

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

## Baseball team falls short in Big 12 tourney

By MARK PASSWATERS  
The Battalion

Entering the Phillips 66 Big 12 baseball tournament in Oklahoma City, the Texas A&M baseball team would need to win the tournament's championship or a miracle to advance into the NCAA tournament. It got neither but came painfully close in advancing to the Championship Game against top seed and No. 1 ranked Nebraska before being sent home.

### Game 1: Texas A&M-9, Texas-8

The sixth-seeded Aggies were the surprise of the tournament, and the surprises started before the first pitch was thrown. A&M head coach Mark Johnson decided to start freshman Kyle Parcus — who had started only five games and no conference games — against the third-seeded Longhorns and their ace Gerrit Simpson, who had thrown 10 innings against the Aggies in a 4-3 loss on May 4.

The ace on this day was Parcus, who held the Longhorns scoreless for six innings while the Aggies hammered Simpson in his less than three innings of work. The Aggies grabbed a 1-0 lead in the top of the first when left fielder Neal Stephenson doubled home designated hitter Eric Shindewolf on a shot to center field that Texas center fielder Kalani Napoleon fell down chasing after.

In the second, the Aggies looked like they were prepared to let another scoring opportunity slip away when catcher Rusty Meyer lined into a double play after the first two hitters had singled. Third baseman Greg Porter popped to short left field, but left fielder Ben King and shortstop Eddie Romprey watched it fall between them, letting A&M shortstop Ryan Wardinsky score from second. An flustered Simpson then made a mistake to center fielder David Evans, who launched a hanging slider into the left field bullpen. "[Simpson] threw the same pitch right before," Evans said. "I knew something was up. I made him pay."

The Aggies were able to stretch their lead to 5-0 after Schindewolf singled, was balked to second and first baseman Jeff Freeman hit a ball to left that King misplayed, allowing Schindewolf to score.

The Aggies chased Simpson in the third after right fielder Ben Himes singled, scoring second baseman Ty Garner. The Longhorns turned to freshman Eugene Espeneli, who gave up three unearned runs in the fifth to make the score 9-0. At this point, closer Chris Russ began throwing in the Aggie bullpen. "I figured we would (10) run rule them, and I wanted to get a quick bullpen (session) in," Russ said after the game.

Russ would quickly find himself on the field instead of the bullpen, as the Longhorn bats came to life in the seventh. A tiring Parcus and freshman Robert Ramsey gave up eight runs while getting only two outs. "I was going crazy in the outfield," Himes said.

Russ came in with the bases loaded, struck out Longhorn second baseman Tim Moss to end the inning and did not allow a base runner for the next two innings. "Chris Russ did what he's done for four years," Johnson said. "He shut the door."

### Game 2: Texas A&M-8, Texas Tech-6

The Aggies next faced a Texas Tech team that had swept them in Lubbock and had already crushed Oklahoma, 17-5. Instead of collapsing under the weight of the Red Raiders' heavy-hitting lineup, the Aggies hit right back.

For the second straight day, the Aggies scored first. Evans doubled to start the bottom of the first, and was driven home when Shindewolf also doubled. The Aggies touched Tech starter Chris Phillips for another run in the second on Meyer's homer down the left field line.

Tech took a 3-2 lead in the third on a three-run homer by left fielder Jason Rainey. After giving up another run in the fourth, Johnson relieved starter Justin Moore with Steven Ponder, who shut down the Red Raider offense. For the next three innings, Ponder gave up only one hit while striking out five, walking three and hitting two batters.

While Ponder held Tech in check, the Aggies tied the game in the fifth and took the lead in the sixth when Meyer hit a sacrifice fly that scored second baseman Garner, who had led off the inning with a double. Texas A&M broke the game open in the seventh, scoring four runs off of Phillips and two relievers, all with two outs.

Texas Tech rallied for two runs in the eighth, but Johnson once again turned to Russ, who retired each of the four batters he faced.

After the game, Tech coach Larry Hays praised the performance of Ponder and Russ, saying, "They did a good job ... they made some pitches and froze us bit. With their velocity and stuff, that's an adventure." Johnson called the seventh inning rally "huge ... Situational hitting has been our nemesis."

### Game 3: Texas A&M-10, Oklahoma-1

The Aggies got a surprise Saturday when it became clear the Oklahoma Sooners would be the opponent in between them and a chance at a tournament title. OU had defeated Texas and Texas Tech on back-to-back days.

The Aggies had a surprise of their own in starting



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION  
Second baseman Ty Garner applies the tag to Nebraska's John Cole as Shortstop Ryan Wardinsky looks on during a game at Olsen Field this spring.

freshman left hander Chris French, a move that had Oklahoma coach Larry Cochell juggling his lineup 15 minutes before the game. Cochell started junior Austin Mix, who had pitched four innings of relief against Texas two days before. Johnson hoped that French would cause trouble with Oklahoma's mostly left-handed lineup; Cochell hoped that Mix would have enough left to keep the game close.

Johnson's gamble worked. Cochell's did not. "It was a heck of a ballgame in the first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth innings," Cochell said.

He left out the third inning, and with good reason. That was when every member of the A&M starting lineup scored a run before there was an out. Evans started the festivities with his second homer of the tournament, but the trouble was just beginning for Mix. He faced another five batters without retiring any before being pulled with the bases loaded in favor of Michael Bradbury. Bradbury's first pitch became a three-run double by Himes. Bradbury could not get out any of the three Aggies he faced, leaving Brandon Hankins to end the carnage. After the nine-

run, 10-hit barrage, the game was effectively over, as the Sooners could not find an answer for French.

French dominated Oklahoma for eight innings before finally running out of gas. "I didn't think I would go that far," French said, "but I really wanted to finish it out. I knew I needed to get out, but that's all right."

Johnson was effusive in his praise for French. "Chris French stepped right out and gave us a big jolt," Johnson said.

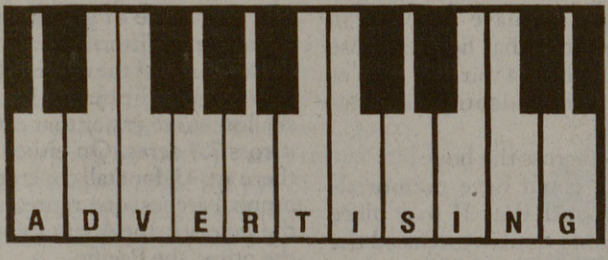
When asked about playing in the championship game, Neal Stephenson said the team's feeling was "confidence, that's for sure ... the baseball gods are watching us."

### Championship Game: Nebraska-7, Texas A&M-4

Texas A&M's run to Sunday's championship game made them the Cinderella of the tournament.

The Nebraska Cornhuskers do not like fairy tales. Led by Tournament MVP Dan Johnson's two

See TOURNAMENT on Page 6.



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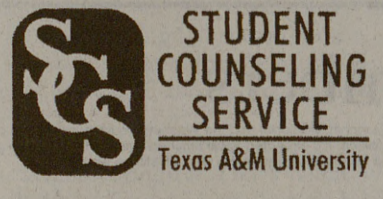
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Part of the Division of Student Affairs

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#### Multicultural Issues & Relationships Group

Monday 5:00 - 6:30 PM

The purpose of this group is to increase awareness of multicultural issues and improve communication and self-confidence when dealing with multicultural relationships. Group topics may include, but are not limited to, cultural shock; cultural religious, and social differences; and bi-cultural/multicultural relationship issues. This is open to all students.

Facilitators: Gisela Lin & Amanda Samson

#### Biofeedback Workshop

Mondays 5:00 - 6:30 PM

One-session workshops that give an introduction to relaxation techniques, including how biofeedback aids in relaxation. Individual follow-up consultation is available.

Facilitator: Steve Wilson

#### Interpersonal Growth & Exploration Group

Tuesday 3:00 - 4:30 PM

This psychotherapy group is for students who desire to live more authentically with themselves and relate more genuinely with others. Group members will be helped to explore self-limiting life patterns and share themselves with others through honest self-disclosure in a safe, supportive atmosphere.

Facilitators: Sarah Haley & Nancy Stebbins

#### Empowering Yourself Group

Wednesday 3:00 - 4:30 PM

A group for women and men with sexual molestation in their pasts. Identifying and exploring aftereffects of abuse will be the focus. Dealing with relationships, building self-esteem, and gaining power are emphasized.

Facilitators: Robert Carter & Nancy Welch

#### Non-Traditional Women's Group

Wednesday 5:00 - 6:30 PM

This therapy group for women 23+ allows each member to enter the group with her own unique issues and share, process and problem solve within a group context. This group can help individuals who are wanting to develop healthier ways of dealing with the stress of school and work, relationships, personal problems and family issues. When we begin to talk more honestly with others, we can often find new ways to deal with the problems we face.

Facilitators: Amanda Samson & Cindy Peveto

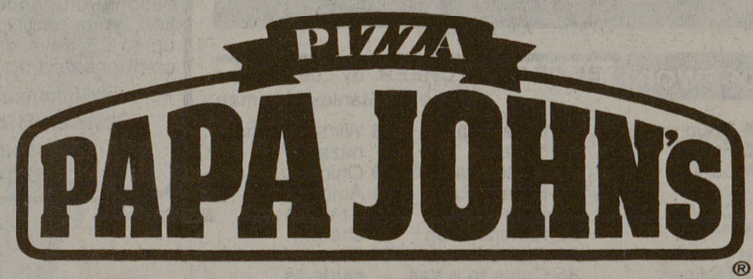
#### Dissertation/Thesis Support Group

Wednesdays 5:00 - 6:30 PM

This group is for students who are struggling with the process of writing a thesis or dissertation. Group topics include issues of competence, procrastination, anxiety, goal setting, and bureaucratic struggles.

Facilitator: Brian Williams

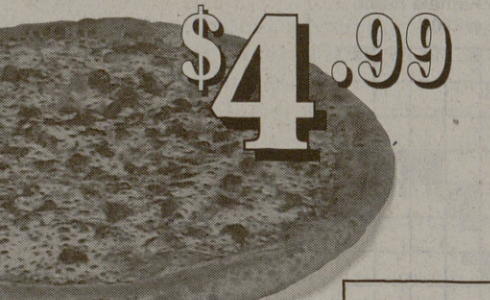
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