

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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No. 20 Aggie tennis completes weekend sweep

A day in the life of Aggie tennis player Lester Cook

By Kyle Davoust
THE BATTALION

The daily life of a student-athlete is, in a word, full. Classes in the morning, practices that last from the afternoon until the evening (depending on the mood of the coach), recuperation and then finally some time for studying (if needed) before sleep. This is not to mention individual workout time, mandatory tutoring sessions and countless events and competitions. Yet somehow, these students try to squeeze in a social life to give them the full college experience.

This sort of hectic schedule has had two enduring effects on Texas A&M junior tennis player Lester Cook: greater maturity and even greater time-management skills.

"It definitely taught me how to manage my time better," Cook said. "You have to separate everything. I have to do my whole school schedule in the morning to get it out of the way before practice. And then sometimes our practice schedule will be from six to nine - it really doesn't leave that much free time or time to study."

Cook said practice for an athlete is like a job for most students - a burden in which they have to work around. Games, or in this case, matches, are an entirely different issue. Cook said practices and matches have caused him to miss classes and exams.

This spring has proved to be even more hectic for Cook because of the amount of time spent on the road. He, along with the rest of the men's tennis team, has already played 10 matches on the road, nine of them coming in a one-month period.

"It's tough," Cook said. "Sometimes when you miss a test, the professors don't understand as much, so they'll make it an essay test. You know, it's not your fault that you missed it. And you have to ask people for notes and try to study for all the stuff you missed."

Cook, however, realizes the importance of a degree. The economics major knows that if tennis doesn't work out down the road, he will need an alternative career plan.

Cook said there are times when he wonders what school would be like without tennis. He thinks about how much he could accomplish with all of the extra time.

"School would be much easier (without tennis)," Cook said. "There are certain days when we get off.

And when we don't have to practice, there is so much time in the day. It feels like I can do whatever I want with my day. I can study however much I want without any time constraints."

Student-athletes, though, are forced to deal with the rigors of both.

"You have to deal with everyone on the team and know



EVAN O'CONNELL • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M junior Lester Cook competes in singles Saturday in A&M's 6-1 win over Oklahoma at the George P. Mitchell Tennis Center. Cook and partner Ante Matijevic are the No. 1 doubles team in the country. Cook is also No. 20 in the nation in singles.

their personalities, so you have to deal with them and spend time with them," Cook said. "I honestly haven't met too many friends outside the team because there is so much time spent with (my teammates)."

Cook also said he has to be careful when he has free time.

"As a student-athlete, you don't ask to be a role model for

your school, but it's placed upon you," Cook said. "It's your decision. If you go to jail or make stupid decisions, it's going to be known. We don't ask for it, but it's a fact. That's how your school is looked upon. It's nice to take on that role and all, but it's also a lot of responsibility. You have to be very mature."

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A&M overpowers OU, Tyler Junior College

By Kyle Davoust
THE BATTALION

Many times, conference play represents a second season. It is seen as a chance to put previous losses behind and gain a new focus. After falling on some rough times during non-conference play, the No. 20 Texas A&M men's tennis team hopes to start anew as it plays through its "second season."

On Saturday, the Aggies (15-6, 3-0 Big 12) extended their conference record to 3-0 with a dominating 6-1 victory over the University of Oklahoma (12-3, 0-1). After a shorter than usual break, the Aggies took the court, defeating two-time defending junior college national champion Tyler Junior College, 5-1.

"I thought we played with as good of a purpose as I've seen all year from our guys," Cass said. "After the national season going like it has so far, I think (the Big 12) gives us a good chance to redeem ourselves. I think it is a little bit of a fresh start."

Led by the nation's top-ranked doubles team of juniors Lester Cook and Ante Matijevic, the Aggies were able to take control of the match by sweeping the doubles point, maintaining A&M's perfect Big 12 doubles record.

Cook and Matijevic set the pace with an 8-4 victory over the Sooner team of junior Ondrej Fukala and sophomore Tommy Garrison.

Cook carried his doubles success into his singles match with an easy 6-2, 6-1 victory over OU sophomore Alexei Ivanov.

After a quick win by A&M

senior captain Khaled El Dorry, Matijevic sealed the match by defeating OU freshman Marek Velicka, 6-3, 7-6 (11).

"I think we fought hard and had some opportunities," said Oklahoma head coach Paul Lockwood. "Obviously, we didn't take advantage of enough of them, but we'll learn from this and get better from it."

With so many matches against OU going to three sets, the Aggies had very little turnaround time before facing Tyler Junior College at 6 p.m.

While most of the match went as planned, A&M suffered two unexpected defeats. The first occurred in doubles play, where Cook and Matijevic lost to the Tyler team of sophomores Mark Growcott and Jordan Freitas, 8-6.

Matijevic's play then followed him into his singles match where Growcott once again got the best of him, 6-3, 6-3.

"In hindsight, an hour and a half between matches might have been a little tight," Cass said. "They're a very good team. They're probably real comparable to Oklahoma in my opinion."

Tyler coach John Peterson said the match was a special one for his players, as most aspire to playing for a top Division I school.

"The guys that come here dream about playing at a place like Texas A&M. That's what they want to do," Peterson said. "Sometimes they think some coach didn't see the greatness of me, I came from the wrong background or my grades just weren't good enough, but that's where they want to go."

A&M baseball ends series with 14-5 loss to Texas Tech

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's baseball team couldn't close out a series sweep over Big 12 rival Texas Tech as the Red Raiders won the final game, 14-5, Sunday at Olsen Field.

After getting shut down by Aggie pitching in the first two games of the weekend series, Tech (17-9, 1-2 Big 12) was able to jump on A&M senior pitcher Justin Moore early, scoring six times in the first two innings.

"(A&M) dominated us for two nights with their pitching," said Tech head coach Larry Hays. "If a pitcher's not on, we've hit pretty well. We've just had a hard time when the pitcher's having a good day."

Tech was able to score three more runs in the top of the third inning off A&M junior relief pitcher Kyle Marlatt to increase its early lead to 9-1. Moore and Marlatt combined to pitch three innings for the No. 10 Aggies while giving up nine earned runs and 11 hits.

A&M (23-6, 3-3) was able to get to Tech junior starter Michael McGowan in the bottom half of the third for two runs to cut the Tech lead to six before Hays pulled McGowan in favor of senior pitcher Corey Gerstner.

Gerstner stomped out any chance of an Aggie comeback as he retired the first 13 batters he faced.

"I'm not going to blame it all on the starting pitching," said A&M head coach Mark Johnson. "I didn't think we hit the ball real well. We didn't have enough quality at-bats."

The Aggies weren't able to get to Gerstner until the bottom of the seventh inning. Trailing 13-3, A&M senior designated hitter Brian Bowe broke Gerstner's no-hit streak with a single to left field with two outs. Gerstner followed by walking A&M sophomore center fielder John Infante before getting pulled by Hays.

Tech junior relief pitcher Barret Pfler walked A&M senior second baseman Erik Schindewolf, prompting Hays to go to the bullpen again.

Tech senior pitcher Steve Gooch walked A&M sophomore shortstop Cliff Pennington, scoring Bowe, before getting A&M freshman third baseman Austin Boggs to fly out to center field to end the inning.

"With McGowan not being able to throw more than he did really put us in a bind," Hays said. "Gerstner was able to throw well enough, but with that big lead we had to keep trying to score runs."

The Aggies were able to score another run in the eighth inning, but were never able to get within eight runs of the Raiders.

"We've been behind like that and won ball games," Johnson said. "We just had trouble holding them down from an offensive standpoint, and then we couldn't gain ground on them."



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M freshman pitcher Kyle Nicholson delivers a pitch in the seventh inning of A&M's 14-5 loss to Texas Tech Sunday at Olsen Field. A&M won two of the three games of the weekend series with Tech.

Aggies top No. 9 Oklahoma

By Ryan Irby
THE BATTALION

The bus ride back to Norman, Okla., will measure about seven hours on the watch, but it will seem like an eternity to the No. 9 Oklahoma softball team.

Texas A&M (20-15, 2-0 Big 12) sent OU packing Sunday with a 5-4 triumph over the Sooners (26-11-1, 0-2) to complete the two-game sweep of the weekend series at the Aggie Softball Complex.

Oklahoma was looking for revenge from its 1-0 loss Saturday early as Sooner freshman shortstop Norelle Dickson laced the first pitch of the game into left field for a base hit. Three batters later, OU junior catcher Heather Scaglione hit a towering home run to give the Sooners a 2-0 advantage.

In the bottom of the first inning, OU junior pitcher Kami Keiter, who went the distance on Saturday, drilled junior right fielder Jana James in the back with her first offering.

"That doesn't surprise me, if that's the way you want to play," said A&M head coach Jo Evans. "(Oklahoma head coach Patty Gasso) said the hit batter wasn't intentional, and I have to believe that."

In the top half of the second, OU added another run as freshman third baseman Jamie Fox drove the first pitch she saw from A&M freshman pitcher Jill Weynand off the scoreboard but take the blow.

Evans went to the bullpen after the long ball and put senior right-hander Lindsay Wilhelmson in the circle, who went the distance from there. She allowed just one run on six hits in the rest of the contest.

"We were making a statement," Wilhelmson said. "We couldn't be content with just one win. We wanted to beat (Oklahoma) more than anything."



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M senior pitcher Lindsey Wilhelmson scores the winning run in A&M's 1-0 win over No. 9 Oklahoma Saturday. A&M also won 5-4 Sunday.

In the bottom of the second, A&M freshman third baseman Laura Durham rocketed an 0-1 offering from Keiter over the wall in left center, scoring sophomore first baseman Kristin Gunter, who doubled earlier.

Keiter then pegged Wilhelmson with her next delivery on a pitch, and Wilhelmson could do nothing but take the blow.

"When they hit Jana, that didn't surprise me," Evans said. "When they hit Wilhelmson, now the war was on. You started it, you better be able to finish it."

The Aggies finished off Keiter in the third with a pair of home runs from junior shortstop Adrian Gregory and Gunter to give A&M a 5-3 lead. Wilhelmson and the Aggie defense held on from

there as OU added one more in the fourth.

"I've never seen fight like that in our kids," Evans said. "There was no giving up. I couldn't be more proud of my team; it's a great way to start the conference season."

For Oklahoma, which was predicted to win the conference, dropping two close games was a disappointing way to begin conference play.

"(A&M) played well," Gasso said. "We are going to see if we can have an attitude adjustment, especially at the plate."

Evans said these wins were something she has been anticipating for a long time.

"I hope this is the catalyst that gets us going in the right direction," Evans said. "We needed to get a little nutty."