

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 1B • Monday, April 21, 2003

Men's tennis team falls to Longhorns at home

Doubles point sets the tone in Texas' 4-3 victory

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

The No. 10 Texas A&M men's tennis team tried to rally Saturday afternoon but fell just short against the University of Texas, which beat the Aggies 4-3 in front of 740 fans.

A&M Head Coach Tim Cass tried to switch up his doubles teams to shake things up a bit and win the crucial doubles point. However, the move backfired for Cass and the Aggies, who dropped the doubles point two matches to one, giving the Longhorns an early 1-0 lead heading into singles.

The Aggies' only victory in doubles play came at the hands of senior Ryan Newport and sophomore Ante Matijevic.

While Cass' move did not work out, Texas Head Coach Michael Center had better luck when he switched his No. 1 and No. 2 players Saturday afternoon. It was a move that gave Texas a critical win on court No. 2.

Longhorn senior Jean Simon has played on court No. 1 for Texas for the last three years and the entire season this year before being demoted Saturday.

Simon defeated Lester Cook on court No. 2 to clinch the win for Texas.

After dropping the first set in a tiebreaker, Cook appeared to be out of gas and fell behind early in the second set, 4-2. Cook rallied to get into a second tiebreaker but didn't have enough to win the tiebreaker, losing 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-4).

"(Simon's) really struggled," Center said. "He lost his first nine matches this year, and I had thought about (moving him) off and on. Then he sprained his ankle on Tuesday. He hadn't practiced all week."

Because Simon has been the Longhorns' top singles player for four years, the move could be protested by the Aggies later this week.

After dropping the doubles point, Aggie senior Kahled El Dorry tied the

match at one with a 6-2, 6-2 win over Longhorn freshman Antonio Ruiz.

The Aggies appeared to have things secured on courts one, two and three and needed a big win from someone on courts four, five or six.

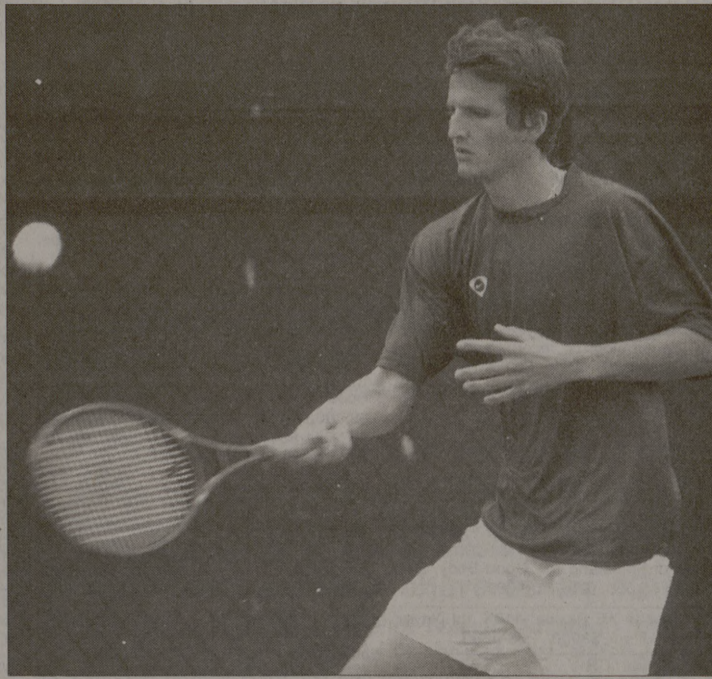
Aggie freshman Matt Loucks came through for the Aggies and rallied to knock off Longhorn senior Jimmy Haney in three sets, bringing the Aggies within one, 3-2, with two matches still playing on courts one and two.

Newport held on to win in three sets at court No. 1, but it was too little too late for the Aggies.

Cass said A&M had some chances to win the match but couldn't capitalize.

"You get a few chances in matches," Cass said, "and when two teams are relatively even, you're going to have to capitalize on those. Today, (Texas) did."

The Aggies will travel to Kansas City, Mo., next weekend to compete in the Big 12 Tournament.



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION
A&M sophomore Ante Matijevic returns a Texas serve. Matijevic and senior Ryan Newport took their doubles match on court No. 1 on Saturday.

Aggies split doubleheader

By Pete Burks
THE BATTALION

On a day meant to honor its seniors, the Texas A&M softball team showed its share of emotion in a Saturday doubleheader with the Iowa State Cyclones (18-23, 5-8 Big 12). The Aggies (33-15, 9-5 Big 12) ended up splitting the series with the Cyclones, winning the first game 8-5, but losing the second 6-5.

Aggie seniors Jennifer Davis, Cheryl Fowler, Lindsey Rippee, Crystal Martin and Selena Collins contributed to the effort against the Cyclones, nearly pulling off a four-run comeback in the bottom of the seventh in the second game.

In the first game of the doubleheader, the Aggies and Cyclones combined for seven home runs for the game. The Cyclones jumped out in front in the top of the first as Cyclone pitcher Erica Martinez opened the scoring, knocking a Jessica Slataper pitch out of the park.

In the bottom of the inning, the Aggies began their own offensive barrage, led by sophomore second baseman Adrian Gregory and shortstop Martin driving in four runs combined as they each hit home runs. In the second inning, Gregory struck again, increasing her home run total to nine for the year and increasing the Aggie lead to 5-1.

Although the Aggies scored a run in

each of the first four innings, they could not keep the Cyclones at bay.

The Cyclones were not to be outdone in this unofficial home run derby as Big 12 Player of the Week Katy Ruby blasted two home runs, one in the third, and one in the fifth which sailed over the scoreboard to bring the Cyclones closer. But in the end, junior pitcher Slataper and the Aggies clamped down and defeated the Cyclones, giving the Aggies the win and Slataper another complete game.

Gregory said the A&M seniors have provided great leadership that younger players strive to follow.

"Our seniors are everything this program is about," Gregory said. "They built this program, and we are trying to follow in their footsteps."

In the second game of the doubleheader, there was still plenty of offense to go around. This time, the Aggies struck first as Martin knocked in two runs with a two RBI single in the bottom of the first. The score remained the same until the top of the fourth as the Cyclones finally broke through for a run on a well executed suicide squeeze bunt.

In the top of the fifth, the Cyclones continued to play small ball, using two bunt base hits to load the bases, allowing Martinez to come through for a second time, hitting a two RBI double to give the Cyclones a lead

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Nowitzki leads Mavs in playoff win

By Jaime Aron
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Steve Nash says his pal Dirk Nowitzki is a mismatch every time he has the ball.

Shooting over small defenders and driving around big ones, Nowitzki scored a career-best 46 points Saturday night to lead the Dallas Mavericks past the Portland Trailblazers 96-86 in the opener of their first-round series.

With Game 2 not until Wednesday night, the Blazers have some time to try figuring out a new way to cover Nowitzki.

The 7-footer made 16-of-27 shots. Most of his misses came in traffic around the basket as he was 4-of-5 on 3-pointers. Fouling him wasn't a good idea because he went 10-of-11 from the line.

"We just can't let Dirk get 50 — even if we have to put a hit on Dirk," Portland's Bonzi Wells said, laughing. "He got a lot of mismatches and took advantage. Once we contain him, we can beat this team."

Nowitzki made his first six shots and had 23 at halftime. But the rest of the Mavericks had just 19, which is why they trailed by as many as 13.

Nowitzki was such a one-man show that from the middle of the first quarter until the last minute of the second, no other Dallas player made more than one field goal.

"I told him at the end of regulation that he will eventually be one of the best all-around players to ever play the game," Mavs coach Don Nelson said. "He will eventually be able to do the things that Larry Bird did. That's my vision of him."

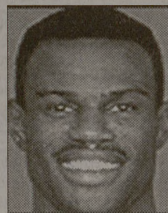
Spurs may be without Robinson in Game 2

By T.A. Badger
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — David Robinson had a big game in the playoff opener against Phoenix. He might not have the chance to follow up on his performance in Game 2.

Robinson twisted his left knee when he drew an offensive foul on Stephon Marbury late in the Spurs' 96-95 overtime loss Saturday. He is listed as questionable for Monday night's game in the best-of-seven series.

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich



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wouldn't talk about Robinson's status Sunday. He said his team's confidence is most important.

"We've got to have the emotion and the same aggressiveness and the same defense — it's all got to be there," he said. "If that's not there, we'll have a problem."

The 7-foot-1 center benefited from the constant double- and triple-teaming on Tim Duncan and went 8-for-8 for 18 points Saturday.

"People think he can't play," said Phoenix guard Penny Hardaway. "He can play. He's done it all in this league."

Whether Robinson plays or not, the Spurs need to stop Marbury and make their free throws to have a chance to win.

The top-seeded Spurs faltered on both in the opener and lost when Marbury banked in a 3-pointer at the overtime buzzer after Duncan missed three free throws in the closing seconds.

Marbury was largely held in check by Spurs point guard Tony Parker in the first half, but he broke loose for 17 of his 26 points in the second half.



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