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SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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AGGIE SOFTBALL FRIDAY
2:30 p.m.
vs. Boston University
4:45 p.m.
vs. Illinois
Aggie Softball Complex

A&M baseball opens series with South Alabama Friday

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

Going into this season, the Texas A&M baseball team had a lot of questions on the mind. After losing eight pitchers from the 2003 Big 12 runner-up squad to the professional ranks, the Aggies want to figure out which pitchers can be reliable once the conference season opens up.

One big question was answered in the Aggies' 15-0 win over Texas A&M-Corpus Christi last Saturday when junior transfer Zach Jackson (1-0) hurled a no-hitter in his first appearance as an Aggie.

"I was as nervous as I've probably ever been in my baseball career," Jackson said. "To be honest, when I was in the bullpen before the game I could hardly throw strikes. I was just going 300 miles an hour through everything."

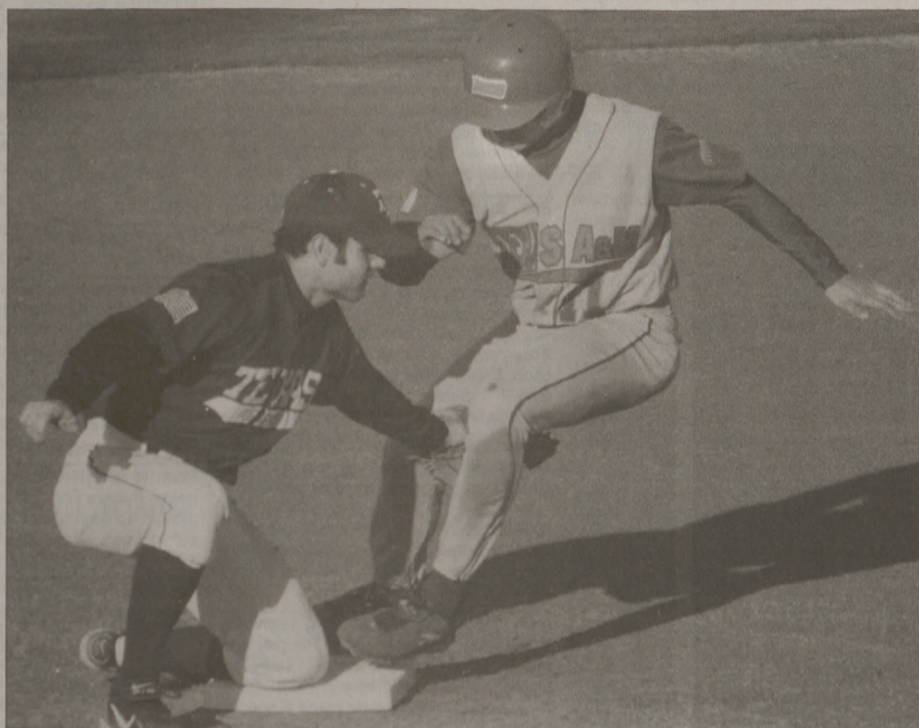
Jackson will take the mound at Olsen Field for the second time as the Aggies (4-0) take on the University of South Alabama (0-0) at 3 p.m. Friday in the first game of a three-game series.

"I kind of know what to expect now," Jackson said. "I just have a feeling though, that every outing is going to be like that first one with the nerves and adrenaline pumping."

South Alabama offers stiffer competition than A&M-Corpus Christi or A&M's other opponent, Sam Houston State. The Jaguars have appeared in nine straight NCAA tournaments, eventually falling to Florida State last season in the regional championship to finish with a 42-19 record.

Even with only three returning position players and two pitchers with more than 60 innings of work, the Jaguars were picked to win the Sun Belt conference championship this season. South Alabama head coach Steve Kittrell, who is entering his 21st season at South Alabama, said his team has a long way to go to become champions.

"We have an inexperienced team,"



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A&M senior second baseman Erik Schindewolf makes the tag on A&M-Corpus Christi senior infielder Jaime Landin in the second game of Sunday's doubleheader.

Kittrell said. "We have a lot of questions to answer. We hope that this club gets better as the year goes on, and hopefully by the end of the season, we'll be a solid team."

A&M still has some questions of its own to answer, mainly in the bullpen. With the better competition coming to Olsen Field, the Aggies are sure to see a lot more of its relief pitchers in action.

"Every week we're going to start playing better competition," said A&M sophomore first baseman Coby Mavroulis. "We don't really know much about (South Alabama), but they are picked to win their conference so we know they are going to be decent enough to come in here and play."

South Alabama will have the emotional high of starting its season and only needs to follow the example set by A&M in its opening weekend to figure out how to begin a season in the right way.

"We're eager to get started," Kittrell said. "We've got one of the toughest schedules since I've been here."

But the Jaguars have to start off against Jackson. After one game on the hill wearing maroon, Jackson feels confident in the team behind him.

"We have a great team and a great group of guys," Jackson said. "We have an awesome defense that makes all the plays and a lineup that's even better than I had thought."

A&M faces No. 23 Tech in Lubbock

By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

With tax season right around the corner, the Texas A&M men's basketball team should be able to get a generous tax break for all the donations they've made to Big 12 teams this season.

And No. 22 Texas Tech will be hoping the Aggies (7-15, 0-11 Big 12) giving ways don't fade before Saturday's game at 3 p.m.

The Aggies are coming off a 77-57 loss to No. 11 University of Texas, which extended the Aggies' losing streak to 11. The Red Raiders (18-7, 6-5) are also coming off a surprising 85-75 loss to the University of Colorado and are looking for a win to stay in the hunt to get a first-round bye for the Big 12 Championship tournament. If the Aggies play like they have in their other conference games this season, they will be just the team to give Texas Tech the win it needs.

A&M has had a lead in the second half in seven of its 11 losses. With every team in the Big 12 currently separated by one game, including five teams that are tied, seven wins for the Aggies would rearrange the entire status of the conference.

"We've played hard and did good enough to win the ball games, but we just didn't get the job done," said A&M head coach Melvin Watkins. "Our guys haven't quit and haven't laid down though."

Since conference play

started five weeks ago, the Aggies have had an opposing player reach a career- or season-high in all five weeks, earning those players Big 12 Player of the Week honors. University of Oklahoma freshman guard Drew Lavender was the most recent breakout player with 31 points in a 78-72 win over A&M.

"He did more than we thought he could," Watkins said. "I don't know where that came from - he was just hitting big shots all night."

And with Texas Tech senior Andre Emmett one point shy of becoming the Big 12 all-time leading scorer, it can be expected that Emmett will have a big night against A&M, continuing the streak of opposing players receiving the honor against the Aggies.

Texas Tech head coach Bobby Knight said he isn't focused on the Aggies' problems or an easy win.

"It's just as big a game as playing Kansas and as big as the next game and the next game," Knight said. "You play 16 league games that are all equally important to win."

No one likes to lose games, and the Aggies are no different despite seeming to give games away.

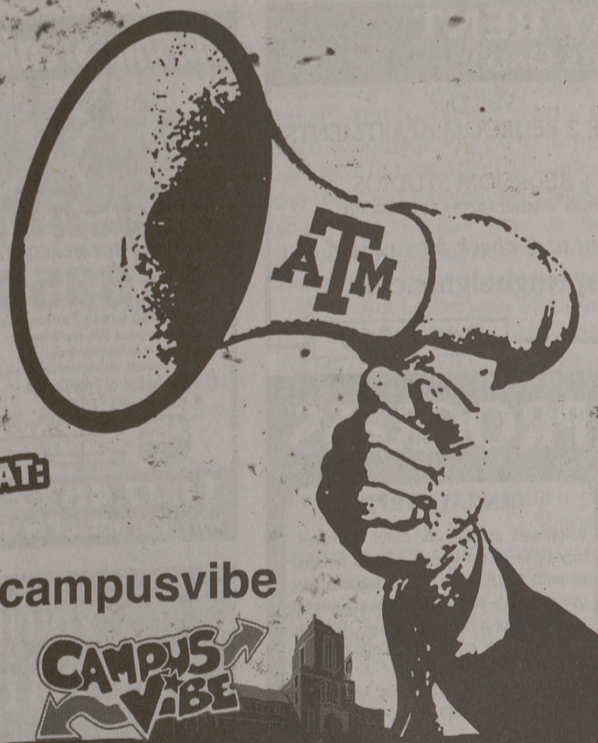
"The kids want to get the win and finish the season off strong," Watkins said. "We just got to find a way to win these games."

Come Saturday, maybe the Aggies won't feel so charitable and will sneak out of Lubbock with their first conference win; one more loss might have the Aggies applying to become a non-profit organization.

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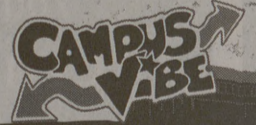
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AMERICA'S CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

LIBERAL ARTS CAREER FAIR

2004

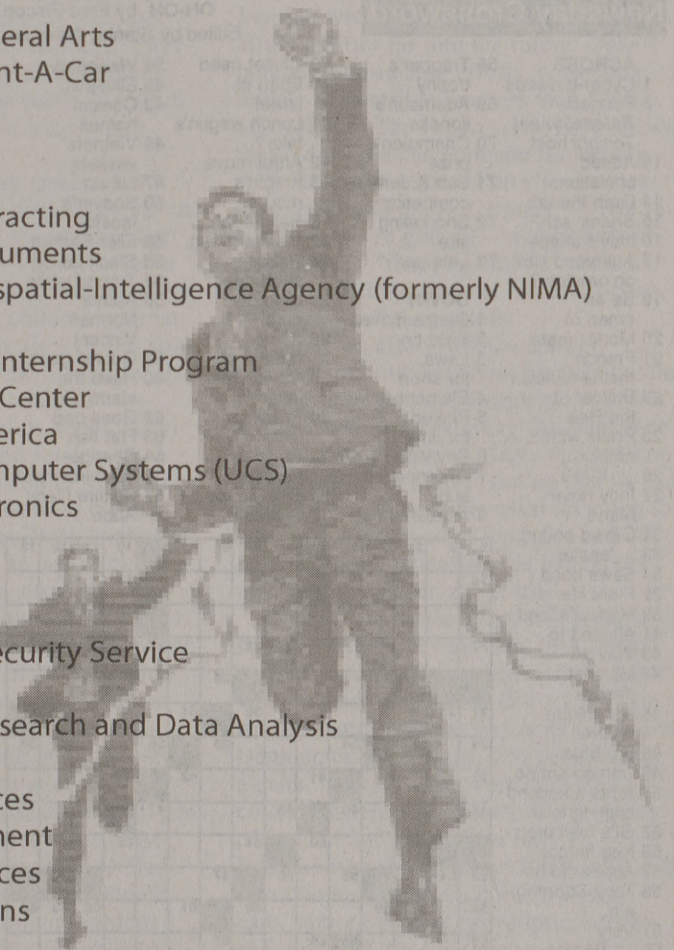
Friday, February 20th
Rudder Exhibit Hall
10 AM - 3 PM

Companies attending the career fair:

- Americorps
- Beneficial
- College of Liberal Arts
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Ferguson
- Foley's
- Luby's
- Medical Contracting
- National Instruments
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (formerly NIMA)
- Peace Corp.
- Public Policy Internship Program
- TAMU Career Center
- Teach for America
- Universal Computer Systems (UCS)
- Velocity Electronics
- Walgreens

Internships:

- Diplomatic Security Service
- Education
- Evaluation Research and Data Analysis
- FBI
- Human Services
- Law Enforcement
- Medical Services
- Public Relations



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