

Softball team powers past SHSU as A&M takes advantage of homers to blast their way to a sweep

By KATIE MISH
Staff writer

The Texas Aggie Softball team swept the Houston State Ladykats last night in a doubleheader at the Aggie Softball Complex. The games were the last for the Aggies before Big 12 competition, which begins Saturday at Iowa State. The Aggies won the first game of the doubleheader by a score of four to two. Freshman Ashley Lewis was the winning pitcher, giving up only four hits and striking out 10. Lewis said she is not completely satisfied with her pitching but that she is heading in the right direction. She started pitching pretty well out in the first inning, and I came out here and had four or ten strikeouts," Lewis said. "I just want to keep it going."

When somebody gets up there and gets a home run, that's always very exciting, and to have us do it three times tonight was very exciting."

Evans said these two games were what the Aggies needed to build confidence before they start Big 12 play this weekend. She said the team played a complete game, putting together their pitching, batting and defense.

Lewis said she feels more prepared for the Big 12, that she is nervous and excited about the upcoming games.

"The Big 12 has some of the best teams in the nation," Lewis said. "It has Nebraska, it has Texas, it has us, and it can't get any better than that, unless you go to the West Coast. But we've all beaten the West Coast."

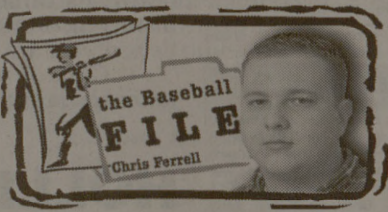
Lewis said the Aggies main goal is to get out and get some wins in conference play, and that their games against SHSU were a step in the right direction.



BRANDON BOLLOM/THE BATTALION

Freshman Tiffany Esters is met by teammates after launching a home run in the first game.

A&M pitchers continue dominance



National League Bound?

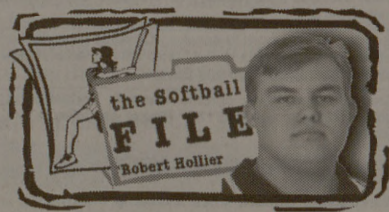
The 1998 Aggies are not exactly long-ball threats. In fact, A&M opponents have hit 30 home runs against one of the country's top pitching staffs while the Aggies have only hit 29. But that has not affected the run production. The Aggies are averaging almost seven runs per game. They're doing it by manufacturing runs. The Aggies are batting .297 as a team with 110 extra base hits. A&M is also making its presence felt on the base paths where they are 57 of 82 on stolen base attempts. Junior center fielder Jason Tyner leads the way with 18, sophomore Steven Truitt has 15. The Ags have stolen 10 more bases than their opponents have even attempted (23 of 47 steals).

Swing And A Miss

After limiting the Cougars to 11 of 56 from the plate, the A&M pitching staff lowered its opponent batting average to .222, more than 70 points below A&M's team average. Senior Ryan Rupe leads the way with the opposition batting a mere .171 against the 6-foot-6-inch right-hander in 51.1 innings pitched.

PLEASE SEE **FERRELL** ON PAGE 12.

Errors doom Aggies in California



While most students were relaxing at the beaches or skiing on the slopes and enjoying their break from school, it was all business and little rest for the Texas A&M Softball Team (20-14-1) last week.

California Sun

After splitting a doubleheader with North Carolina on March 13, the Aggies then traveled to Sacramento to compete in the Sacramento State Capital Classic Tournament where they finished with a 2-3 record. A&M defeated No. 19 Oregon 6-

4 in the first game, with freshman pitcher Ashley Lewis throwing a complete game four-hitter and striking out 12 to pick up her eighth win of the season. The Aggie offense was headed by senior catcher Marianne McGuire who went two for three, driving in two and scoring one. Lewis also chipped in with a two for three performance scoring one and knocking in one.

In their next game, A&M defeated Pacific 2-0 behind freshman pitcher Kristina Gandara's complete game, two-hit performance to pick up her fourth win of the year. However, the Aggies would not win again, suffering three straight losses, including a 2-1 loss to No. 16 Iowa and a 9-0 loss to No. 21 California. In their fifth game, they fell to San Jose State 7-0 and were eliminated.

Errors hurt the Aggies the most in the tournament as they committed 13 miscues in the five games

and have made 60 on the year, 12 more than their opponents.

Aggie Sluggers

Despite the sometimes inconsistent field play, the Aggies have still been pounding out the hits and driving in the runs.

The most consistent hitter for the Aggies so far this season has been freshman center fielder Tiffany Esters. She leads the team in hitting at .333 and in slugging percentage at .417. She is second on the team in hits with 24 behind Ashley Lewis' 25 and she leads the team in stolen bases with 15.

Other bright spots at the plate for A&M include freshman third baseman Amanda Whalen who leads the team with 13 RBI and is fourth in hits with 21. Also, sophomore shortstop Jamie Smith is second on the team in hits with 23 and in RBI with 11.

PLEASE SEE **HOLLIER** ON PAGE 12.

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Rick Rigsby is an ordained minister and founder of Cornerstone Ministries. He holds a faculty appointment at Texas A&M and serves as Life Skills Development Coordinator for the Aggie football team.

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