

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 1B • Wednesday, April 2, 2003

## Aggies hold off Bearkats in offensive battle

By Dallas Shipp  
THE BATTALION

Tuesday's baseball game between No. 19 Texas A&M and Sam Houston State University could not have picked a better day to be played than April Fool's Day.

Both starting pitchers' nights were finished after pitching one third of an inning each in a game that lasted three hours and 35 minutes.

A&M junior right hander Brian Finch had his worst outing of the season, giving up six runs on five hits, two wild pitches and a hit batter after recording just one out.

But freshman left hander Dan Donaldson came in and picked up the pieces for the Aggies to earn his first win as an Aggie.

A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson said that although he was disappointed with Finch's outing, it gave Donaldson a chance to come in and get some experience in a big game atmosphere.

"Dan Donaldson was the hero for us tonight," Johnson said. "I thought he came in and settled things down. There were some times he had to step up and make the pitch and he did."

Bearkats' left hander Ryan Herrera didn't

fare much better than Finch after watching his team take a 6-0 lead in the top of the first. Herrera walked the first three batters he faced on 15 pitches before A&M junior left fielder Scott Beerer hit a three-run double into left field.

Bearkats' reliever Nathan Osterman came in for Herrera after Beerer's double but gave up four runs in the second inning before being removed himself.

Osterman left the game in the second and gave up four runs on three hits to get the loss for Sam Houston. Bearkats Head Coach Chris Rupp used seven pitchers in the game.

The Aggies put up another five runs in the second inning that was capped off by a two-run single from freshman catcher Craig Stinson.

A&M freshman third baseman Cliff Pennington said that he had never seen a first two innings like Tuesday night's.

"I have never played a first two innings that was as long as that," he said. "It doesn't happen very often. Our pitchers are a lot better than that, (Finch) just had a bad outing."

Johnson echoed Pennington's comments adding that a lot of times a six-run deficit is too much to bounce back from.

"I don't think I've ever seen both pitchers only get one out in the first inning,"

Johnson said.

After the first two innings lasted 80 minutes, Pennington got the third inning started by robbing Bearkats DH Dom Garcia of a base hit, grabbing the slow rolling ball with his hand and throwing Garcia out at first.

"It was (Alexander's) ball and I got a good break on it," Pennington said. "He called for it at the last second but I was already there. Then it took a side hop on me so I had to bare hand it, then I just threw him out."

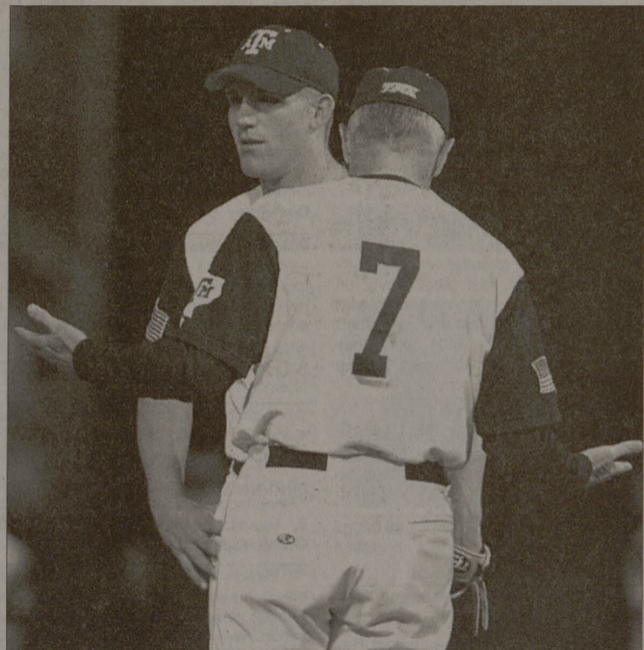
Pennington later sent a shot into the gap in the sixth that cleared the bases and gave the Aggies their first cushion of the game, 12-8.

"I hadn't been hitting the ball real well as of late," Pennington said. "To come up with lots of men in scoring position was a good chance to give us a nice lead."

Senior catcher Jordy Mitchell, who had come in as a pinch hitter in the sixth inning put an exclamation mark on the win for the Aggies with a blast over the center field wall to send A&M home with the win, 15-8.

The two teams combined for 26 hits, 23 runs and 11 pitchers used in the contest.

A&M next travels to Norman, Okla. on Friday to face the Oklahoma Sooners.



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

A&M Head Coach Mark Johnson speaks with pitcher Brian Finch before removing him. Finch allowed four runs in one-third of an inning.

## No. 20 softball team heads to Waco for Big 12 series

By Pete Burks  
THE BATTALION

With the start of Big 12 play comes the renewal of old rivalries as the No. 20 Texas A&M softball team (26-12, 4-2 Big 12) heads to Waco to face the Baylor Bears (24-16, 0-5 Big 12) at 6:30 p.m. today. Both teams are looking to regain momentum after dramatic late inning losses on Sunday.

In a matchup with the No. 4 Oklahoma Sooners, Baylor could not sustain its strong defensive effort, as it eventually succumbed to Oklahoma on a couple of late home runs by the Sooners.

Meanwhile, the Aggies are trying to

regroup after Missouri halted their seven game win streak, taking advantage of an untimely A&M error in the bottom of the 10th inning to win 6-5.

Although the Bears have yet to break into the win column in Big 12 play, the Aggie softball team knows they can be dangerous. This series has been tightly contested historically, as evidenced by the series split last year between the two squads.

"This is probably the best series I've been involved with since I've been here," said Baylor Head Coach Glen Moore. "It has been an exciting series that has not been really dominated by either team. Many of the girls on each team know each other well from playing



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in summer leagues together, and that helps fuel the rivalry."

Baylor came into this season with high hopes and expectations as the Bears fell just short of joining the field of 48 that competed in the NCAA postseason last year. However, as this season has gone on, injuries have taken their toll. In addition, the Bears' schedule has by no means been easy.

"We're coming off of a tough season so far, and we will have faced eight ranked teams in a row to start off conference play," Moore said. "We just need to

concentrate and play the way we know how instead of focusing on A&M."

As for the Aggies, they will look to avoid the pitfalls that hampered them last weekend against Missouri. A&M played like two different teams on Saturday and Sunday. In the first game, the Aggies came through with timely hitting when they needed it for a 4-2 win.

However, on Sunday, the Aggies were not as fortunate. The Tiger pitching staff halted the A&M offensive attack, allowing only two hits, one by senior shortstop Crystal Martin and the other by senior catcher Selena Collins.

"I thought we played well defensively with some timely hitting in the first

game," said A&M Head Coach Jo Evans. "But, in the second game...we were just flat, and we didn't play well. We just need to regroup and get ready for a Baylor squad that has always played us competitively."

Collins promised some offensive improvement against the Bears.

"We are going to go out and work a lot on our offense," Collins said. "Baylor always raises their intensity level when they play us, so timely hitting is a necessity."

After playing Baylor, A&M's road to the postseason does not get any easier. A&M will host a two game series this weekend against Oklahoma State before heading to Austin to play the Longhorns.

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