of spending Easter weekend looking for eggs, the Texas A&M Softball Team (22-19, 2-2) spent the holiday searching for its first conference win.

Playing a pair of doubleheaders at the Aggie



Rogge Heflin, THE BATTALION  
Senior outfielder **Gina Perez** checks her swing against Iowa State Saturday.

Softball Complex, the Lady Aggies opened its second season of Big 12 play against Iowa State University (12, 10, 1-1) Saturday, and the University of Nebraska (13-15, 2-2) Sunday.

Leading the Cornhuskers 2-1 in the top of the sixth inning of Game 2 yesterday, junior pitcher Trina Solesbee walked the first two batters of the inning. Following a conference on the mound with Assistant Coach Joy Jackson, Solesbee settled down. Nebraska first baseman Rachel Dunham grounded to third base, but reached on the fielders' choice when third baseman Kami Tucker stepped on third to retire the lead runner. But a passed ball allowed the runners to advance.

With two runners in scoring position, Solesbee got out fielder Jennifer Williams to ground out and struck out second baseman Alice Brewer to end the Cornhusker scoring threat.

Solesbee retired the side in order, in the top of the seventh inning, for the complete game.

Jackson said Solesbee redeemed herself from Saturday's loss to Iowa State with her performance.

"Trina did an outstanding job," Jackson said. "She came back and proved to herself and to her teammates that she can play with the best of them. When she walked the two batters with no outs, I went out to talk to her. She said she was okay.

"I could see the fire in her eyes and knew that she was going to get the job done."

Solesbee said the two walks forced her to focus. "I was just missing (the plate) by a little bit," Solesbee said. "You just have to push yourself that much harder. You have to get it done or we could lose."

The Aggies' one-run victory in Game 2 resulted in a series split with Nebraska. In Game 1, the Aggies fell behind 8-0 after the Cornhuskers posted five runs in the top of the fourth inning. The Aggies

managed to score just two runs in the bottom of the fifth inning, losing 8-2.

Between Game 1 and 2, injured Head Coach Joe Evans took the field to talk with her team. Jackson said Evans' speech aimed to motivate her frustrated team.

"She told them they were a better team than what happened in the first game," Jackson said. "She said they were letting yesterday's (Saturday) loss affect them. Coach Evans also said they needed to focus, play their game and stop hanging their heads.

"She also reminded them they have to come out ready to play every inning," Jackson said. "And if the opponent scores, not to get down on themselves."

Saturday's loss came in Game 2 of the doubleheader against the Cyclones. After winning the opener, 4-2, the Aggies took a four-run lead into the sixth inning of the nightcap.

Solesbee, the starting pitcher, surrendered four straight singles and two runs to start the sixth. Senior pitcher Lori Gioco entered in relief. A passed ball allowed another run to cross the plate. Gioco then relinquished an RBI single to junior designated hitter Jaime Kahler and freshman shortstop Jessica Polo, to cap off the five-run inning.

Splitting both doubleheaders, the Aggies stand at .500 (2-2) in the Big 12. Jackson said she has mixed feelings about this weekend.

"I was really pleased with the second win today (Sunday)," Jackson said. "Seven innings ago, I was very disappointed in where we were. One inning cost us the chance of being 3-1, which I think played over into the first game today.

"Honestly I feel like we could have been 4-0. I guess I'm not real happy, but I'm thrilled with the second (conference) win. Our players know they could be 4-1. With the Big 12 the way it is, it's anybody's to win."

**"I was really happy with the second win today (Sunday). Seven innings ago, I was very disappointed in where we were."**

Joy Jackson  
Assistant coach



Rogge Heflin, THE BATTALION  
Sophomore third baseman **Kami Tucker** celebrates her home run against Iowa State Saturday.

## A&M tracksters pick up gold

Larry Wade turned in a NCAA qualifying time

STAFF AND WIRE REPORT



Rogge Heflin, THE BATTALION  
Senior decathlete **Kendall Madden** throws the shot put Saturday against Texas.

Despite placing second to the University of Texas Saturday at the annual dual meet between the two teams, the Texas A&M Men's and Women's Track and Field teams had plenty to be proud of as they won eight and 10 gold medals, respectively.

Although falling to the University of Texas 89-74, the men's team recorded several career-best times. Leading the men's team was Larry Wade, who recorded a NCAA qualifying time of 13.61 in the 110-meter hurdles in his first meet since his back injury last season.

Other gold winners in the men's track events include the 1600-meter relay team, with a time of 3:11.05, and the 400-meter relay team (40.02). Also claiming gold medals were Danny McCray in the 200-meter dash (20.81), Travis McAshan in the 400-meter hurdles (52.44), and Derrick Woods in the 400-meter dash (52.44).

In men's field events, Russell Nuti continued his quest to break 200 by winning gold in the discus with a throw of 193-9, while freshman Travis Grasha placed first in the javelin with a freshman record throw of 217-1. John Nance vaulted 16-3.25, almost a foot higher than his nearest competitor, taking first place in the pole vault.

Despite losing 79-65, several Lady Aggies had big days. In women's competition, Kelli Schrader and Anjanette Kirkland led the Lady Aggies by accumulating five gold medals.

Schrader led the Lady Aggies with three golds by placing first in the hammer throw (118-9), the discus (161-2), and the shot put with a throw of 40-10.5. Kirkland took first in the both the 200- and 400-meter hurdles (59.72).

Rounding out the Lady Aggie winners was Chimika Carter in the triple jump (40-10.25), Vanessa Garcia in the high jump (5-8), and Milli Ondras in the 300-meter.

The Aggie tracksters return to competition Thursday at the Texas Relays in Austin.

## Rangers make another run at title

TEXAS RANGERS

The Rangers got a dose of reality in their first-round playoff loss to the eventual World Series champion New York Yankees last season. They needed some help in the bullpen — bad. So what did they do? Nothing else but sign the best closer in baseball and last year's World Series MVP, John Wetteland.

Wetteland will take the spot of Mike Henneman, who had more than his share of problems closing games last season. The rest of the bullpen is juiced-up too. Rookie Danny Patterson, who has had a stellar spring, and Xavier Hernandez, will share the role of set-up man. Julio Santana, Ed Vosberg and Jose Albero will round out the middle relief.

The starting rotation is one of the most solid one-through-five staffs in the league. Ken Hill, John Burkett, Darren Oliver, Roger Pavlik and Bobby Witt are all returning from last year's rotation that led baseball in victories. Manager Johnny Oates' philosophy calls for a staff full of No. 3 starters, and with the exception of Hill and Burkett, he has just what he asked for.

1996 AL MVP Juan Gonzalez will lead the deadly Texas offense onto the field, when he returns from ligament damage in his thumb. Until then, Mike Devereaux and Warren Newson will fill in for the slugger.

Damon Buford takes over in center after showing exceptional defensive skills in the spring and Rusty

Sportswriter



Jeremy Furtick  
Senior journalism major

Greer will patrol left. Dean Palmer returns to third base and Mark McLemore to second. Will Clark should have a huge year after having close to 20 bone chips removed from his elbow. Benji Gil will step in at short. And as always, the best catcher in baseball, Ivan Rodriguez, will be behind the plate and

Mickey Tettleton will do the DH'ing. The Rangers proved last year they weren't affected by the pressure of the playoff drive, even with Seattle hot on their trail. A healthy Clark will make up for the drop-off in power numbers from Kevin Elster to Gil and the bullpen will shut opponents down. Look for Dean Palmer to challenge for the home run crown.

**Projected Record: 97-65**  
**Key Series: July 10-13 @ Seattle Mariners.** Texas suffered a four-game sweep at the end of last season in Seattle that almost cost them the division title. That series ran the Rangers' record in Seattle to 3-20 since 1994. This series kicks off the second half of the season and is Texas' last trip to Seattle for the year. No late-season sweeps in Seattle for the M's this year.

SEATTLE MARINERS

Seattle is clearly the best offensive team in baseball. The question for this team lies in their pitching staff, especially in the arm of Randy Johnson.

The only surprise going into the season is Jose Cruz, Jr., who didn't make the team. Instead, Rich Amaral will start 1997 in left field with Ken Griffey, Jr. in center and Jay Buhner in right. The best designated hitter in baseball, Edgar Martinez, will anchor the rest of the lineup which includes Russ Davis at third base, Alex Rodriguez at short and Paul Sorrento at first. Dan Wilson will do the catching.

Without Johnson, this team is not going to the postseason, as evident by last year's absence from the playoffs. With the Big

Unit headlining the rotation, the combination of Jeff Fassero, Scott Sanders, Jamie Moyer and Solomon Torres doesn't look that bad. But without him, Bob Wolcott gets the call and Fassero is the ace. The loss of Mike Jackson from the bullpen will hurt this team. They are left with Bobby Ayala, Rafael Carmona, Bob Wells and Tim Davis to fill the middle relief role. Norm Charlton will return as the closer, but the Mariners are concerned with his lack-luster 1996 performance.

See FURTICK, Page 10

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