

Aggies falter in finals of Big 12 Tournament

Aggies' rally falls short to Bears, 4-2

By Kevin Espenlaub
THE BATTALION

On the heels of a grueling victory Saturday against the University of Texas, the third-seeded A&M men's tennis team (20-6) stepped to the courts to take on the top-seeded Baylor University team (25-1) in the finals of the Big 12 Tennis Championships on Sunday afternoon before 1,022 fans at the Varsity Tennis Center.

However, after riding the performance of freshman Lester Cook to win the Texas match, 4-3, the Aggies wore off, and the Bears, No. 6 nationally, claimed a 4-2 victory to deprive the Aggies of their third-straight Big 12 tournament title.

For the second consecutive match, the decision rested with the No. 17 Aggies' two starting freshmen, Cook and Ante Matijevic.

Trailing 3-2 with only the freshmen left standing for the Aggies, Matijevic failed to break the serve of Baylor sophomore Matias Marin and lost the fourth and deciding match of the contest, leaving Cook's match unfinished.

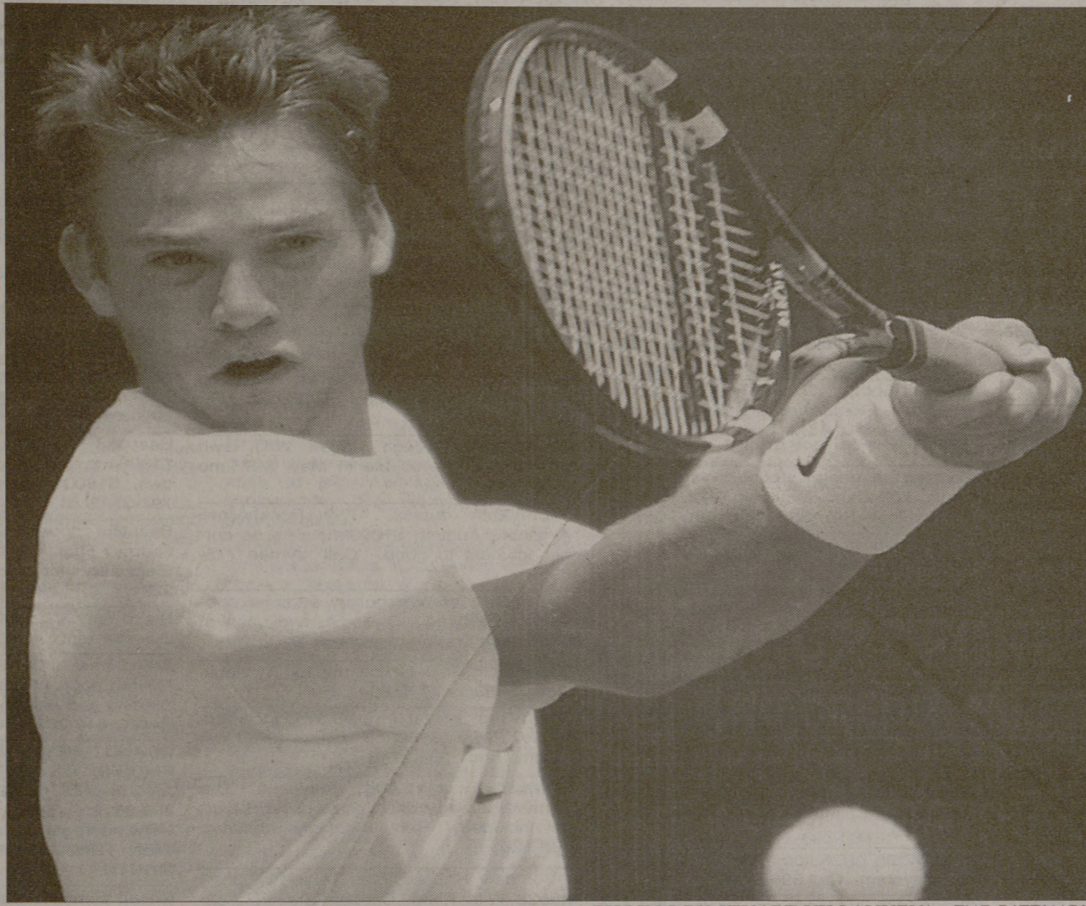
The loss marked the first time this season the Aggies have lost four singles matches after winning doubles point.

"It sure would have been interesting to see it come back to Lester's court again," said A&M head coach Steve Cass. "I'm proud of the performance of our freshmen, and obviously Baylor is the No. 6 team in the country for a reason. They're a very good team."

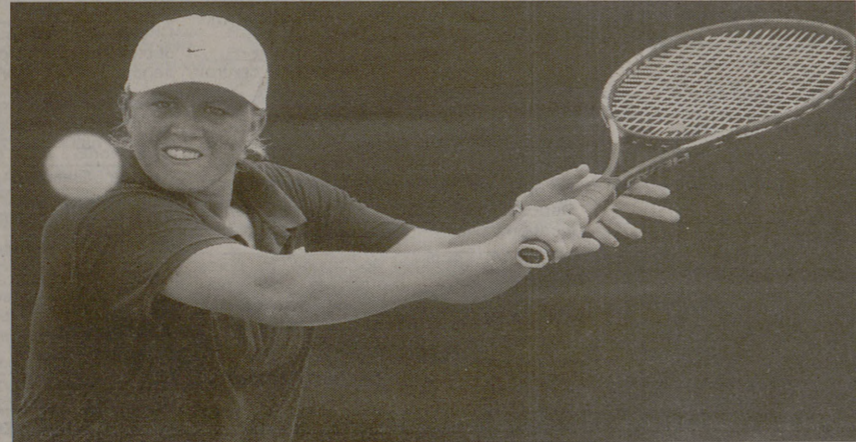
On Saturday against Texas, Matijevic fought through severe dehydration that left him barely able to stand in the middle of the third set to tie the match score at 3-3. Matijevic's win left Cook on court 3 with the opportunity to claim the match and trip to the finals.

"When it was 5-4 in the third set (against Texas), I could hear 1,100 people screaming for me," Cook said. "It sent chills down my spine. I really love the support and having their attention on me. I thrive on it and I think I play a lot better when there is a lot of energy from the crowd."

The Aggies used the momentum from the Texas victory to claim the first two matches of the doubles against the Bears, paced by the No. 15 duo of Cook and junior Ryan Newport, who managed a



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Above: Texas A&M's Ryan Newport hits a return during his match against Baylor on Sunday at the Big 12 tournament finals. The Aggies fell to Baylor, 4-2. Left: A&M's Majorie Terburgh hits a backhand during the Aggies' 5-0 loss to Texas.

Texas blows past A&M in finals

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's tennis team entered the 2002 Big 12 Tennis Championships looking to start a new trend by winning its first Big 12 tournament title.

The second-seeded Aggies also were looking for redemption against the top-seeded University of Texas after their disappointing loss to the Longhorns at home a week ago. What they got was more of the same.

A&M earned its chance by advancing to the finals on Sunday, only to fall to the Horns in front of 1,022 fans.

"The crowd support is the best that I've ever seen (at a Big 12 tournament)," said UT head coach Jeff Moore. "It has set a standard for us when we host the tournament at UT again."

A&M was confident that it would come away with the win over a team that has dominated the conference in tennis. Texas has won 80 of 81 conference matches in the last six years and every regular season and tournament title since the Big 12 was formed in 1997.

The history meant nothing to the Aggies, who were anxious to prove to everyone that they were the top team in Texas.

"We were prepared mentally and spirits were high," Kleinecke said. "We were ready to take it to them."

However, UT ended the Aggies' hopes of a tournament title as it came out strong from the opening serve.

The Longhorns dominated the Aggies in doubles play, winning on court 3, 8-1 and court 2, 8-3. The Longhorns did not stop as they continued an impressive display over the Aggies.

"I thought that we could still do it without the doubles point," Kleinecke said. "Texas just got on top and didn't let up."

As singles play began, the Aggies fell behind early, dropping the first set in five of six matches. The Longhorns closed out the match, winning on courts 2, 3, 5 and 6 within seconds of each other, giving them the 5-0 win.

"You can't fall behind against a team like Texas," Kleinecke said. "It's tough to mount a comeback against a strong team like that."

Texas' Lindsey Blau won her match against junior Ashley Hedburg on court 5, 6-2, 6-2, in what was the beginning of the end for A&M.

See **Baylor** on page 3B

See **Blowout** on page 3B

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.80	G	SI ₁	2624 ⁰⁰	1.52	I	VVS ₂	5400 ⁰⁰ Old European Cut
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.74	E	VS ₂	2850 ⁰⁰	.32	H	SI ₁	550 ⁰⁰
.73	G	SI ₂	2625 ⁰⁰	EMERALD CUT DIAMONDS			
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.68	G	SI ₁	1550 ⁰⁰ EGL Cert.				
.64	G	VS ₁	2050 ⁰⁰ EGL Cert.				
.59	I	SI ₃	950 ⁰⁰				
.55	I	VS ₁	1550 ⁰⁰				
.55	I	I ₁	850 ⁰⁰ Old Mine Cut				
.52	G	SI ₁	1225 ⁰⁰ ELG Cert.				
.51	F	VS ₂	1685 ⁰⁰				
.51	F	VS ₂	1650 ⁰⁰				
.51	F	VS ₂	1075 ⁰⁰				
.51	F	SI ₂	950 ⁰⁰				
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