

Rice steams Aggies, 7-5

Nine-game losing streak worst ever for A&M baseball

BY DOUG SHILLING
The Battalion

It was a historic night for the Texas A&M baseball team Tuesday night at Olsen Field.

Unfortunately for the Aggies, it was not the history they were looking for. The Rice University Owls used a five-run fifth inning to send the Aggies to their ninth-straight loss, 7-5.

Never before in the 98-season history of A&M baseball has a team suffered a nine-game losing streak.

Before this season, the only other eight-game losing streak for the Aggies had been the 1951-52 seasons when A&M lost the last game of the 1951 season and the first seven of 1952.

"The baseball gods are different sometimes," said A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson. "We struck out too many times. We had some chances with runners in scoring position but didn't get it done."

The Owls jumped ahead in the third inning when center fielder Jason Gray drove in second baseman Brett Smith after his lead-off double to make the score 1-0.

Then, Rice turned on the heat in the fifth inning.

Three straight bloop singles scored a run to make it 2-0. Then, shortstop Eric Arnold added an RBI double to left field to make it 3-0.

The barrage kept coming as left fielder Jesse Roman, slapped a two-run single to center field for a 5-0 Rice lead.

First baseman Derek Michaelis finished the inning with an RBI double for a 6-0 lead.

Meanwhile, A&M looked like a team on a losing streak. Rice starter Jonathan Gonzalez dominated the Aggies for the first four innings.

Gonzalez, who had struck out eight batters all season, struck out seven Aggies over the first four innings.

One of those strikeouts included junior right fielder Daylan Holt, who was rung up with the bases loaded to end the third inning.

"I thought our guys tried hard," Johnson said. "I thought we were slow getting on the first pitcher [Gonzalez]. I thought we would do better against him. I thought we fought hard though."

The Aggies did get to Gonzalez in the

fifth however as sophomore shortstop Ryan Wardinsky and Holt both had RBIs to cut it to a 6-2 lead.

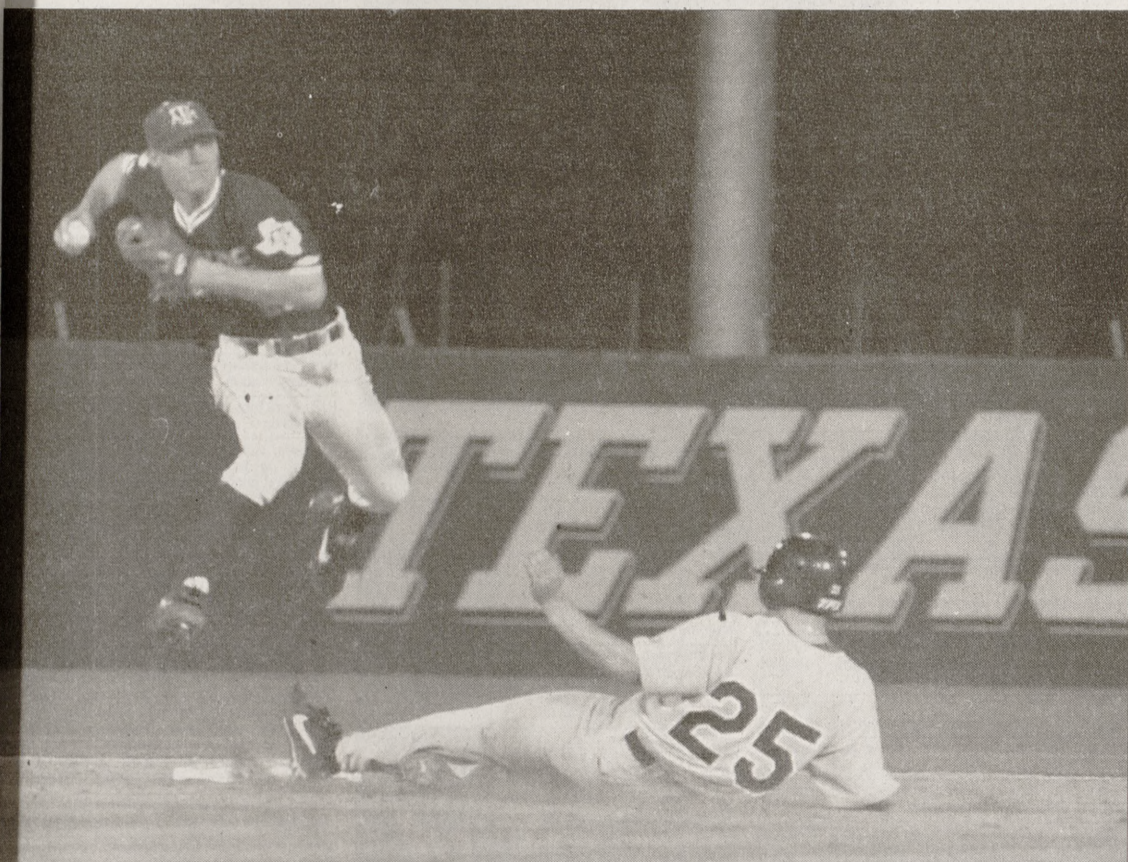
After the Owls added one more run in the sixth, the Aggies made their run in the seventh.

After senior second baseman Sean Heaney, freshman center fielder Eric Reed and Wardinsky loaded the bases to start off the inning, Holt stroked a two-run single to left field to cut the lead to 7-4. Senior first baseman Jeff Freeman added a RBI groundout to make it 7-5, but sophomore catcher Brent Howell struck out swinging to end the threat.

The Aggies made one last push in the ninth inning, loading the bases with two men out, but sophomore designated hitter Neal Stephenson flied out to the shortstop to end the rally and cap off the historic loss.

Holt, who finished the game 3-for-5 with three RBIs, said even though the team lost, he was proud of the way they finished.

"We started out slow, but the last five innings we were a different ball team," Holt said. "Yeah we lost, but we had bases loaded and a position to win it, that's all you can ask for."



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

sophomore Ryan Wardinsky jumps and throws the ball to first base in the ninth inning of the Aggies' 7-5 loss to Rice University Tuesday night at Olsen Field.

Women's Big 12 hopes disappear with UT loss

BY BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

The seventh-ranked University of Texas women's tennis team showed Texas A&M exactly why they are the free-time defending Big 12 Conference Champions Tuesday at the Varsity Tennis Center.

The Longhorns beat the Aggies by a final count of 9-0, pushing their winning streak to nine in a row and improving their perfect conference record.

Entering the match, the Aggies were holding on to the hope that they could win the conference championship with a win over UT and another against the University of Kansas on Friday, but that hope was shattered by the dominant performance put on by the Horns. Texas women's tennis coach Jeff

Moore said his team is beginning to peak at the right time.

"We've just been playing better and better since mid-season when we lost five straight, all to top-ten teams," Moore said. "In the middle of the season, we had a couple of people out. The attitude wasn't quite right and the confidence wasn't there, but now we seem to be back."

They were back from wherever they had been, and it was apparent right from the start.

UT opened up their scoring quickly with a 6-2, 6-3 win by sophomore Joanna Masongsong over A&M sophomore Leah Killen.

The score was pushed to 2-0 when Aggie senior Lisa Dingwall dropped her match, 6-1, 6-3, to Longhorn sophomore Kaysie Smashey. A&M

freshman Martina Nedorostova and sophomore Olivia Karlikova then both dropped their matches, 6-3, 6-4 and 7-5, 6-2, respectively.

It seemed the only Aggies able to put up much of a resistance against the champs were senior Kathryn Scott and freshman Cassie Haas.

Both Scott and Haas won their first sets against their opponents, 6-4. Haas lost her next two sets and ended up losing the point, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Scott won her match, but her match point was overturned by the official after a questionable out called by her opponent, Texas' Pauline Trinchant. Trinchant was able to make her comeback to take the final, 4-6, 7-5, 6-2.

In doubles play, the Longhorns made quick work of the Aggies, winning all three matches to seal the final score at 9-0.

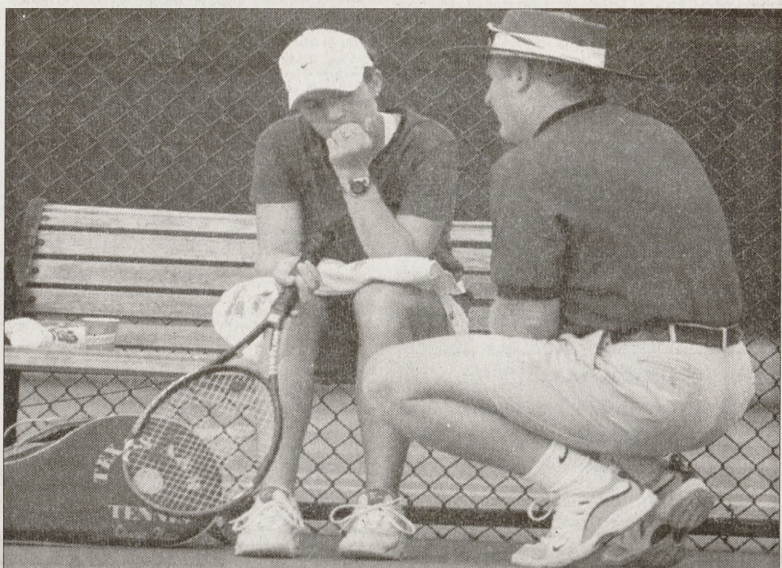
Moore said his only concern before the match, how his team would respond at the beginning, was dispelled quickly.

"I was extremely pleased with the way they came out of the blocks," Moore said. "Playing over here is always difficult because of the rivalry and the crowd. I was pleased with the way everyone came out and played aggressively."

Aggie women's tennis coach Bobby Kleinecke said he had no excuses for the loss.

"Texas just came out and took it to us," Kleinecke said. "I think more than looking at anything we did wrong, I think you've just got to credit them. They are definitely worthy of their ranking at No. 7."

The Aggies will conclude the regular season against Kansas on Friday.



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

A&M women's tennis coach Bobby Kleinecke (R) talks to freshman Cassie Haas during the Aggies' match against the University of Texas.

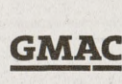
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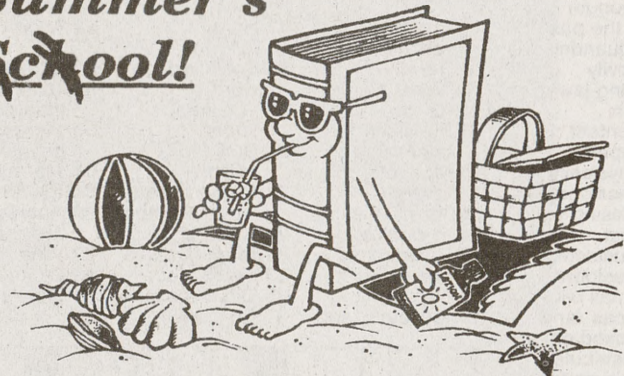
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