

Ags claw Cougars, 8-4

By Chris Ferrell
THE BATTALION

Excuse the 16th-ranked Houston Cougars (25-13) if they were expecting Rod Serling to show up at Olsen Field Tuesday night. From Houston's standpoint, the game resembled a bad episode of the *Twilight Zone* as they fell to the 15th-ranked Texas A&M Baseball Team (31-15), 8-4.

Senior shortstop Rich Petru led the Aggie offensive charge with home runs in consecutive at-bats in the second and third innings — the second home run a grand slam. Petru, who had only hit four home runs this season going in to the game, said he was in a groove.

"Tonight was just one of those nights," Petru said. "I was in the zone. The ball looked like a basketball coming in. I made an adjustment yesterday in practice and that played a big part in it."

A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson said Petru's five-RBI explosion was a key for the Aggies.

"He gets back-to-backers," Johnson said. "The grand slam opens the gates for us."

Another big part of the victory for the Aggies was the sun. A five-minute period during which the setting sun wrecked havoc with the Houston outfielders' vision allowed A&M to capitalize in the third inning.

Cougar centerfielder Eric Lee lost back-to-back hits by junior second baseman Brian Benefield and freshman third baseman Sean Heaney in the sun to set up Petru's grand slam.

"There's a five-minute slot there, in every ballpark, where dusk hits and it's a little bit tougher to pick up



Robert McKay, THE BATTALION

Sophomore outfielder **Jason Tyner** slides into third base against the University of Houston last night at Olsen Field.

the ball," Johnson said. "And then I think after he missed a couple, things got a little bit shakier. When we hit into dusk we tell our infielders be sure to let them (the outfielders) know where it's at."

Houston also had to be shaking their heads when A&M freshman pitcher Courtney Weller, one of the staff's few left handers, came in and shut them down for the second time this season.

"I had a lot of luck against them last time," Weller said. "Last time I pitched against them I had my curveball working and was able to get ahead of them. I was pitching them backwards and they had a little trouble with it."

After replacing starter Steve Scarborough in the second inning, Weller threw six innings of scoreless two-hit baseball.

"Courtney came in and stabilized things for me with his curve-

ball," Johnson said. "He came in and established it and he moving himself right up the ladder. He was impressive tonight."

Weller said he is beginning to gain confidence.

"Pitching is really all about confidence," Weller said. "And I guess, really last year and this year, I just didn't have it and now I'm pitching like I'm in high school. I have that confidence level back and that helps a lot. It was a mental turnaround. I wasn't liking where I was going and I decided that I had to do it, be real confident, and I kind of got it done in Houston."

The win also gives the Aggies an impressive victory over a ranked opponent, something Johnson said would help come tournament time.

"That was a good one because they were a ranked team and they beat us before," Johnson said.

Lady Ags sweep with two shutouts

By Jamie Burch
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Softball Team (28-23) continued its current hot streak, chopping down the Lady Jacks of Stephen F. Austin University (16-32) by sweeping a doubleheader 4-0, 7-0. The Lady Aggies now have won six straight games, the longest streak of the season.

A&M dominated SFA, taking advantage of the Lady Jacks' generous offerings. SFA committed 10 errors in the two games, leading to five unearned runs.

A&M Head Coach Jo Evans said the Lady Aggies capitalized on SFA's poor defense.

"We took advantage of their mistakes and got the lead early," Evans said. "I thought we executed well offensively and moved the runners."

In Game 1, senior pitcher Lori Gioco (16-11) threw a complete four-hit game shutout, striking out three batters with no walks. Gioco received all the run support she would need in the bottom half of the second inning. Senior first baseman Mya Truelove singled to lead off and advanced to second base on catcher Marianne McGuire's sacrifice grounder to third. Truelove then scored on a throwing error by Lady Jack first baseman Misty Longron.

The Lady Aggies padded the lead with two runs in the third inning on RBI singles by Truelove and designated hitter Trina Solesbee and Truelove and a final



Dave House, THE BATTALION

A&M freshman shortstop **Jamie Smith** snags the ball and tags out Stephen F. Austin runner last night at the Lady Aggie Softball Field.

run in the sixth inning on a single by shortstop Jamie Smith.

Solesbee said the win helped the Lady Aggies move closer to their season goals.

"It's a good step on the way to where we need to be as a team," Solesbee said. "We're improving each game."

Game 2 continued in much the same fashion. Booted balls by the Lady Jacks resulted in three unearned runs.

Solesbee (10-7) started for A&M, throwing a two-hit shutout through five innings with two strikeouts. Sophomore Kim Turner closed out the final two innings, allowing no runs on three hits.

Evans said she was not sur-

prised with the bookend shut-

"I thought we could get shutouts," Evans said. "Our pitchers have been throwing well. Lori is throwing well. Trina has thrown in a few days, so it's good to get her some innings. Kim (Turner) did a nice job coming in [to shut the door]."

A&M jumped out on top with two runs in the bottom of the first. With runners on second and third base and none out, junior outfielder Tanya Klecker scored a passed ball. Smith later scored a single by catcher Amy Schumacher.

The Lady Aggies play a doubleheader against Sam Houston State University Thursday.

Cox

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Cox left Amarillo High School with two All-State selections and two top three finishes at the state tournament. Last summer, he won four American Junior Golf Association titles — more than any other player. Also prior to this season, he was named an honorable mention All-American. Talent has never been an issue.

The issue, according to Ellis, has been his mental approach to the game, something in which Ellis has seen a major improvement.

"I saw in the last round at the Border Olympics that Ty didn't play well," Ellis said. "But he really stayed calm through the round and wasn't excited — excited where he's really irritated himself. He took

his mistakes better and was more tolerant. "I think, hopefully, he's turned the corner as far as that's concerned, mentally and emotionally. Mechanically, he's always been good."

At last weekend's All-American Intercollegiate in Houston, Cox proved he was at the top of his game, mentally and physically. Cox shot a 144 in two rounds to tie for second place, his top college finish.

"I've been lacking confidence in myself as far as my game goes," Cox said. "I think this finish will help me going into conference. Hopefully, that will set me up for some good tournaments for the rest of the year."

Cox's strong fundamentals began forming at an early age. His father Sherwin, a golf pro in Amarillo, started his son on the game at an early age.

"Basically, I had a club in my hands when I was able to pick it up," Cox said. "He

(Sherwin) started me with fundamentals and stuff at age three. I've been playing competitive golf since I was 6 or 7. My dad's been a big influence on my golf game."

This strong start, coupled with his technique and body style, have allowed Cox to become one of the nation's longest hitters.

"I'm six-foot and kind of narrow," Cox said. "Body structure and hand technique have a lot to do with it. Fundamentals have a lot to do with it. Kind of like Tiger (Woods). He's slim and tall."

As Cox continues to perform at a high level, his goals continue to increase, something which has not always sat well with his opponents.

"I'm a person that expects a lot from myself," Cox said. "That can be good and bad. I've always tried to place really high goals for myself, both in life and on the course. Sometimes my goals may come

off cocky to some people."

Ellis said that cockiness can sometimes be one of Cox's greatest assets.

"If anybody is going to amount to anything, they have to think they're pretty good," Ellis said. "Sometimes he gives the appearance that he's cocky and he gives the appearance that he's better than everybody else. I won't argue that point — sometimes he is that way — but he has something to back it with. It isn't just bravado."

"Cockiness isn't something that I'm opposed to. If a player doesn't think he can play, he isn't going to play. If a player thinks he can play and has a little cockiness about him, I'd much rather have a player like that than someone who says, 'Well, I'm not very good.'"

Cox's high goals extend to the team as well. He said the Aggies have big plans for the rest of the season.

"I didn't come to Texas A&M only for golf," Cox said. "I came here for the team. I thought this was a team that had a chance to go somewhere."

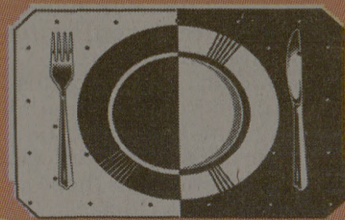
"I hope we haven't peaked. I hope we're just getting warmed up. This should be a great time to peak. That's our goal to win conference, to win regionals, to get to nationals and play well there. Maybe win, but we have to take one step at a time."

Cox said A&M's recent finish has the tone for the rest of the season.

"I think the last tournament in Houston is big for me and the team as far as confidence goes," he said. "Golf is a game of confidence, and if you have confidence you can accomplish a lot of things."

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