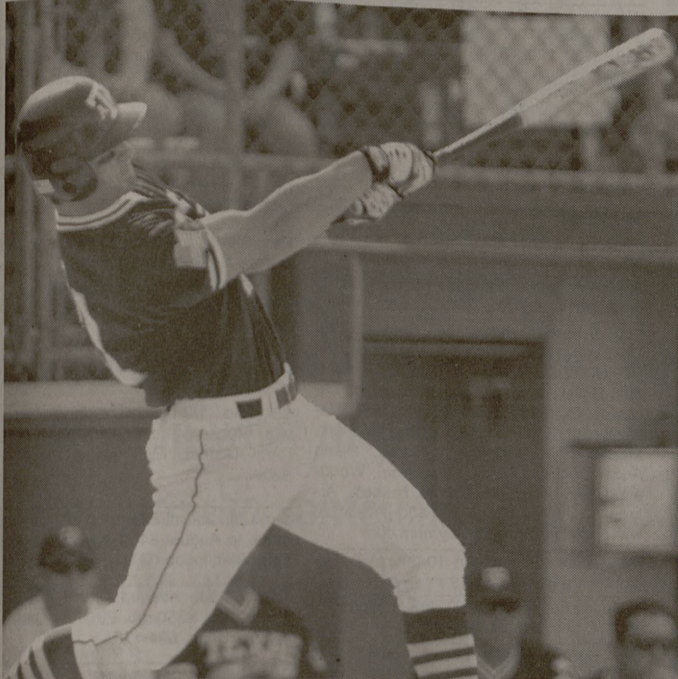


# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Monday, March 17, 2003

## No. 22 Aggies win two in series with Nebraska



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M center fielder **Justin Ruggiano** belts one of his four hits on Sunday. Ruggiano went 4-4 and drove in two runs in Sunday's victory.

### Ruggiano drives A&M offense past Big 12 opponent

By Troy Miller  
THE BATTALION

The No. 22 Texas A&M baseball team continued its strong start to the season as it opened Big 12 Conference play by taking two of three from No. 12 Nebraska over the weekend at Olsen Field.

After dropping the opening game of the series 3-2, the Aggies rallied to win 5-1 and then 6-2 in the third game.

The Aggies (19-5 overall, 2-1 Big 12) proved that they are a serious threat this season in a Big 12 Conference that boasts the defending national champions and six current top 25 teams. Nebraska (11-4, 1-2) has appeared in the last two College World Series.

"To come back and win the next two I thought was huge," said A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson. "I was really pleased with the guys. We have so many new guys they don't know what the Big 12 is."

Junior center fielder Justin Ruggiano led the Aggies in their Sunday afternoon 6-2 vic-

tory as he hit 4-4 with two singles, a double and a home run with two runs batted in.

After five and one-half innings, the game was deadlocked at 2-2. With two outs and Aggie junior right fielder Cory Patton on first base, Nebraska Head Coach Mike Anderson decided to bring in freshman reliever Tim Schoeninger for senior starter Jamie Rodriguez (0-1). Schoeninger's first pitch was a slider to Ruggiano, who sent it over the left field fence for a two-run home run in what proved to be the game-winning play.

"We faced (Schoeninger) Friday night," Ruggiano said. "He had a good slider and I was just looking for it the whole time and he threw it to me on the first pitch."

The Aggies were down two after Nebraska senior first baseman Matt Hopper hit a two-run home run over the left field wall off A&M junior starter Matt Farnum in the top of the first inning.

The Aggies used a run in the second inning and another run scored by freshman catcher Craig Stinson on junior shortstop Matt Alexander's RBI single in the third to even the score.

"Obviously you hate to start off a ballgame 2-0," Johnson said. "I thought we hung in there. Nobody had their head down, nobody was mad, and we just kept plugging along. We did hit pretty good this week with men in scoring position."

Nebraska received its offense from Hopper, who went 2-4 with two home runs and three RBI's. His second home run came in the eighth inning off Aggie junior relief pitcher Kyle Parcus. Hopper hit three homers and brought in four RBI's as he hit 6-13 in the three-game series.

Farnum (5-0) gave up two earned runs in six and one-third innings to earn the win for the Aggies. Parcus earned his first save of the season in two two-thirds innings of relief.

"It's a different mind-set starting than coming in in relief," Parcus said. "You have to come out ready throwing strikes."

The Aggies will try to continue their hot streak when they go on the road Tuesday to take on the University of Texas-San Antonio at Wolff Stadium in San Antonio. The Aggies won the first meeting between the teams 8-5 at Olsen Field.

## A&M teams make early exits from Big 12 tournaments

By Michael Crow  
THE BATTALION

After entering their respective Big 12 Tournaments with high hopes, the A&M men's and women's basketball teams each made first-round exits last week in Dallas. As a result, the women's team now has a coaching vacancy, while the men's team awaits word regarding a potential postseason berth.

Following an 80-61 defeat at the hands of Baylor University in the conference tournament, A&M women's Head Coach Peggie Gillom found out that her contract would not be renewed. The

Aggies surrendered a nine point halftime lead against the Lady Bears on Tuesday in Gillom's final game.

A&M Athletic Director Bill Byrne said the search for Gillom's replacement would begin immediately.

"I've only known Peggie for a short time," he said. "I think she is a wonderful person, but I feel like we need to go in a different direction with our women's basketball program."

Frequent injuries limited Gillom's team throughout the 2002-2003 season. Overall, Gillom compiled a 53-86 record during her five year tenure during which the Aggies failed to finish better than ninth in the Big 12.



GILLOM

"This is not the kind of season I had hoped for," she said. "We set several goals when we came here five years ago, and I'm disappointed that we did not accomplish all of them."

The loss to Baylor ended the A&M women's season, giving them a 10-18 mark for the year.

Meanwhile, A&M men's Head Coach Melvin Watkins and his team had an equally short stay in the Big 12 Tournament, largely resulting from a first-half surge by the Iowa State

Cyclones. The Cyclones jumped out to a 29-11 lead midway through the first half that the Aggies were unable to overcome.

"This was one of our most fun games this year," said junior ISU guard Jake Sullivan. "Getting out and playing with a lead...we wanted to prove something."

Sullivan scored 17 points as one of six Cyclones in double figures. Tim Barnes' 21 points led all ISU scorers and included five three-point shots.

"We got outplayed in every aspect of the game," Watkins said. "Right across the board, we didn't make plays, a lot of mental mistakes, all those things

went into this type of performance."

A&M senior guard Bernard King led the Aggies with 20 points in what was likely the final game of his collegiate career. King and the Aggies are now left waiting for word on a possible bid to the National Invitation Tournament. A&M (14-14, 6-10 Big 12) has not reached the postseason since 1994.

"It's one of those things where we'd like to continue to play, and hopefully the phone call will come," Watkins said. "Six wins in the Big 12, I think that's got to be impressive to the committee there, but it's out of our control."

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<p><b>LIVE THE EXCITEMENT WITH SPORTS CLUBS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>W. Rugby vs. Baylor, March 22, 11:00 a.m. @ Rugby Pitch</li> <li>W. Lacrosse, league game, March 22 @ 12:00 p.m., Penberthy 8</li> <li>W. Lacrosse, league game, March 23 @ 11:00 a.m., Penberthy 8</li> <li>M. Lacrosse vs. UNT, March 29 @ 12:30 p.m., Penberthy 7</li> <li>Racquetball, Aggieland Open, March 28-30, all day @ Rec Cts 1-12</li> </ul>	<p><b>MAY BREAK TRIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA KAYAK ALASKA—Explore a portion of the northern wilderness—Alaska's Prince William Sound and Harriman Fjord. Registration ends April 1. \$1,765*/\$1,950** (Attend an Informational Meeting March 18 at 6:00 p.m. in room 272 Rec Center or March 19 at 5:30 p.m. in room 707 Rudder Tower.)</li> </ul> <p><b>AUGUST BREAK TRIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAIL &amp; SCUBA the Bahamas—Sail on Blackbeard's cruise and trace the historic route of pirate ships and treasure galleons. Registration ends June 9. \$819</li> </ul>	<p><b>AQUATICS-MAKE A SPLASH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Join the Lifeguard Challenge or CPR-Rescuer Challenge Program. Courses are designed to renew certifications for existing lifeguards.</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Program</th> <th>Registration</th> <th>Cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LIFEGUARD TRAINING</td> <td>Jan. 13-March 24</td> <td>\$110/\$130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LIFEGUARD CHALLENGE</td> <td>Jan. 13-March 27</td> <td>\$25/\$35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BASIC SCUBA</td> <td>Jan. 13-March 31</td> <td>\$225/\$245</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADULT LEARN TO SWIM</td> <td>Jan. 13-March 31</td> <td>\$25/\$35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CPR-Pro Rescuer Challenge</td> <td>Jan. 13-April 3</td> <td>\$25/\$35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AED/PDT/OA Training</td> <td>Jan. 13-May 3</td> <td>\$50/\$75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Water Babies</td> <td>Jan. 13-May 12</td> <td>\$25/\$35</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Program	Registration	Cost	LIFEGUARD TRAINING	Jan. 13-March 24	\$110/\$130	LIFEGUARD CHALLENGE	Jan. 13-March 27	\$25/\$35	BASIC SCUBA	Jan. 13-March 31	\$225/\$245	ADULT LEARN TO SWIM	Jan. 13-March 31	\$25/\$35	CPR-Pro Rescuer Challenge	Jan. 13-April 3	\$25/\$35	AED/PDT/OA Training	Jan. 13-May 3	\$50/\$75	Water Babies	Jan. 13-May 12	\$25/\$35
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