

Baseball drops home opener

Aggies shutout for first time since 1996 in 4-0 loss to Roadrunners

BY DOUG SHILLING
The Battalion

The learning experience continued for the Texas A&M baseball team yesterday at Olsen Field in front of an opening day record crowd of 3,874.

Unfortunately for A&M, the experience was once again a sour one as four University of Texas-San Antonio pitchers combined to shutout the Aggies, 4-0.

It was the first time since 1996, a span of 209 games, that A&M (1-3) had been shutout when Rice University turned the trick. It was the first time the Aggies failed to score at Olsen Field since 1995 against Texas Tech.

"Our offense didn't click at all," A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson said. "I thought we were still playing with a lot of nervousness."

"We're young, but we're into four games so I told the team that's about enough of that. We're going to have to be more competitive and play."

The Roadrunners (1-0) started off fast and took the lead quickly on the Aggies.

UTSA rightfielder sent a pitch from A&M

freshman pitcher Ryan Warpinski over the left field wall for a 1-0 lead in the first inning.

UTSA struck again in the third as they scored two more runs on a groundout by first baseman Mike Putnicki and a wild pitch by Warpinski to stretch their lead to 3-0.

UTSA baseball coach Mickey Lashley said getting an early lead was a plus for his ballclub, especially after losing a close game at Olsen last year.

"We were a little nervous early but I think the key for us today was getting a couple of runs early," Lashley said. "We have a number of new guys on our team just like the Aggies and it was their first time coming to College Station so I think it was important to get on top early. It let us relax a little bit."

"We lost a heartbreaker here last year. I thought we outplayed them then but the Aggie magic got us. So we wanted to come in here and play a good ball game. Our pitchers did a good job and we played good defense."

A&M had plenty of chances to get into the game, but never capitalized.

In the bottom of the sixth, the Aggies had

runners on first and second with one out, but sophomore third baseman Greg Porter struck out on three pitches and freshman first baseman Travis Wong grounded out to third base to end the inning.

The next inning A&M had the bases loaded with two out but sophomore leftfielder Carlos Sepulveda struckout swinging.

The Aggies once again threatened in the eighth inning with runners on second and third and only one out. Sophomore shortstop Ryan Wardinsky struck out swinging and senior second baseman Sean Heaney grounded out to end the Aggies' threat and chances.

"We were playing nervous so we needed a couple of hits to break it open and maybe get a lead," Johnson said. "I thought their pitchers did really well. They came in and threw strikes and did a good job when they were behind in the count."

A&M junior rightfielder Daylan Holt said the Aggies needed to get rallies going to gain rhythm and momentum.

See SHUTOUT on Page 9.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

UTSA centerfielder **Hunter Wenzel** attempts to get back to first base as A&M first baseman **Travis Wong** attempts to apply a tag in the Aggies' 4-0 loss to UTSA.

Vining's pitching helps Ags to 3-1 victory

BY BREE HOLZ
The Battalion

A&M junior pitcher Amy Vining had only one more batter to get through before she would have pitched her first collegiate perfect game.

"All I was thinking was, 'Don't think about it Amy,'" Vining said.

But with two outs and the count at one ball and one strike, Sam Houston State University first baseman Candace Felts belted a home run over the left field wall and ended Vining's perfect game.

"I would do anything to have that pitch back," Vining said.

Though there was no perfect game, the Texas A&M Softball Team was victorious 3-1 Tuesday night in its first game of the season at the Aggie Softball Complex.

Vining was perfect through 6 2/3 in-

nings, posting a career high 13 strikeouts.

Softball coach Jo Evans said she was very pleased with the Aggies' performance in their first game of the season.

"I can't complain one bit," she said. "I thought our team gave a great effort."

Evans was especially pleased with Vining's dynamic performance.

"Amy really pitched great," Evans said. "I thought she was really on top of her game."

"I'm sure every Aggie fan is disappointed that she didn't get her perfect game."

The Aggies recorded 10 hits and no errors, while SHSU managed only one hit and posted one error.

Senior first baseman Angie Long drove in the Aggies' first run of the game in the first inning on a triple that scored junior left-fielder Hollee Hayden, who reached base on a single.

"It's a specific goal of ours to score first," Evans said. "When you get that run early, you can at least feel that every at bat is not going to put you behind."

"Getting that first run was good for Amy, letting her know that she didn't have to be perfect, even though she almost was."

The Aggies struck again in the fifth inning after Long advanced to first on a walk and stole second base.

Sophomore second baseman Lisa Klam slammed a double into the left field corner, which scored Long and gave the Aggies their second run of the game.

Klam scored from second base on a single by junior right fielder Tiffany Esters, and the Aggies led, 3-0.

Vining said a major difference this year's team has over last year's team is the consistency and power of every hitter.

"Our opponents have to pitch to

everyone," she said. "They can't pitch around someone to get to someone else. They have to face the whole lineup, one through nine."

Evans said she was particularly impressed with the play of the team's newcomers.

"Davis hit the ball great and did really well at third base for us," she said. "[Freshman catcher] Selena Collins really took charge behind the plate and got a base hit. It's always great to see the freshmen get up there and get a base hit in their first game."

Vining said the team was very pumped up and ready to play in its first game.

"Practice is good, but you have to have that first game to really get things going," she said. "Everyone's adrenaline was pumping, and we were all so excited to play."



CODY WAGES/THE BATTALION

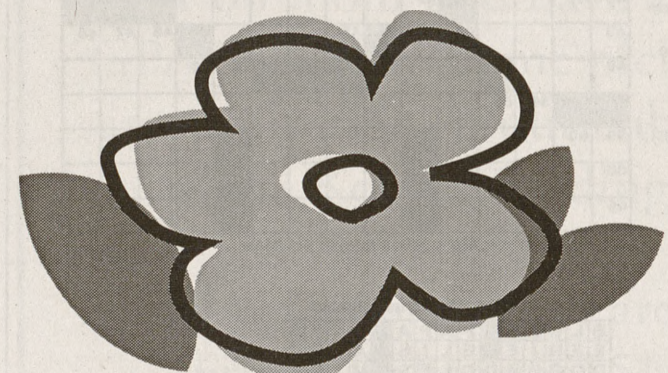
A&M senior first baseman **Angie Long** slides into home plate during the fifth inning of the Aggies 3-1 win last night.

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