

## Rangers' Palmeiro deals with frustration of rehabing knee injury

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. (AP) — As his Texas teammates finish tucking in their jerseys and begin heading out of the clubhouse for batting practice, Rafael Palmeiro takes his time lathering cream cheese and jelly on a bagel. These days, he's in no hurry.

Palmeiro spends most of his time in the lonely training room recovering from two operations on his right knee. He is working hard in hopes of

being back by opening day, but it is just not the same as being on the field, especially not for the major leaguer who has played more games this decade than everyone but Cal Ripken and not when it's his first year back in Texas.

"Being in here is the tough part," Palmeiro said in a nearly empty clubhouse. "But my teammates have been very encouraging. They've tried to make me feel a part of it, even though I haven't

been out there."

Palmeiro underwent arthroscopic surgery Feb. 10 to clean out some rough cartilage under his right kneecap probably caused by wear and tear from his off-season regimen of running stairs. Less than four weeks later, Palmeiro was jogging and tore the cartilage in his knee, forcing another operation. Doctors said the injuries aren't related and Palmeiro calls them "a fluke, a coincidence."

## Hitting the links



Senior Ryan Palmer, tees off at the Cleveland Golf/Morris Williams Collegiate Tournament Tuesday at the Austin Country Club.

## Men's Tennis Team faces ACU, Ohio State

Aggies look to get back on track after defeats in 2 of their last 3 matches

BY AL LAZARUS  
The Battalion

The No. 21 Texas A&M Men's Tennis Team will take on Abilene Christian University and Ohio State University in a doubleheader today at the A&M Varsity Tennis Center. The Aggies (8-2,3-0) will face ACU at noon followed by OSU at 6 p.m.



CASS

After starting the season 7-0, the Aggies have lost two of three matches heading into today's doubleheader.

The losses came against No. 2 University of Illinois in last weekend's Blue-Gray Classic in Montgomery, Ala., and No. 4 Duke University March 16 in College Station.

"We're just looking forward to getting our rhythm back and getting a few wins," junior Juan Aramburo said.

A&M blanked ACU, 7-0, last season in a match moved to an indoor facility in The Woodlands due to rain. In 1996, the Aggies defeated the Buckeyes, 6-1.

A&M coach Tim Cass says Aggies are expecting a tough match from OSU.

"Ohio State is a solid school," Cass said. "They'll be in here ready to play."

Cass said although their bad blood between the two teams revenge could still play a factor today's match.

"Hopefully we can try to get a little revenge for our football losses to them in the Sugar Bowl," he said.

Cass said playing a doubleheader allows the Aggies to show their depth.

"We have very good depth. This will give us an opportunity to play more of our guys," Cass said.

"Our guys work so hard, it's our No. 1 or No. 12."

In Tuesday's Rolex Rankings, the Aggies fell despite going undefeated in the rankings period, defeating Louisiana State University, 58 University of North Carolina.

For the third straight year, the Aggies' No. 1 team of sophomores Caradima and Shuon Madala the top-ranked doubles team.

## Bliss signs as Baylor new basketball coach

WACO (AP) — Dave Bliss, the former Southern Methodist basketball coach who became the winningest coach in New Mexico history, was named Tuesday to rebuild the faltering program at Baylor.

Bliss, 55, led the Lobos to a 246-108 record over the past 11 seasons, winning at least 20 games in 10 seasons. New Mexico went to the NCAA tournament seven times during his tenure and advanced at least into the second round the last four years.

Still, he found plenty of criticism in Albuquerque. That, combined with a lucrative Baylor contract — reportedly worth \$600,000 a year, double his New Mexico deal — probably were the reasons for Bliss' decision, New Mexico athletic director Rudy Davalos said.

"He's got to move on, and we've got to move on," Davalos said.

This year, New Mexico had a 25-9 record and again went to the NCAA tournament, losing in the second round to Connecticut.

At Baylor, Bliss will be taking over a program at its low ebb. The Bears are finishing a five-year NCAA probation for recruiting vio-

lations and have been a perennial contender in the Big 12. This season finished 6-24 overall and in the Big 12 under coach Miller.

Bliss encountered criticism in recent years over a failure of New Mexico to enter into the NCAA tournament during a news conference. Bliss said the Lobos loss to Connecticut was a "disappointment."

"The hardest thing was coach against in Albuquerque the community," Bliss said.

After last season, Bliss received an \$18,000 raise to a \$140,000. His total financial package, including basketball shoe and radio and television contracts, is estimated at \$300,000.

Bliss was coach at SMU from 1980-88, when he compiled a 101 record and won the Southwest Conference title in 1988. He was 77-62 while at Oklahoma from 1975-80.

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