

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 6 • Monday, February 16, 2003

A&M baseball starts off 3-0

By Kyle Davoust
THE BATTALION

A primary lesson from childhood: When your little brother steps up to challenge you, knock him back down. This weekend, the Texas A&M baseball team applied this lesson by sweeping, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi in a three-game series by a combined run total of 29-8.

Due to rain, the series was moved back a day, with one game on Saturday and a doubleheader on Sunday.

The Aggies flexed their muscles in the Saturday game as junior left-hander Zach Jackson threw a no-hitter in a 15-0 romp of the Islanders. Jackson's no-no was the 10th in A&M's history and the first solo effort since Matt Blank shut down Texas-Pan American in the Aggies' 1996 home opener.

Besides calling a great game for his pitcher, catcher Craig Stenson also helped carry the offense by going three-for-four and knocking in six runs.

The second game of the series proved to be more difficult for the Aggies, as they needed 10 innings to escape with a 4-3 win. For nine innings, Corpus Christi pitchers junior Mike Hatfield and senior Jorge Huerta slowed the Aggie bats, allowing just five hits before the 10th.

"(Hatfield) pitched well and did well early in the count," said A&M head coach Mark Johnson. "And we never really did a good job of staying ahead of the count because he threw that breaking pitch in there on 0-0 and 1-0. He did a good job and his reliever did well too."

In the bottom of the 10th, however, sophomore first baseman Coby Mavroulis, who had already homered and driven in two runs, nailed the ball to the right field fence, scoring sophomore shortstop Cliff Pennington from third to win the game. Pennington had led off the inning with a single and advanced to second on senior outfielder Cory Patton's single. Both runners then advanced on a wild pitch, setting up Mavroulis' game-winning hit.

"He threw me a down-and-in fastball, the same pitch that I hit a home run on earlier in the game, and I was just lucky enough to get enough of the bat on it to get it over (the



Texas A&M senior outfielder Cory Patton runs to third base past a diving A&M-Corpus Christi third baseman Robert Sedillo in Saturday's season opening 15-0 Aggie win.

right fielder's) head," Mavroulis said. "I just wanted to hit the ball as hard as I could and get it out into play somewhere."

Mavroulis, who redshirted last year due to a back injury, finished the game three-for-four with a home run and three runs batted in.

"He's a batter, and it's fun to watch him play," Johnson said. "He sat out last year and that wasn't fun, so he's got a lot of spark to him right now and he's really getting after it."

In the final game of the series, the rest of the Aggies' offense quickly awoke from its one-game slumber to better their previous run total before the Islanders could record the first out. The five-run first inning could

have been a lot worse for the Islanders if it wasn't for an inning-ending triple play resulting from a great catch by center fielder Charles Carter.

Corpus Christi then fought back, making the score as close as 6-5 in top of the sixth when left fielder Mark Schlekewy hit a RBI double off the right field fence. But that's as close as the Islanders got, losing eventually by a score of 10-5. The Aggies distanced themselves for good by scoring two runs in the bottom of that same inning.

The Aggies will again be in action this Tuesday in Huntsville against Sam Houston State at 7 p.m..

Men drop tenth straight, 78-72

By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

It wasn't such a happy Valentine's Day for the Texas A&M men's basketball team on Saturday. The University of Oklahoma (16-5, 6-4 Big 12) gave the Aggies a 78-72 loss in place of the traditional flowers or candy hearts.

The Aggies (7-14, 0-10), who have now lost 10 straight games, had what could be considered their best outing in conference play this season on the floor. The team shot above their season averages in all three offensive categories and grabbed 25 rebounds. But a strong showing by the Sooners late in the second half kept the Aggies from capturing that precious first conference win.

Oklahoma head coach Kelvin Sampson said the game was close, but the deciding factor was the Sooners' focus in the last minutes of the game.

"Our guys just hung in there," Sampson said. "Of all our wins this season, I was most proud of this one."

The Sooners dictated much of the pace in the first half, shooting 50 percent from the field and hitting seven three-pointers. Oklahoma also capitalized on Aggie mistakes, scoring 15 points off 11 turnovers.

The Aggies started the second half in dismal fashion, going one-for-six in the first five minutes. The game turned around when A&M sophomore forward Antoine Wright made an enormous block on a shot by Sooner freshman guard Lawrence

McKenzie. Wright finished the night five-for-six from the field.

The Aggies took their first lead of the game after a layup by forward Jesse King. A&M's lead lasted until the final two minutes of the game, when Sooner freshman guard Drew Lavender drowned A&M's hopes for a win with a long three-pointer.

Lavender, the smallest player on the court at five foot seven inches, had the biggest night by far. Lavender finished with a career-high 31 points, 18 of those coming from behind the three-point line. Lavender said the strong work ethic demanded by Sampson in practices carried over to the games.

"I just wanted to go out there and play hard for coach," Lavender said. "My shots were just falling tonight and that's all."

A&M head coach Melvin Watkins said the closing minutes of all the games this season seem to be the toughest for the team. Watkins said mental mistakes and errors on A&M's part have caused them to lose games in a similar fashion to the Oklahoma game.

"You give any team any sort of opportunity and they're going to take it," Watkins said.

Watkins said he is still pleased to see the team's good attitude despite the 10-game losing streak and that he knows the team is playing to the best of its ability.

"They're not quitting even though they have every reason to quit," Watkins said. "It's just those closing moments that are keeping us from getting over the hump and getting a win."

Blair's troops drop tight game to No. 6 Texas Tech, 59-58

By Brad Bennett
THE BATTALION

Head coach Gary Blair needs two recruits next year to keep what happened on Saturday to his Texas A&M women's basketball team from happening again: a six-footer to rebound and a witch doctor to remove the curse that causes his team to play so well but always come up short.

The Aggies (8-15, 1-11 Big 12) were ahead of No. 7 Texas Tech, 58-57 with 14.4 seconds to go at Reed Arena. Aggie senior point guard Toccara Williams, was shooting one-and-one off a second half foul.

Williams missed the first shot, and Tech sophomore guard Erin Grant came down with the rebound. Grant found Tech forward LaToya Davis on the other end of the court for a layup with 2.9 seconds remaining to give Tech (21-4, 7-4) the 59-58 victory.

"I was just in the right place at the right time," Davis said.

The Aggies went on a 12-point run with 2:25 left in the second half, eventually taking a three-point lead with 19 seconds left.

A questionable foul on Williams led to Tech center Cisti Greenwalt's two free throws that cut the lead to one.

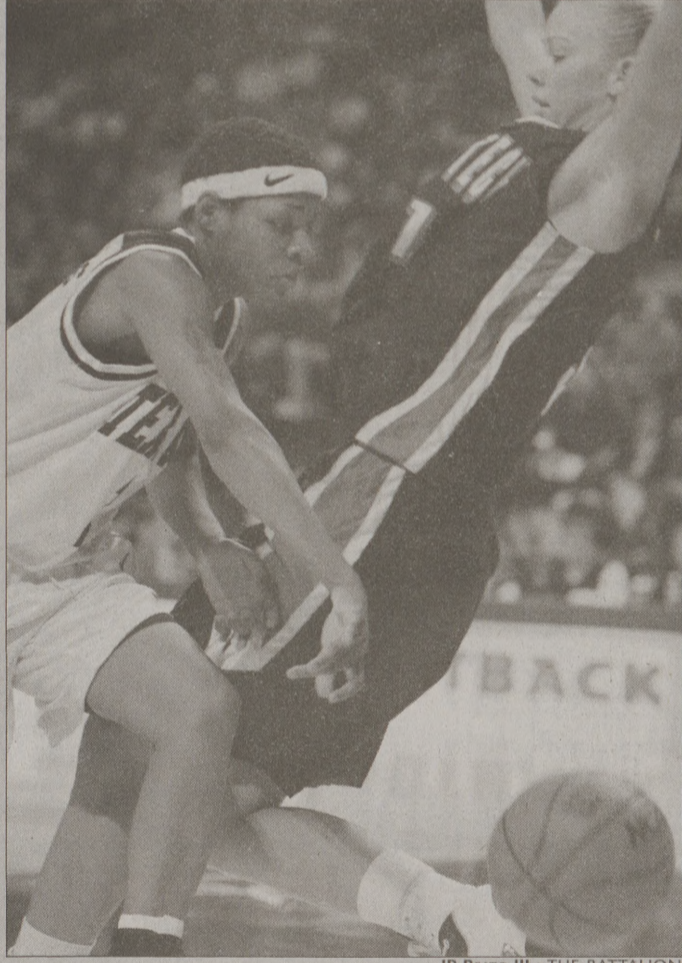
"I would love to see that film," Blair said. "We were not trying to foul Greenwalt. I'm not sure if there was a foul. We were just trying to play good defense."

It was Williams' fourth foul, but Blair said he didn't tell her to back off at all. Williams collected seven steals in the game running her Big 12 record to 432.

"You don't tell the nation's leader in steals to back off," Blair said. "We don't back off, we attack."

The Aggies had only 24 rebounds, compared to Tech's 42.

"They were pounding us on the inside," said Aggie senior



Texas Tech center Cisti Greenwalt draws a foul from A&M senior guard Toccara Williams with 15 seconds left in the game.

forward Lynn Classen. "They did an awesome job with their post players inside."

Despite Tech's rebounding, the Aggies still took 18 more shots than Tech.

"We forced 24 turnovers to our seven, we had 15 steals to their one and we do not get any easy baskets - we're not rewarded at the end," Blair said. "We are not converting and that's just something we've got to work on."

Tech head coach Marsha Sharp said her team took advantage of the Aggie pressure defense.

"Sometimes when people play pressure defense the shots are going to be easier shots to

make," Sharp said. "We got some people some looks around the rim because of it."

Blair said he was pleased with the pressure his team put on Tech.

"I thought our kids did everything they possibly could to win that ball game," Blair said. "We had a great defensive game plan even though they shot whatever they shot and got out-rebounded by 18, we still played our style of ball."

"I am tired of people patting me on the back. I am tired of the little applause for nice effort. I am not in this game for the effort I am in this game for wins and eventually they will come our way."

A&M men's tennis dominates Lamar in first home match

By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

Although the No. 9 Texas A&M men's tennis team had to wait an extra day to take on unranked Lamar University, it didn't wait long to hand the Cardinals a 7-0 loss.

The Aggies (7-3) were originally scheduled to play Lamar (0-4) Saturday afternoon, but chilly and wet weather forced the match to be moved to Sunday. The wait rewarded the teams with sunny skies and mild temperatures.

"The weather was awesome," said Texas A&M head coach Tim Cass. "You couldn't have asked for a better day."

With the national No. 1 A&M doubles team sitting out and getting rest, doubles matches would prove to be the toughest spot for the Aggies all day. Lamar would get its only win of the day in doubles, as Cardinal juniors Juan Alatorre and Emilio Kirby scratched out a narrow 9-8 (7-4)

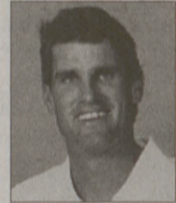
tie break win against the A&M combo of junior Zack Malmgren and sophomore John Nallon. The other two A&M doubles teams would come through, squeaking by with wins over the Cardinals, 8-6 and 8-3 respectively.

Lamar head coach David Wong said he was surprised but pleased by the performance of his doubles teams.

"I think this is the best I've seen these teams play this year," Wong said. "They played hard and they played intense."

Cass said doubles matches have seemed to be the soft spot for the Aggies this year, and today was no different.

"It's been a bit frustrating why we haven't been getting better in doubles as the year goes on," Cass said. "We just



CASS

haven't figured out the right combinations yet."

The Aggies didn't hesitate to show their true power on the singles side, dropping only 11 games out of the 72 played. The most intense match of the day was between A&M sophomore Matt Loucks and Lamar junior Ignacio Melus. The match would also be the longest on the day, lasting just more than 40 minutes.

Loucks, playing in his first match this spring, cruised to a 6-0, 6-1 win despite the strong competition.

Loucks said the competition during the match helped him play on a higher level, which he thought to be true for the rest of the Aggies.

"Our intensity in singles is really hard to match," Loucks said. "We yell for each other and that adds that much more."

Lamar junior Jonathan Capps, who is from College

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Women handle Rice with ease

By Jon Gilbert
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M women's tennis head coach Bobby Kleinecke and his players talked all week about the advantages that playing outdoors again would give the team. Sunday, the team learned that it takes longer than expected to get reacclimated.

Nonetheless, the No. 19 Aggies blanked the Rice Owls (4-4) 7-0 in a hotly-contested match at the George P. Mitchell Center. The score was deceiving, though, as Rice led A&M (3-4) in three of the six singles matches before eventually folding to the Aggies.

"(The outdoors) did have a factor," Kleinecke said. "It's tough to go from indoors to outdoors. The ball bounces a lot

slower when you're outdoors."

Senior Roberta Spencer and junior Lauren Walker helped get the Aggies going with a convincing 8-3 doubles win over the Rice tandem of sophomore Blair DiSesa and junior Erika Villalobos.

"We came out strong and its good to know we're going to take care of business," Walker said. "It helped our No. 3 doubles come back."

Two courts away, A&M junior Helga Vieira and freshman Anna Lubinsky rallied past Rice seniors Yasmin Fisher and Annie Goodrich to clinch the doubles point for the Aggies.

Despite winning the doubles point, Kleinecke said he is not totally pleased with his team's performance in doubles.

"I'm concerned with doubles. I'm pleased with our effort, our

character, our fight and all of the intangibles. But we have some improvement to do in doubles. We didn't walk away totally satisfied with doubles."

In singles action, the Aggies won all six matches. It was easy though as three of the matches went into an extra game, and Lubinsky's victory against Goodrich involved a second set tiebreaker.

With A&M leading the overall match, 3-0, the remaining matches hovered over the last four singles matches and cheered on the Aggies. This, along with mental toughness, may have been the deciding factor in the outcome.

"I think (mental toughness) was a factor," Walker said. "I know I can do it and my team was behind me."

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