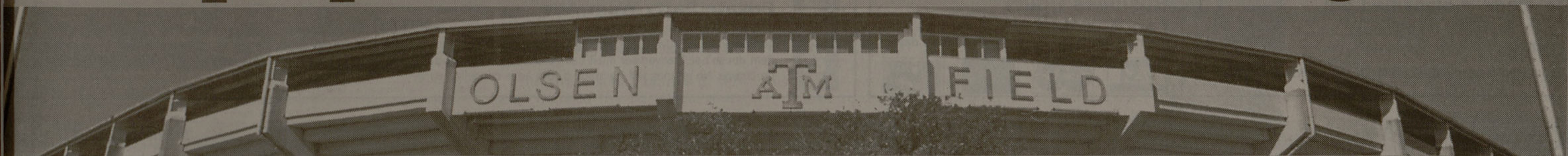


# A&M prepares bid to host NCAA Regional



BY JEREMY FURTTICK  
Sports editor

The Texas A&M Athletic Department has picked up where the Aggie Baseball Team left off last weekend, attempting to secure an NCAA Regional Tournament bid to follow the Aggies' first Big 12-title season.

The application for schools bidding to host one of the eight NCAA Regionals is being prepared by Athletic Director Wally Groff and Associate Athletic Director for Business Penny King and is due Friday at the NCAA national office.

One of the selection criteria is a minimum financial guarantee of \$50,000, which is 75 percent of the estimated net receipts as submitted on the school's proposed budget to the NCAA. In other words, Texas A&M must estimate the number of tickets to be sold and after all expenses are taken out of that gross figure, 75 percent of that net total must at least equal \$50,000.

Groff said the University will easily eclipse the \$50,000 minimum bid but that money is not necessarily the bottom line in the NCAA's selection decisions.

"Of course the bid is important, but there are so many other factors the NCAA considers in its selection process," Groff said.

Other criteria set by the NCAA include the host team's won-lost record, its national ranking, the quality of the facility, the availability of necessary accommodations along with attendance history and geographic location.

"We offer several things the NCAA is looking for in a Regional Tournament host and are preparing a very competitive bid," Groff said.

Considering the NCAA's criteria, the Aggies seem to have an edge in the bidding war.

A&M set an all-time average home attendance mark of 3,203, edging out the old record of 3,187 set in 1989, while drawing over 3,900 for home conference games. The Aggies also drew three crowds inside Olsen Field of more than 6,000, two of which were over 7,000, to set the first, fourth and ninth places in single-game attendance history. A&M had never had more than one 6,000-fan crowd in a season before.

Another advantage for Texas A&M is the NCAA's preference to utilize the entire country for Regional Tournament sites. With superior facilities and a higher ranking (No. 10) than Texas Tech (No. 22), and considering Texas' horrid season, A&M becomes the apparent front-runner for a tournament location in a state which is usually host to at least one Regional site. Head Coach Mark

Johnson said his team did its part in securing the bid with the successful season it produced.

"Our role is having a good team and one that has a chance to advance in the Regional and on to the World Series," Johnson said.

Groff said the reports made by visiting coaches, umpires and NCAA Tournament directors critiquing Texas A&M's Regionals in 1989 and 1993 were outstanding and will carry a lot of weight in the selection process.

But there are some financial risks involved for the host university. If, for instance, the host team is eliminated from the tournament in two games, the home fans will likely not come out to the park for the rest of the weekend.

"To meet your proposed (financial) objective, you have to win at least one game, being around to play at least three," Groff said. "If you have a successful tournament and the fans turn out, the host team will get to keep around 15 percent after all expenses are paid."

Johnson acknowledges the risks of hosting the tournament, but says it is all part of being an NCAA powerhouse.

"There's definitely some gambles you take in hosting a Regional," Johnson said. "If you go two-and-out, the fans aren't going to show up anymore. But you have to take some gambles. I gamble in recruiting that guys aren't

going to sign pro contracts out of high school, it's all part of competing on the national level with the country's top programs — you have to roll the dice sometimes."

Even with the apparent risks of hosting an NCAA Regional Tournament, A&M officials agree the benefits outweigh the possibilities of failure.

"We don't make a lot of money, if any," King said. "The real benefit is for the team. They don't have to travel, it's great for recruiting and it gives you an advantage to get to the World Series."

Johnson echoed King's remarks.

"Obviously, playing at home is an advantage in itself," Johnson said. "It does get nullified a bit in the Regional Tournament when you consider the quality of the teams. If they couldn't play on the road, they wouldn't be in the tournament."

"You really can't count the advantage of hosting the Regional in runs, you look at things like how the teams hosting the tournament are, more times than not, the ones going to Omaha (Neb., site of the College World Series)."

NCAA Regional Tournament hosts will be announced Monday, May 11, with the teams receiving tournament bids being announced the following Monday, May 18.

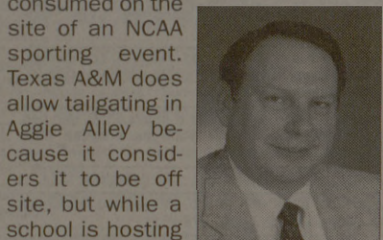
## AGGIE BASEBALL BRIEFS

from staff and wire reports

### Aggie Alley faces NCAA challenges

The parking lot behind the left field wall of Olsen Field, known as Aggie Alley, where students are allowed by the University to watch the game from their cars while tailgating, may be closed by the NCAA if Texas A&M receives a Regional Tournament bid.

The NCAA does not allow any alcoholic beverages to be served or consumed on the site of an NCAA sporting event. Texas A&M does allow tailgating in Aggie Alley because it considers it to be off site, but while a school is hosting an event such as a Regional Tournament, the NCAA has the authority to rule areas such as this lot to be on site, and therefore dry.



Groff

Athletic Director Wally Groff and Associate Athletic Director of Business Penny King support the University's stance to allow the tailgating saying it is a unique feature to A&M baseball

games bringing more fan support than would otherwise be offered. They will be discussing the issue this week with the NCAA as they prepare to make a bid to host a Regional.

### Big 12 Tourney a big task for A&M

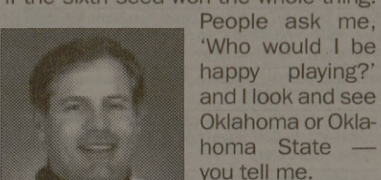
With the Big 12 Tournament approaching on May 14, Aggie Head Coach Mark Johnson said he has no special strategy for his No. 1-seeded team.

"There's not much strategy involved in the tournament, except for watching the pitchers' inning totals," Johnson said. "The only real advantage you can give yourself is if you have rested pitchers the deeper you get into the tournament."

Johnson said he is still sticking by his

preseason prediction that the Big 12 Tournament is open for anyone to win.

"All of the teams are pretty equal in talent," he said. "I said before the season started that it wouldn't surprise me if the sixth seed won the whole thing."



Johnson

People ask me, 'Who would I be happy playing?' and I look and see Oklahoma or Oklahoma State — you tell me. "Being the champion for the regular season proves more to me than anything. The tournament is just won by the hottest team."

Tickets for the tournament can be purchased by calling (405) 236-5000.

### Kuzmic's monster week gets notice

Junior third baseman Craig Kuzmic was named Louisville Slugger National Player of the Week by Collegiate Baseball just two days after setting the Texas A&M single-season record for home runs at 21.

Kuzmic hit .563 (9-of-16) in four games last week with six extra-base hits, five of which were home runs, and 11 RBI. He also extended his hitting streak to 15 games with his ninth-inning triple against Baylor on Sunday. Kuzmic eclipsed the home run record

set in 1986 by Mike Scanlin on Saturday with a pair of blasts in the Big 12 Championship clincher for the Aggies.

### Sports passes no good for Regional

In the event that Texas A&M is selected as host for an NCAA Regional Tournament, ticket prices will increase and students will not be able to obtain them with their sports passes.

Athletic Director Wally Groff said Texas A&M will keep with its former policy of raising ticket prices \$1 for post-season play over the regular season prices.

The proposed prices being made to the NCAA in the Aggies' bid are \$50 for reserved seating passes to the entire tournament, \$8 for single game reserved tickets and \$6 for single game general admission tickets.

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