

A&M hopes to play 'Uncle Ben' role to make quick work of Rice

No. 11 Aggies prepare for highly-ranked non-conference showdown with No. 12 Rice University in College Station

By MICHAEL TAGLIANTI
Staff writer

The No. 11 Texas A&M Baseball Team take on the No. 12 Rice Owls in a non-conference battle tonight at 7 p.m. at Olsen Field. The Aggies swept a doubleheader against Nebraska Saturday to win the Big series 2-1. With the win, the Aggies improved their record to 31-13 and 14-7 in the Big 12. The Aggies were led by junior first baseman John Scheschuk who had three home runs and nine RBI in the doubleheader. Rice (31-13, 18-3) is coming off a two-game series with the New Mexico Lobos in which they scored an astounding 54 runs. Even more incredible is the fact that Rice lost the series, winning 28-7 on Saturday and losing 27-26 on Sunday. Junior center fielder Bubba Crosby led Rice, batting 10-for-the-weekend with five home runs. It will be up to the A&M pitchers to shut out this potent Rice lineup. Sophomore pitcher Chance Caple usually pitches Tuesdays, but he pitched five and two-thirds innings in relief on Sunday to pick up the win in the second game of the dou-

bleheader against Nebraska.

Right now Coach Mark Johnson said that he does not know who is going to pitch against the Owls.

"I don't know who is going to throw for

"... Rice is a very good team and we want to do very well against them."

Mark Johnson
Texas A&M Coach

us. We have to wait for practice to see how the arms recovered from the weekend," Johnson said.

Johnson said that although it would be easy for the team to look forward to the Texas series this weekend, he thinks the team will be ready for Rice.

"The team is going to be ready to play," Johnson said. "The thing that is very hard is that we have the Longhorns looking at us

on Friday, so it would be very easy for us to look past Rice for obvious reasons (the rivalry), plus it's a Big 12 game. The Rice game doesn't carry near the implications a Big 12 game does, but we are aware that Rice is a very good team and we want to do very well against them."

Scheschuk said the Rice game is important because it has regional implications.

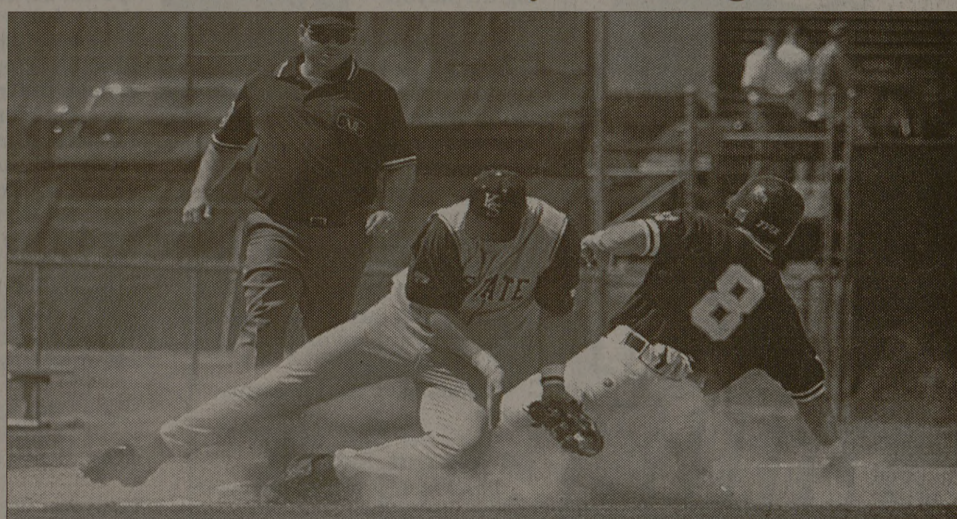
"Rice is a big game in that they are highly ranked, and we definitely need to pick up a win to help our regional status and maybe even help us get a regional bid," he said.

Junior centerfielder Jason Tyner said that despite some recent struggles the team is happy with where it is right now.

"We are doing all right. We have given away a few games, but that is to be expected over the course of the season. You look at the major leagues and the best team in the league loses 60 games every year, so we like where we are right now," Tyner said.

Johnson said despite some setbacks, he is happy with where the team currently stands.

"Well I think every coach would like to be a little bit better," Johnson said. "I'm not disappointed. We've put ourselves in posi-



RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M outfielder **Steven Truitt** (No. 8) will lead the Aggie attack when the baseball team takes on Rice University in a non-conference game tonight at 7 p.m. at Olsen Field.

tion to have an opportunity to win and go to the Big 12 tournament and regionals.

"We could fall flat on our faces, but what you want to happen as you approach

the stretch run is to have a chance to win the tournament and regionals. We still have a lot of goals in front of us, and I'm happy with that."

Cowboys bolster rushing attack with acquisition of Chris Warren

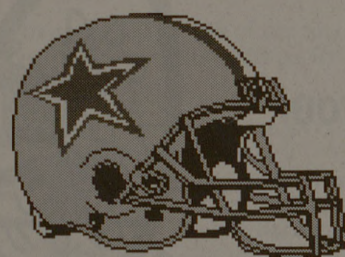
New back provides relief for overworked Smith, Gailey says

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Free agent running back Chris Warren signed a three-year, \$2 million contract with the Dallas Cowboys Monday, jeopardizing the jobs of Sherman Williams and Herschel Walker.

The deal also could mean a reduced workload for Emmitt Smith in coach Chan Gailey's offense because of Warren's ability to catch the ball, making him a valuable third down receiver. Warren caught 45 passes for 257 yards last year in Seattle.

"We think Chris has a lot more in his career and he will complement Emmitt," owner Jerry Jones said. "He has been in the league nine years like Emmitt, but he has 1,000 fewer carries and we are fortunate to have a back of his caliber."

"We want to be smart about the number of carries Emmitt has over



the next several years. We'll have Emmitt doing what he does best for the next couple years and he will be our starter."

Smith rushed for more than 1,000 yards last year for the seventh straight season but averaged only 4.2 yards per carry and scored just three touchdowns.

Jones said no decision had been made on the status of Williams and Walker for the 1998 season.

Warren was a fourth-round draft choice who became one of the NFL's best backs before Seattle released him last month in an economy move.

In eight seasons, Warren rushed for 6,706 yards, breaking Curt

Warner's team record of 6,705 on last season's final play.

He rushed for 1,000-plus yards for four straight seasons, including a team record and AFC-leading 1,545 yards in 1994. Last year, he had 847 yards and four touchdowns.

Warren played in the Pro Bowl in 1993, 1994 and 1995.

He became expendable when the Seahawks signed Ricky Watters, a five-time Pro Bowl running back, to a four-year, \$13 million contract, including a \$5 million signing bonus last month.

Clarence Shelmon, Warren's position coach in Seattle, now is the Cowboys' running backs coach. Warren also knows Cowboys offensive line coach Hudson Houck, who coached with the Seahawks in 1992.

"I saw what he could do at Seattle," Shelmon said. "He'll help our offense and give Emmitt some rest."

If the Cowboys release Williams, a former second-round draft pick, it would count only \$150,000 against their salary cap.

Walker has spent the past two seasons as a kick returner and backup running back.

New York robbed of eighth spot



The NBA season that everyone has been waiting for has finally reared its intense head — the Playoffs!

For those of you tired of boring regular season games and those late-season Denver Nuggets - Dallas Mavericks matchups, get ready because games that mean something are on the way.

Non-Duncan Rookie of the Year

Anyone who watches basketball and doesn't have a vegetable for a brain knows that Tim Duncan will take Rookie of the Year honors. Heck, he might even make first-team All-NBA. However, for that parting-gift, runner-up category, how about Nets forward Keith Van Horn.

The Utah alum overcame an early-season injury to rebound (literally) well. Van Horn put in a season-high 33 points against Toronto on Sunday at an important time in the playoff race.

Pencil in Brevin Knight and Ron Mercer as a close second and third, respectively. Knight is second in the league in steals at a 2.46 per game clip and Mercer has provided a nice complement to Antoine Walker

on Rick Pitino's Boston squad.

Washington Wizards. What a Waste.

The Wizards are all-but-eliminated from the Eastern Conference playoff race. With the amount of talent on their roster, last year's sweep by the Bulls was thought to be a simple preview of the greatness for which Washington was destined. It turned out to be a flash in the pan from one of the most talented teams in the league.

Chris Webber (22.0), Rod Strickland (17.8) and Tracey Murray (14.8) are all in the top-50 in scoring and Strickland leads the league in assists with a 10.5 average. The core of Strickland, Webber and Howard had championship written all over it, but with team conflicts and lack of effort, their limitless talent got them a golf game in late April.

Coach Bernie Bickerstaff was so disgusted at a recent game that he walked off the court before the game was over. Look for general manager Wes Unseld to make sweeping changes on the roster before next season.

"Happy Easter, Everybody!"

Those were the words out of Tim Hardaway's mouth after referees ruled that Allan Houston's buzzer-beater actually didn't beat the buzzer in Sunday's Knicks-Heat game.

The shot — which clearly left Houston's hand before time expired according to replays — would have given the Knicks a crucial 83-82 victory and pushed them up a half game on the New Jersey Nets.

PLEASE SEE **KNICKS** ON PAGE 6.

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