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from page 1

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SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 7 • Tuesday, February 11, 2003

Aggies start 2003 campaign at Olsen Field

Baseball team opening against A&M Corpus Christi

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

Some could call Opening Day at Olsen Field a holiday, because many fans will play hooky from work and class to see this year's Texas A&M baseball team (0-0) begin its season against Texas A&M-Corpus Christi (1-0) Tuesday at 3 p.m.

Opening day is the time of year when the smell of the fresh-cut grass fills the stands as spring air brings a sense of youth to the crowd. The crack of the bat sparks the Raggies in the first-base side stands to rag at the opposing dugout.

"When you mention opening day, it's not about football or basketball or another sport but baseball," said A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson. "It has its unique ring to it. It has a flavor all of its own. I still get thrilled on opening day."

Johnson is entering his 19th season at the helm of the Aggie baseball program, and hopes to use new faces to lead A&M back to the post-season for the first time since winning the Big 12 title and moving on to the College World Series in 1999.

New faces will be something Johnson has plenty of, as the Aggies welcome 17 newcomers to the team. Six of the new players are junior college transfers. Included in the transfers is the 2002 National Junior College Player of the Year and NJCAA Male Athlete of the Year, Corey Patton.

Patton hit .465 with 32 home runs and 119 RBI's as a sophomore for Seward County Community College in Oklahoma. He will be looked at as an immediate impact player in the outfield for the Aggies.

"It's hard to express how good of a feeling it is to know you're about to start playing division

one baseball," Patton said. "To actually be able to do it here on Tuesday, it's a dream to play division one baseball."

Patton also threw 70 innings from the mound for Seward County in 2002 as he finished the season with an 8-1 record. Patton is one of nine new members of the Aggie pitching staff.

Among the new pitchers is 6'5" freshman B.J. Boening. Boening went 15-0 and had a 0.94 earned run average as a senior for Gregory-Portland High School in Yoakum, Texas. He was a 14th round draft selection of the Houston Astros.

Boening will join pitching mainstays Kyle Parcus and Justin Moore, both juniors, to give the Aggies a solid group on the mound.

First up for the Aggies are the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Islanders. The Islanders opened their season with an impressive 5-0 win over the defending

national champion and current No. 1 team, the University of Texas Longhorns.

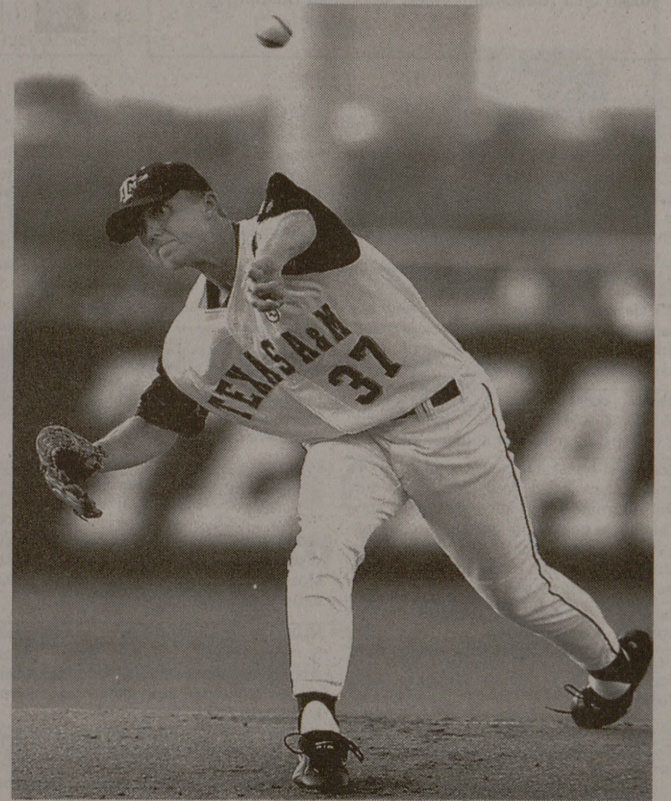
"Obviously, we'll see the pitcher that threw against Texas that was responsible for at least six innings of their shut out," Johnson said.

"Texas is a good ball club, so it's a real eye-opener to us," he said. "It's good for our team that we have a great opponent coming in."

Senior Jimmy Hammon started on the mound for the Islanders in their game against UT. Hammon threw six innings and gave up only two hits as he earned the win.

The Aggies will most likely see Hammon on the mound for opening day at Olsen Field.

"Leo Goertz and the grounds crew will have the grass cut, edged, and lined," Johnson said. "You can smell the cut of the grass and all those things that go along with it."



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION
Junior Kyle Parcus returns to help anchor the pitching staff this season.

Golf team visiting Hawaii for first spring tournament

By Marcus White
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M men's golf team is on the move again as it travels to Waikoloa, Hawaii Wednesday to compete against several of the nation's premiere programs in the Taylor Made Waikoloa Intercollegiate. This will be the Aggies' 12th consecutive visit to "The Aloha State."

The 2002-2003 season has proved to

be busy for the Aggies. So far, A&M has competed in five tournaments, including trips to Rhode Island, California, and the birthplace of golf, St. Andrews, Scotland.

The tournament Wednesday will be the Aggies' first since October's Barona Collegiate Classic in San Diego, Calif., where they finished eighth among 17 teams. Adam Carr led the way for the Aggies, taking fifth place individually by finishing the tournament at a 7-under-par 211 total points. Collectively, the Aggies finished 18 strokes behind

tournament winner San Diego State University on the way to their third straight top 10 finish.

Senior captain Shaun Helme said he believes the pieces are in place for the Aggies to make a run at the National Championship as the team hopes to build on what has been a successful start to the 2002-2003 season.

"We are gearing up (for the Hawaii trip)," Helme said. "We had a great fall and for the spring we are just trying to get off to a good start."

A&M faces stiff competition this week as the Waikoloa tournament attracts many of the country's best collegiate golfers. No. 4 Texas Christian University highlights a field that includes five teams ranked in the top 25, and several teams ranked among the top 100 programs in the country.

No. 19 Georgia Tech also returns to Waikoloa to defend its 2002 first-place finish.

Led by Adam Rubinson, the TCU Horned Frogs finished fourth among 16

teams from the 2002 NCAA National Championships in Myrtle Beach, S.C. in November. Rubinson also took first in the Western Refining All-American Classic in El Paso, Texas, out-shooting 24 All-Americans from 2001-2002 by five strokes on his way to being named Conference USA's "Golfer of the Month" for November.

The Taylor Made-Waikoloa Intercollegiate is a three-day tournament scheduled to kick off Wednesday, Feb. 10 at the Waikoloa Kings Golf Course.

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If you meet the requirements after Fall '02:

1. **Submit a Ring audit** online at www.AggieNetwork.com/AggieRing or visit the Aggie Ring office to complete an audit no later than February 11, 2003.
2. The Aggie Ring office will send you an email with the status of your audit and, if qualified, assign you an ordering session.
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 - Contact the Aggie Ring office if you do not receive your email by February 12, 2003.
3. **Order your Ring** during your assigned ordering session.
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