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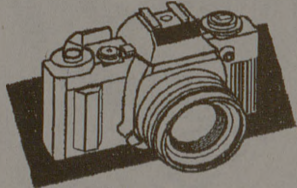
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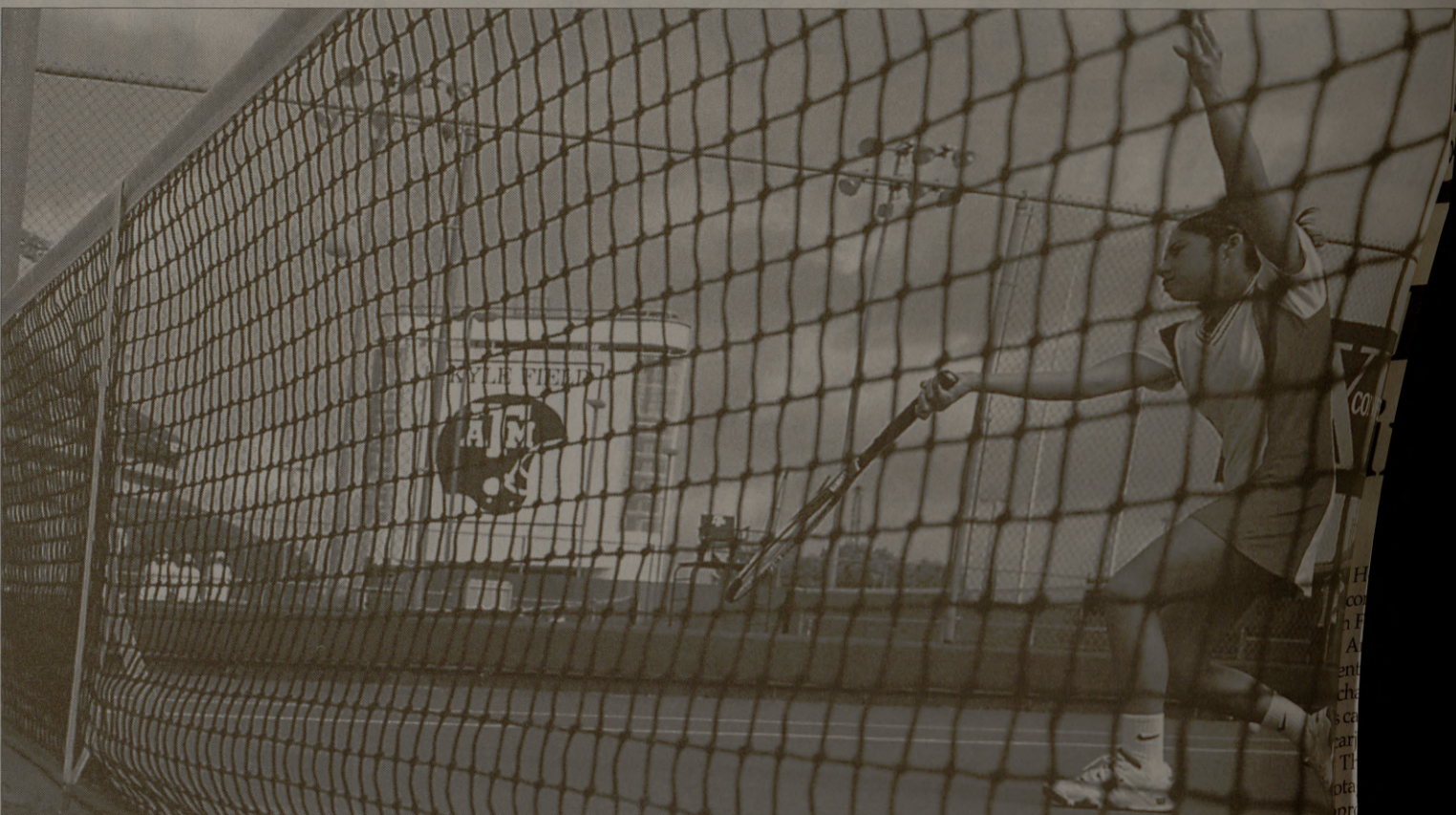
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Seleste Acosta, of Friendswood, Texas, volleys as part of her training for tennis camp this week. Camps will run throughout the next two weeks at Texas A&M.

Toxic fire ants wreak havoc on trout community

SATTLER, Texas (AP) — Fire ants are being blamed for a major fish kill in the Guadalupe River, where wildlife officials say thousands of trout have died after eating dead ants.
 An estimated 22,000 trout have been killed this year along a 15-mile stretch of the Guadalupe below Canyon Dam toward New Braunfels, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
 Fire ants are toxic to the fish. Some trout had as many as 500 ants in their stomachs, officials said.
 Andrew Labay, regional pollution biologist with the wildlife department,

said fire ants go on mating flights after the first strong rain every May. From 3,000 to 4,000 winged ants per mound take to the air to continue their species, he said.
 "They fly up high and mate," Labay was quoted as saying in Wednesday's *San Antonio Express-News*.
 "The males die and fall to the ground. The females land and start new colonies. There is a high concentration of fire ant mounds along rivers because of the water and the deep soil. So a lot of the ants land in the river," Labay said.

Experts determined three years ago fire ants were to blame for the yearly deaths, officials said.
 Agency spokesman Steve Lightfoot said he talked to a diver who inspected the fish kill last Thursday.
 "He found the bottom of the river was covered with dead trout," Lightfoot said.
 Trout have small air bladders, so they don't bloat and float like other fish. Instead, they sink and collect in deep pools and eddies, where they are quickly consumed by scavengers like turtles and crawfish.
 "We suspect now that the previ-

ous fish kills were similar to one," Lightfoot said. "But he added to the toll was that they stocked trout two or three ago. They're hatchery fish, so they're hitting that lands on the surface."
 Most of the fish killed were among the 250,000 to 5-inch trout stocked the last three weeks. But were in the more mature to 13-inch range.
 Officials plan to wait until the fire ants' mating season stocking the river again.

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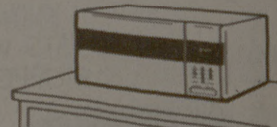
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