

Bombs away

A&M Baseball sweeps UT-Pan Am to start season

BY MICHAEL TAGLIANTI
The Battalion

Fans were surprised when a College Station fire truck showed up at Olsen Field Saturday afternoon. Unfortunately for the UT-Pan American Broncos, the truck was there to put out a fire in a dumpster in "Aggie Alley" and not to cool off the red-hot Aggie baseball bats.

Using the new "deadened" bats, made heavier to cut down on swinging speed, the 11th-ranked Texas A&M Baseball Team unleashed a barrage of 49 runs over three games to sweep the season opening series against the Broncos.

A&M opening-day starter Casey Fossum, who drew an estimated 40 major league scouts, struck out 13 over six innings while only allowing one hit and one earned run.

Courtney Weller started the seventh inning and gave up two hits and one run in three innings to earn the save in a 12-2 A&M win.

While Aggie pitching was busy dominating the UT-Pan Am batters, the Aggie hitters pounded out 14 hits and 12 runs. Junior transfer Shawn Schumacher got the hit parade going with a solo home run in the fourth inning. Steve Leonard went 3 for 4 with two runs batted in, Sean Heaney went 2 for 5 with a double and a triple and Steve Scarborough went 2 for 2 with 2 RBIs to lead the Aggies' offensive attack.

The first game of the Saturday double-dip pitted two possible early round draft picks against each other on the mound. The major league scouts were out in force to watch A&M's Chance Caple go up against Pan Am's Omar Ortiz. Ortiz kept it close giving up only one run over three

innings but tired in the fourth, and sophomore Daylan Holt made him pay, hitting a grand slam to highlight an eight-run inning.

Mike Cox and Gary Sorden were un-

battled and with the players who came off the bench.

"Chance Caple pitched well," Johnson said. "He did not have his major breaking pitch that he can get over the top, but he made good adjustments. The thing that pleased me the most is we showed our depth. We had guys coming off the bench and they had some success and were ready to play."

Heaney led the Aggie hitters going 3 for 3 with a double and 2 RBIs. Steve Truitt went 3 for 4 with 2 doubles and 3 RBIs and Holt went 2 for 4 with a double, a home run and 5 RBIs.

The last game of the series can be summed up in two words — Daylan Holt. Holt tied an A&M record with three home runs in the game, and Pan Am never really threatened as the Aggies won 22-5.

Matt Ward started the game but was pulled in the fourth. Kyle Holle came in and pitched 2 1/3 innings, giving up one run to get the win. The Aggies hit six home runs in the game with Truitt, Del Lindsey and Joe O'Jibway, each homering to go with Holt's three. Holt tied John Curl's record set in 1995 when he had three home runs in a game against the University of Texas.

Despite all the preseason hoopla, Holt said that he did not see much of a difference in the new heavier bats.

"I don't think there is a big difference in the bats," Holt said. "I think it will make a difference in the nine-hole hitter or eight-hole hitter where there is not as much bat speed, but overall, I don't see anything wrong with the bats."

The Aggies will travel to Tucson, Ariz., to take on the University of Arizona Wildcats in a three-game series starting Friday.

A&M Baseball vs. UT-Pan American Feb. 5-6

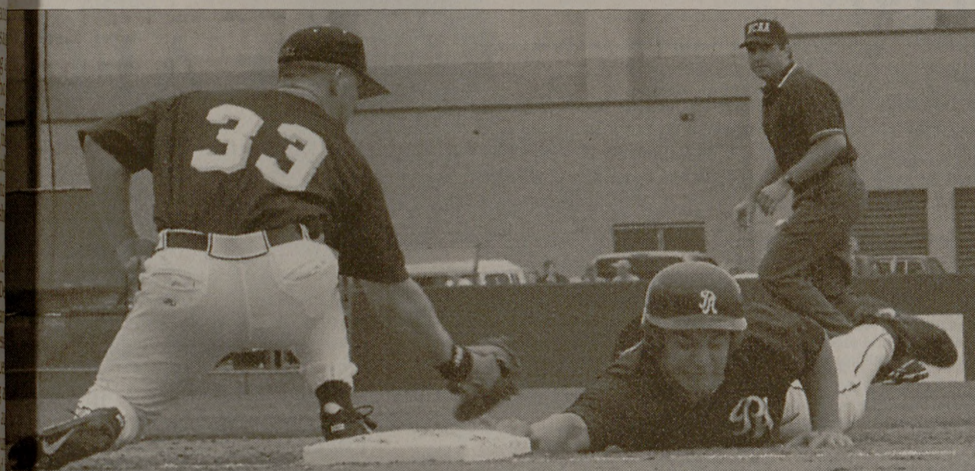
Game 1 (Friday):
12-2 — A&M
W Fossum (1-0)
L Green (0-2)

Game 1 (Saturday):
15-1 — A&M
W Caple (1-0)
L Ortiz (1-1)

Game 2 (Saturday):
22-5 — A&M
W Holle (1-0)
L Bottenfield (0-1)

able to stop the Aggie onslaught for Pan Am as the Aggies scored six runs in the next two innings on their way to a 15-1 victory. Chance Caple pitched six innings giving up one run on two hits while striking out seven. Freshman Khaled Ballouli struck out two and pitched a perfect seventh inning to complete the game.

Coach Mark Johnson said that he was impressed with the way Chance Caple



CARIÑO CASAS/THE BATTALION



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

TOP: Senior first baseman John Scheschuk applies the tag to a Bronco baserunner.

RIGHT: Seniors Steven Truitt and Shawn Schumacher congratulate sophomore Daylan Holt at home plate after Holt's grand slam. Holt finished Saturday's doubleheader with four homers and 11 RBIs.

Aggies hand Baylor 10th straight Big 12 defeat

BY SANTOSH VENKATARAMAN
The Battalion

"We know we're better than em."

It has been a while since a Texas A&M Men's Basketball player would make such an assessment out a conference opponent, but senior forward Shanne Jones' post-game comment rang true after the Aggies' 69-58 victory over Baylor University on Saturday.

The win completed A&M's first one-and-away sweep of a conference opponent since a sweep of Baylor in the 1994-95 season and capped the Aggies' two-game losing skid. A&M climbed back to the 500 mark (10-10, 3-7 Big 12) while the Bears (6-17, 0-10 Big 12) stumbled to their tenth consecutive defeat.

It was Jones who responded to poor performance Feb. 3 against the University of Texas to lead the way for the Aggies with 19 points, coming in the second half.

"We expected to be much closer (at Texas) if I had come to play," Jones said. "But I didn't, so this time I was hoping to get out of the slump I had at Texas and come out and be assertive."

A&M also cut down on turnovers from the last two ball

games. The Aggies had committed 30 turnovers in each of their previous two contests but had only 17 against the Bears.

"We worked on that in practice, trying to take care of the ball," junior guard Clifton Cook said. "Every time we turned the ball over, we had to do sprints. We wanted to cut that down."

A&M Men's Game Leaders

Points:
Shanne Jones (19)
Clifton Cook (19)

Rebounds:
Shanne Jones (5)

Assists:
Clifton Cook (4)

Cook tied Jones for team-high scoring honors with 19 points and contributed four assists and four steals. A&M junior guard Michael Schmidt chipped in with nine points and three steals. Jamie Kendrick led Baylor with a game-

high 21 points.

The game appeared to be heading for a rout as A&M jumped out to a quick 13-2 lead, employing some full-court pressure that resulted in five Baylor turnovers in the first three minutes of the game.

However, the Aggies allowed Baylor to climb back into the game, and a resounding two-handed dunk by Kendrick cut the Aggie lead to 26-24 with 7:24 left in the half. The Aggies pulled back ahead by seven, but Baylor would close the half with a 12-3 scoring run to take a 36-34 lead at the break.

At the start of the second half, Coach Melvin Watkins shuffled his lineup to include junior forward Jason Boeker and freshman guard Shelton Wise. The moves paid off as Wise connected on a jumper and a layup for the Aggies' first four points of the half.

Watkins eventually reinserted his starters, and a run of 11 straight Aggie points, including nine by Jones, gave A&M the lead for good at 51-43 midway through the second half.

A&M would extend the margin to as much as 16 points on the strength of solid free-throw shooting down the stretch, as A&M made 21 out of 29 free throws for the game.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Senior forward Shanne Jones pulls down a rebound against the Baylor Bears during the Aggies' 69-58 victory Saturday in College Station.

Women win at Houston meet

Men's Track team finishes third at weekend Cougar Invitational

BY TOM KENNEDY
The Battalion

If momentum can boost a team's performance, the Texas A&M Women's Track and Field Team received a welcome sign on Saturday in Houston. In their last meet before the Big 12 Championships, the Aggies came out on top with 126 points at the Cougar Invitational.

The women, who upset 17th-ranked University of Houston among others, were keyed by four individual victories and a slew of other top-three performances.

For the second time in two weeks, sophomore Meshell Trotter extended her own A&M school record, 55 feet 6.25 inches, in the weight throw to claim the individual title. Senior Kelli Schrader took third in the same event with a throw of 51-6 1/2.

Sophomore Christina Ohaeri and junior Chimika Carter took first and second in the 60-meter high hurdles with times of 8.49 and 8.53 seconds, respectively.

Junior Ann Dwyer came within two seconds of her school record in the 800-meter run on the way to a first-place finish in a time of 2:14. In other distance events, sophomore Debbie Villareal placed second in the 3,000-meter run with a season-best time of 10:07.

Freshman Shylia Williams was victorious in the long jump with a leap of 18-7 1/4. Other key field event performances included freshman Robyn Burkhardt in the high jump (2nd, 5-7 3/4), freshman Erica Boren (2nd, 10-6) in the pole vault and sophomore Meghan Koonce (2nd, 43-11 1/4) and freshman Terra Taylor (3rd, 41-7 1/4) in the shot put.

Freshman Natalie Young proved to be a multi-event threat after placing second in the 200-meter dash (24.91) and third in the 60-meter dash (7.63) in season-best times.

In the 1,600-meter relay, the Aggie "B" team took second in a season-best time of 3:56.85 while edging the "A" team, which took third with a time of 3:58.98.

The Texas A&M Men's Track and Field team placed third with 88 points behind nationally ranked University of Texas (158 points) and Texas Christian University. The men upset the University of Houston, ranked 25th by Trackwire.

The Aggie men were led by two first-place performances. Sophomore Mike Hummel lowered his team-leading time in the mile to 4:13 on his way to a four-second victory, while junior Travis Grasha equaled his season-best toss of 55-2 3/4 to win the weight throw.

The field events aided the Aggies' cause as sophomore Bashir Ramzy set a personal record after soaring 50-9 1/2 on his way to second place in the triple jump. Senior Mike Lowrance had his best throw of the year (53-3/4) to place second in the shot put and junior Richard McDonald took second in the pole vault after clearing 16-2 3/4. The 1,600-meter relay team closed out the scoring for the Aggies after posting a season-best time of 3:15.67 to wrap up a second-place finish.

Both squads have an open date next weekend before heading to the Big 12 Indoor Championships in Manhattan, Kan., on Feb. 19-20.



BOREN

Hot shooting not enough as women fall to OU, 83-71

BY AARON COHAN
The Battalion

Defense. No matter how many times it is stressed, if a team does not play strong "D," they're not going to win.

The Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team learned that lesson the hard way Saturday afternoon, losing to the University of Oklahoma, 83-71, despite shooting 53 percent from the field.

A&M coach Peggie Gillom said defense was the deciding factor in the Aggie loss.

"No matter what you do in a game, if you don't play good defense, you will never win," she said.

The Aggies struggled with the Sooners' inside game the whole night. In the first half, second-chance points and offensive rebounding helped Oklahoma stay one step ahead of the Aggies. Even a 67-percent first-half output by A&M could not match the intensity the Sooners established after every loose ball and defensive possession. Junior forward Phyl-

sha Whaley scored 15 of her 23 points in the first half to give the Sooners a solid 42-31 half-time lead.

A&M Women's Game Leaders

Points:
Brandy Jones (21)

Rebounds:
Prissy Sharpe (6)

Assists:
Kerrie Patterson (10)

The second half was more of the same, as OU sophomore forward Desiree Taylor pumped in 18 of her 20 points to help seal the game for the Sooners.

"Every time she (Taylor) got the ball, she could turn around and shoot," Gillom said. "She just got too deep inside all night long."

A perceived lack of defen-

sive tenacity hurt the Aggies, who repeatedly gave up inside position and were outrebounded, 39-23.

Oklahoma coach Sherri Coale said the Sooners' hard work paid off with a tough road win.

"I was so proud of the way my girls hustled today," Coale said. "It takes a lot to win a conference game like this on the road."

The Aggies were not so happy with their lackluster defensive performance.

"We're not coming together as a team," sophomore forward Brandy Jones said. "Our defense was horrible today. We just weren't communicating."

Gillom said A&M would play hard down the season stretch despite some close losses.

"You have to keep going and going," Gillom said. "We have played too many of these close games to know not to give up."

The Aggies' record now stands at 7-13, 2-8 in Big 12 play. Another tough contest awaits the Aggies in Lubbock Wednesday when they travel to face No. 6 Texas Tech University.



CARIÑO CASAS/THE BATTALION

Senior guard Kerrie Patterson glides in for a shot against the Oklahoma Sooners Saturday at Reed Arena.