

## Ags host UTSA in home opener

BY DOUG SHILLING  
The Battalion

For the Texas A&M baseball team, this weekend was not exactly how it wanted to begin the year. The Aggies started off the 2000 season by losing two out of three games in the Spalding Fiesta Tournament in Albuquerque, N.M.

A&M lost its first game of the season, 5-3, to the Washington State University Cougars, bounced back to take its second game against the Oregon State University Beavers, 9-4, and dropped Sunday's game against the Cougars by a score of 14-4.

The Aggies return home today, hoping to get back on the winning track against the University of Texas-San Antonio Roadrunners at 3 p.m. at Olsen Field.

A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson said he thought last weekend was a good learning experience for the young Aggie team.

"There really were some bright and encouraging spots," Johnson said. "You want to learn and win at the same time but it always doesn't happen that way. It was very exciting for a lot of the guys to get out there in their first time in an Aggie uniform. It didn't surprise me that we had some guys with anxiety over swinging and overpitching."

One of the brighter spots over the weekend for A&M was junior rightfielder Daylan Holt. He left off where he did last year, leading the Aggies in batting with a .500 average and had one double, a triple and one RBI.

Holt said the Aggies need to continue growing and learning as a team.

"We just have to build on last weekend," he said. "We did some things good and some things bad. We have to build on that and hopefully we can come in at the first game at home and get a big 'W.'"

The Aggies hope to get a 'W' against a Roadrunner team which played two wild games with the Ags that were both decided in the ninth inning last year.

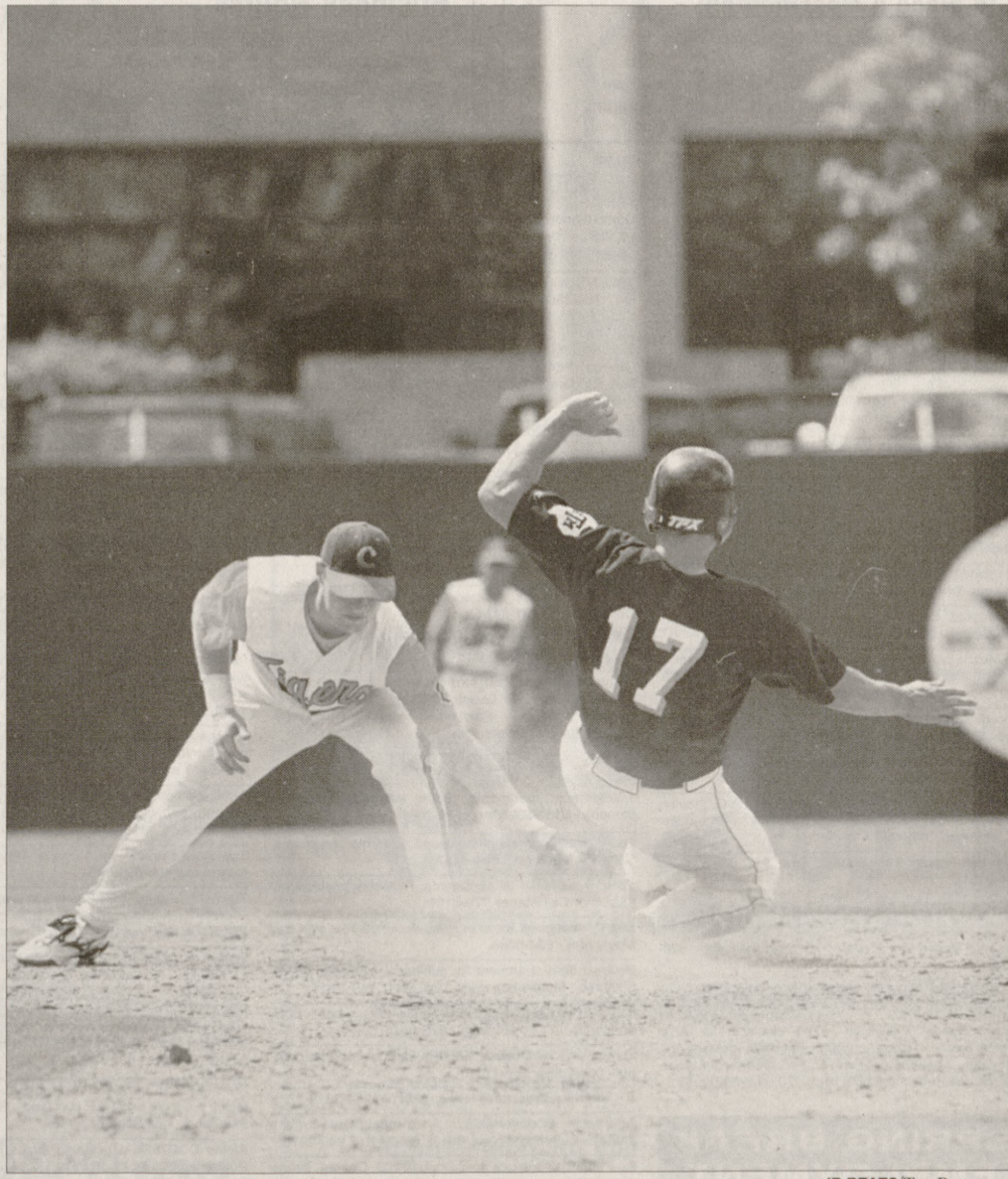
Early in the season, UTSA downed the Aggies in San Antonio, 10-9. A&M scored five runs in the top of the ninth to take the lead 9-7, but the Roadrunners scored three in the top of the inning to take the game.

The Aggies returned the favor later in the year at Olsen when they turned in a rally of their own to defeat UTSA, 12-11.

Down 10-6 in the seventh inning, the Ags scored one run in the seventh, three in the eighth and two in the ninth to secure the win.

Johnson said although he does not know much about UTSA's team this early in the season, the Roadrunners should provide a challenge for the Aggies.

"Early in the year, it's so hard to get scouting re-



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M junior rightfielder **Daylan Holt** slides into second base last season against Clemson University.

**Holt** and the Aggies take on UTSA Tuesday at 3 p.m. at Olsen Field.

"Guys change so much and teams change so much, I really don't know much about their ballclub. They have played us very well in the past, however. We had a great comeback on them last year and we were lucky to have won that game. So they aren't a weak team."

The Aggies' scheduled starter is Ryan Warpinski. Warpinski, a freshman from Maribel, Wis., will be making his first start as an Aggie.



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M senior **Angie Long** hopes to lead the Aggie softball team in 2000.

## Softball begins season

BY JASON LINCOLN  
The Battalion

The Texas A&M softball team raised the bar last season, posting 41 wins and earning its first trip to an NCAA regional since 1996.

Tuesday at 7 p.m. the Aggies will try to pick up where they left off in the season opener against Sam Houston State University at the Aggie Softball Complex.

The postseason experience brought big changes in Aggie softball. A&M is no longer a mystery team. The young Aggies of 1999 have learned they can compete with the best.

Competing in the nation's second strongest softball conference, the Big 12, A&M is used to playing top teams. With more experience under their belts this season, the Aggies expect to build on last season.

A&M returns eight starters into the mix for the 2000 season. Led by Amy Vining, Lisa Klam and Tiffany Esters, the Aggies bring back the best of their offense and defense.

"We've got a great nucleus coming back," A&M softball coach Jo Evans said.

Vining, the Aggies' lead-off pitcher, leads the A&M defense with an ERA of 1.26 and 22 wins last season.

Klam and Esters return the offen-

sive power that led the team into the postseason in 1999.

Klam, the Aggies' second baseman/catcher, powered the Aggies with a .348 batting average, 15 home runs and 23 stolen bases in her freshman season.

Esters brings consistent scoring to the A&M lineup. In 1999, she batted .311 and drove in a team-leading 40 RBI.

The Aggies look to build on the offensive power of Klam and Esters with four new hitters that add strength to the Aggie bats.

"This year, pitchers are going to have to pick who they want to pitch to," Klam said. "We have a lot of weapons in the line-up, one through nine."

The SHSU Bearcats are a familiar opponent to the Aggies. A&M leads the series 64-13 between the two schools and has won the last 17 games since 1995.

Despite A&M's dominance in the series, the Aggies respect the early opposition.

"They're a scrappy team," Evans said. "They never quit and they always give us a good game."

Evans will start Vining on the mound for the opener and then move to freshman pitcher Kara Weikel.

"Anybody could show up tomorrow night and we'd be fired up because our kids are ready to play," Evans said.

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