

SPORTS

A&M set for show in Omaha

BY REECE FLOOD
The Battalion

It would be difficult for the Texas A&M to top Sunday's late-inning heroics against Clemson University, but they will try when they face the nation's best teams this week at the College World Series at Omaha, Neb.

After being blown out by A&M, 20-3, last Friday, the Tigers won Saturday, 10-3, to force a third game.

Senior Matt Ward started for the Aggies Sunday and carried A&M into the sixth inning, when junior Casey Fossum was brought to the mound.

After pitching for a victory against Clemson Friday, Fossum received another win against the Tigers Sunday, beating them, 5-4.

A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson said he was impressed by the righthander's performance Sunday.

"I thought he threw exceptionally," he said.

Also playing an important role in the game were the four double plays made on defense, including a move by rightfielder Daylon Holt to catch a fly ball and throw the ball to catcher Shawn Schumacher for a tagout, preventing a Tiger run.

Highlighting the Sunday game were the two home runs hit by Steve Scarborough and Steven Truitt in the top of the ninth inning to give the Aggies the lead for good.

A&M seemed to be running on all cylinders, as a strong pitching performance, key defensive plays and big hits in clutch situations helped them to the victory.

Johnson praised his team's poise in the clutch.

"[This team has] a type of character that doesn't give up," he said. "It is resilient; it has



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Aggie senior first baseman **John Scheschuk** (left) and the Texas A&M Baseball Team will begin their pursuit of the College World Series title Saturday against Florida State University.

strong resolve towards reaching goals.

"We've had some good teams. This isn't the only team (to make the CWS). Once you make it to Omaha, then you separate yourself from the other ones regardless of how good they were."

The Aggies, who carry an overall record of 52-16 with them into the tournament, said they are excited about making the trip to Omaha.

"It's pretty much unbelievable," junior rightfielder Daylon Holt said. "It's like a lifelong dream come true."

Senior first baseman John Scheschuk said he is ready for the trip.

"I've been waiting four years to do this," he said.

Although the team is hoping for success in Omaha, it will not be an easy task. A&M will play their first game of the tournament Saturday against the Florida State University Seminoles (53-12).

"Somebody said you really got a tough draw by drawing Florida State," Johnson said. "My

response was 'Who's an easy draw at Omaha?'"

The Seminoles will start ace pitcher Nick Stocks (12-2) this Saturday. Stocks, against whom batters have hit just .218, received a slight jaw injury during a celebration pileup after the Super Regional victory.

The Aggies know it will be difficult to win the College World Series, but they said they are confident in their abilities.

"People [have] got to understand that when you face good pitching, you're not going to get 10 runs," Scheschuk said. "But they're going to be facing good pitching, too."

A&M will start Fossum (12-6) Saturday.

Fossum said he was encouraged by his performance last weekend.

"My slider was the best it's been all season," he said. "I'm looking forward to hopefully having that pitch, my best slider, when I come into the game on Saturday."

Florida State has not had a lot of luck in the College World Series. The Seminoles have

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College elite take World Series field

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The 1999 College World Series kicks off Friday, as eight teams from across the country gather in pursuit of the same goal.

The University of Miami, Florida State University, Cal State-Fullerton, Oklahoma State University, the University of Alabama, Stanford University and Rice University will all compete against the Texas A&M Baseball Team to bring home the trophy.

Each team has battled its way through Regional and Super Regional competition to make it to Rosenblatt Stadium in Omaha, Nebraska.

Oklahoma State University (46-19) will get the tournament started by taking on Alabama (51-14) Friday at 2:30 p.m.

The Cowboys of Oklahoma State will rely on the play of junior outfielder Lamont Matthews (30 HRs) and senior Josh Holliday.

Holliday, who split time this season between third base and catcher, has an on-base percentage of nearly .500. The Cowboys beat Baylor University in Waco last weekend to win the Super Regional. Oklahoma State has won one title in 19 previous World Series appearances.

After beating Louisiana State University in their Super Regional, Alabama is riding a 15-game winning streak into Omaha. Senior shortstop Andy Phillips is in third place on the SEC's all-time home-

run list and will try to extend his 33-game hitting streak. Senior outfielder G. W. Keller also is looking to play an important role in the tournament at the plate and on the base paths with nearly 40 stolen bases on the season. Alabama is making its fifth appearance in the College World Series.

The University of Miami (46-13) will take on Rice University (58-13) Friday night at 6:30 in a probable pitchers' duel.

Miami coach Jim Morris is taking his team to the College World Series for the sixth consecutive season.

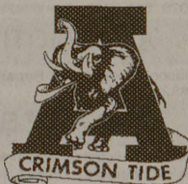
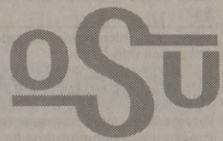
The Hurricanes rode the coattails of veteran College World Series pitchers David Gil and Alex Santos to a win over a tough Wake Forest team to win the Super Regional. Miami has won two national titles in 17 trips to the CWS.

Coach Wayne Graham also is taking the Rice Owls to Omaha on the back of a strong pitching staff.

Rice's all-time wins leader junior Jeff Nicholls (15-3) and junior Mario Ramos lead a powerful rotation that produces victories despite the Owls' offensive shortcomings.

Rice, which defeated Southwestern Louisiana State University to win its Super Regional in Houston, is making its second appearance in the College World Series.

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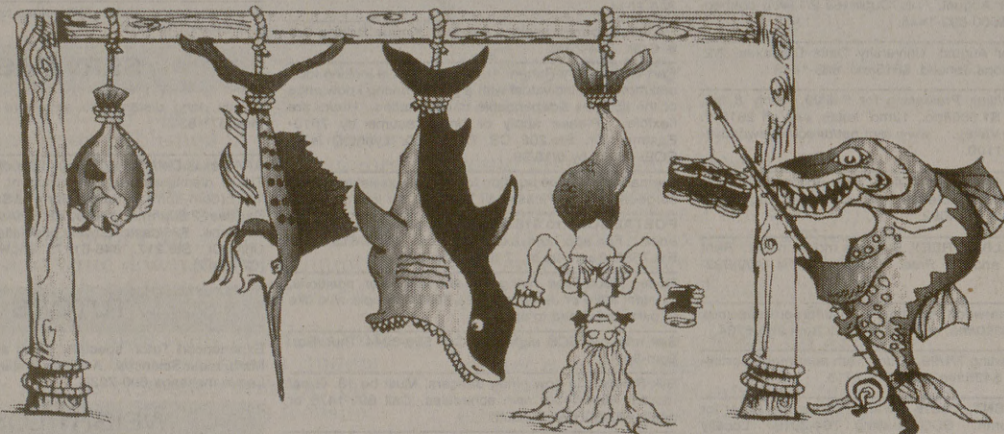
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