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By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

The No. 13 Texas A&M baseball team's list of tough opponents left to play this season is long, and the University of Texas-Arlington, which A&M will play Tuesday in Arlington, Texas, is a team on that list.

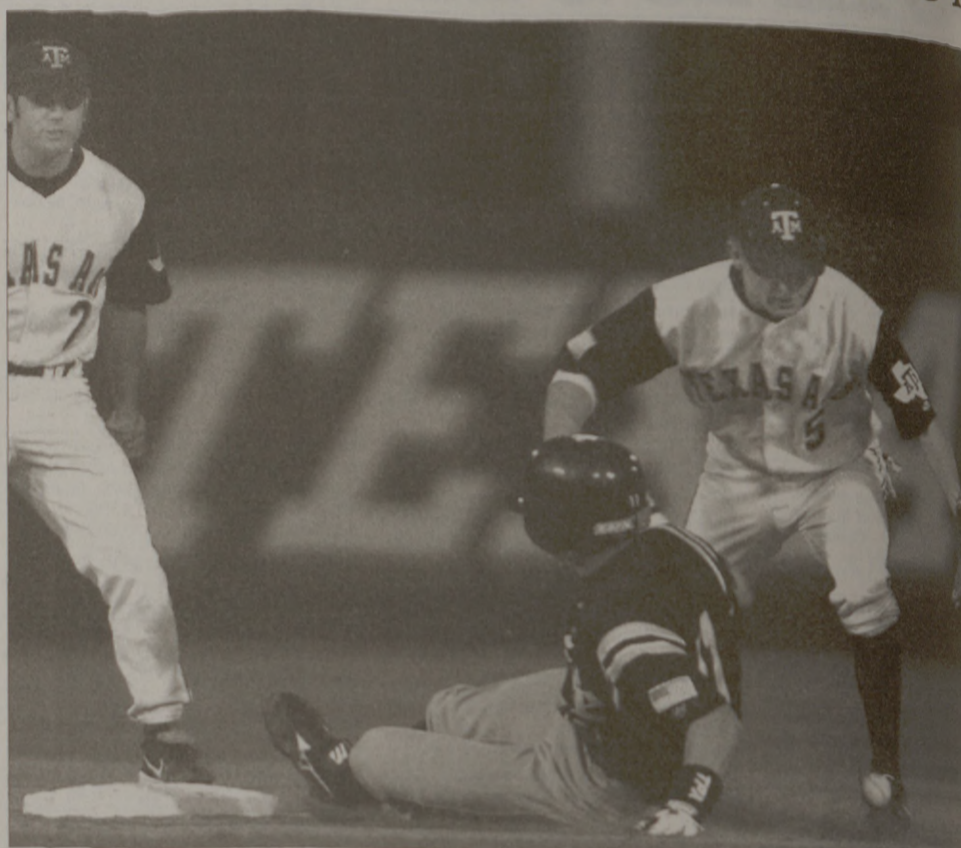
A&M (31-11, 7-8 Big 12) still has two top-15 teams remaining on its schedule, including top-ranked University of Texas. UTA is unranked in the baseball polls, but has shown it can handle Big 12 powerhouse teams such as No. 13 University of Oklahoma and Baylor University.

"I think it's good we're playing a team of this caliber heading into the stretch," said A&M senior outfielder Cory Patton. "The better somebody you're playing is, the better it helps you become."

"Basically, we need to get it together. We have to get up and face what's ahead of us."

— Mark Johnson
Texas A&M baseball head coach

A&M is coming off a weekend series loss to the Sooners, winning Friday's game and then dropping Saturday and Sunday's matchups. The Aggies were able to keep up with the Sooners in the two losses, but eventually lost the games on defensive mistakes



Texas A&M shortstop Cliff Pennington drops the ball while Rice junior shortstop Paul Janish slides into second base during the third inning of Rice's 15-10 win over the Aggies on March 23 at Olsen Field. A&M will travel to Arlington, Texas, to face the University of Texas-Arlington Tuesday.

or mistakes on the base paths.

"Basically we need to get it together," said A&M head coach Mark Johnson. "We don't have time to sit down and whimper at all. We have to get up and face what's ahead of us."

The Mavericks are also coming off a weekend series loss to Lamar University, losing two of three games. In both of the losses, the score was tied heading into the final inning of play, with Lamar capitalizing on key mistakes by UTA.

"We've been stranding a lot of base runners lately and we've lost a lot of those games because of it," said UTA head coach Jeff Curtis. "The key to winning Tuesday is going to be

a good pitching performance — someone who can keep us in the game."

That someone will be junior pitcher Grant Varnell, who takes a 3-3 record and a 5.56 earned run average to the mound. After using six pitchers in the three-game series, Curtis said he has big expectations for Varnell.

"We're going to need him to go deep in the ballgame for us because our bullpen is a little depleted," Curtis said.

A&M's pitching staff has also been worn thin after the weekend, sending 10 pitchers to the mound. In a surprising move, the Aggies will send starting outfielder Patton to the hill in his first pitching start for

the Aggies to try and give one of the regular pitchers rest. Patton won't be Patton's first time on the mound, however, as he went 8-1 in 10 starts at Seward Community College during the 2002 season.

The Aggies will be without senior Erik Schindewolf, the team's regular second baseman, leadoff hitter and team captain. Schindewolf will be sidelined at least three to four weeks after sustaining an injury in Saturday's game.

"It's hard when you lose a captain and a guy with a little bit, but we'll just have to adjust to that."

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