

SPORTS

ISLANDERS REPORT

Isles baseball team routs Northwestern State

By staff reports

The Texas A&M-Corpus Christi baseball team earned another run-rule victory on Sunday, winning 12-2 in seven innings against Northwestern State at Chapman Field.

Winning the final two games of the series moved the Islanders (21-14, 8-4 Southland Conference) into a four-way tie for first place.

Islanders starter Matt Danton (4-1) was effective through six innings, giving up just two runs on eight hits while striking out a pair of Demons (11-25, 2-10).

Jonathan Gonzales had a big day at the plate, going 4 for 4 with two RBIs while Stafford Brantley picked up three hits and three RBIs as the Islanders poured it on.

Zach Taylor added two hits, while Jordan Lee,

former John Paul stand-out Dominic Lopez, Eric Weiss, Cody Stephens and Brandon Tierney picked up one hit apiece. Taylor also finished with two RBIs, while Lee, Lopez, Weiss, Stephens and Tierney also added one each.

With the score tied at 2 in the fourth, A&M-Corpus Christi scored six runs with two outs.

With the bases loaded, Gonzales scored on a wild pitch that was also ball four to Tierney, and then Brantley singled through the left side to score Vaughan for the second run of the inning. Taylor followed with a two-RBI single through the right side that brought home Tierney and Brantley to make it 6-2. Lee tripled home Taylor for another run, then Weiss followed with a single of his own to finish the scoring in the

inning.

That score would hold until the bottom of the seventh, as the team plated four more, including a walk-off single to invoke the run-rule ending.

SOFTBALL

Islanders fall in 8

Despite overcoming a five-run deficit, the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi softball team saw Sam Houston State score three times in the eighth inning for an 8-5 victory at Chapman Field.

Down 5-0, the Islanders (8-31, 3-15 Southland) rallied back with one run in the first and put together a huge bottom of the third to even the score at 5.

The Islanders plated four runs on five hits in the bottom of the third to knot the score, getting an RBI single from Mickayla Co-

chran, a bases-loaded wild pitch, Laura Phillips' run-scoring single and Cassie Carroll's tying RBI hit.

The Bearkats (25-19, 11-7) then ended a four-inning stalemate in the eighth, getting Jessica Slater's RBI fielder's choice and Tori Benavidez's two-run double off Constance Brandenburg (5-12).

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Isles roll past ORU

The Texas A&M-Corpus Christi women's tennis team won 6-1 over Oral Roberts in its regular-season finale.

The Islanders are now assured of at least a second-place finish in the Southland Conference, with the potential for a conference title depending on the outcome of Monday's match between Southeastern Louisiana and Nicholls.

A Nicholls victory would give the Islanders the title and No. 1 seed in the upcoming Southland Conference Tournament.

Against Oral Roberts, the Islanders earned the double point and then got singles victories from Sandra Burges, Leanne Mascall, and Mia Matuszak to clinch the match.

TRACK AND FIELD

Isles net eight golds

KINGSVILLE — The Texas A&M-Corpus Christi men's and women's track and field teams clinched eight first-place finishes late Saturday at the Javelina Twilight Invitational.

The Islanders men's and women's teams both dominated in the 3,000 meters, picking up the top five spots in both races.

On the men's side, senior Patrick Kimeli clinched

the top spot with a season-best time of 8:39.90. On the women's side, senior BreAnna Briggs led the way in first place with a time of 10:29.22.

The Islanders also put together a stellar performance in the men's and women's 800 meters. Brandon Lacy led the men to a first-place finish with a season-best time of 1:51.97. Jasmine Boutte led the women's team with a first-place finish in the women's 800, clocking a time of 2:16.96.

Alexandra Fernandez clinched the top spot in the women's 1,500 with a personal-best time of 4:48.32. Ebony Collins finished first in the women's 100 with a time of 12.16.

Michael Diamond picked up a first-place finish in the men's long jump with a distance of 6.49 meters (21 feet, 3.5 inches).

SOUTHLAND WOMEN'S GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS

Where: Frisco Lakes Golf Club, Frisco

When: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 18 holes each day

At stake: An automatic berth into the NCAA regional

ISLANDERS from 1C

team can compete. A&M-Corpus Christi hasn't placed higher than sixth in a spring tournament this year, but she feels her team just needs to be confident heading into the tournament, which is staged at Frisco Lakes Golf Club.

She said her team hasn't been able to find a rhythm this season with multiple weather issues. A very gusty wind — even by Corpus Christi standards — hampered play when the team hosted its opener. There were a series of rain delays at an Arizona tournament and golf balls were freezing in the cup in Little Rock, Ark.

“Our confidence has labored on and off again,” Blackmar said. “We had our challenges starting out this spring. There were weather problems, and it seemed like there was always something taken away from us

when we would try to get back in it again.

“We've had some very good practices. I feel we're capable of competing and hanging with any of the teams.”

Blackmar said if her team can keep mental mistakes to a minimum, the Islanders might be able to keep pace with favorites such as Sam Houston State and Lamar.

While this is the first time Frisco Lakes has hosted the Southland tournament, A&M-Corpus Christi players have some familiarity with the course, playing it over spring break just to get the feel for it.

“I think the tournament will be won around the greens; off the tee it's pretty wide open,” Blackmar said. “It probably will be the short game and putting that win it. We have been hitting wedges and wedges and a few more wedges. It's just a matter of getting out there and making adjustments to the speed of the greens.”

REGIONALS from 1C

by Knox and Xac at regionals could also mean a UIL state tournament berth for them.

The top three teams and top three individuals who aren't on a state qualifying team from each region advance to the state tournament.

The 31-4A individual boys champion, Knox, and the 30-4A individual girls champ, Xac, have good reason to have those state tournament aspirations.

Xac shot a course record, opening-round 67 at Victoria's Riverside Golf Course en route to winning the 30-4A individual title by 16 strokes thanks to a two-round total of 139. Xac started that tournament at 3-over par through the first five holes, before picking up birdies on the next three holes. She finished with seven birdies and an eagle on the opening day while beating her one-round personal best this season by two strokes.

“Our ultimate goal for her was to be the district champ, but she exceeded that — nobody was even close to her score at the district tournament,” T-M coach Matt Pacheco said. “If she can shoot two rounds of par at the regional tournament, she has got a really good chance to make it to state. She (just) has to go out there and perform.”

Knox followed his opening round of 73 at the 31-4A tournament at the Alice Municipal Golf Course with a final round of 71 for

REGIONAL GOLF

REGION IV-5A TOURNAMENT

BOYS

Where: Cedar Creek Golf Course, San Antonio

First round: Monday, 8 a.m.

Final round: Tuesday, 8 a.m.

GIRLS

Where: Brackenridge Park Golf Course, San Antonio

First round: Wednesday, 8 a.m.

Final round: Thursday, 8 a.m.

REGION IV-4A TOURNAMENT

Where: Golf Club of Texas, San Antonio

BOYS

First round: Monday, 8 a.m.

Final round: Tuesday, 8 a.m.

GIRLS

First round: Wednesday, 8 a.m.

Final round: Thursday, 8 a.m.

REGION IV-3A TOURNAMENT

BOYS

Where: Gabe Lozano Sr. Golf Center

First round: Monday, 7:30 a.m.

Final round: Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.

GIRLS

Where: Oso Beach Municipal Golf Course

First round: Monday, 7:30 a.m.

Final round: Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.

10 to watch

Here are 10 other former Coastal Bend high school athletes who excelled last week at the collegiate level:

BASEBALL

UT-Pan American senior IF Shane Klemcke (Rockport-Fulton):

Went 3 for 8 with three runs scored to help the Broncs sweep their three-game Great West Conference series against Chicago State. Batting .236 (21 for 89) with 16 runs and 12 RBIs for UTPA (15-15, 6-1).

Texas Lutheran sophomore RHP Aaron Aleman (IWA): Allowed one earned run, struck out nine and walked two over six innings to get the win in the Bulldogs' American Southwest Conference victory over Hardin-Simmons on Saturday. Has an 8-3 record with a 2.97 ERA and 47 strikeouts over 63.2 innings for TLU (28-8, 14-1).

WOMEN'S GOLF

Southwestern freshman Keeley Coburn (Tuloso-Midway): Finished fifth at the NCAA Division III West Region Invitational on April 9 with a two-day 18-over 162 to lead the Pirates to a second place.

SOFTBALL

Concordia-Austin freshman RHP Zalya Perez (Alice): Improved to 5-2 by scattering five hits and striking out two over 6.2 innings of Saturday's 7-6 American Southwest Conference win over Hardin-Simmons. Has a 4.17 ERA with 16 strikeouts over 52 innings for the Tornados (21-13, 10-10).

Houston-Victoria junior 2B Ashley Winegeart (Carroll): Helped the Jaguars sweep a two-game series from Centenary College by going 3 for 7 with two runs scored and two RBIs.

St. Mary's junior RHP/UTIL Emily Brittain (Tuloso-Midway):

Reached the 20-win mark Saturday with two-thirds of an inning of relief in an 8-5 victory over Oklahoma Christian. Went the distance in Friday's 8-1 win over Oklahoma Christian, striking out three and scattering four hits. Has a 20-4 record with a 2.25 ERA and 74 strikeouts over 113.2 innings.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

MIT junior Lauren Quisenberry (Gregory-Portland): Won 7-6 (7-3), 7-5 in No. 1 singles and combined with Julia Hsu to win 8-6 in No. 1 doubles to lead the Engineers to a 6-3 win over Brandeis.

Texas Lutheran freshman Sofia Vega (Flour Bluff): Remained undefeated in American Southwest Conference matches with a 6-0, 6-0 win over Howard Payne's Joan Burks in No. 1 singles. Teamed with Caitlin Zarr for a victory in No. 1 doubles as the Bulldogs took a 7-2 win. Has a 10-2 overall record in No. 1 singles and 3-1 mark in No. 1 doubles.

Texas State sophomore Rachel Baldree (Flour Bluff): Beat Bryn Oliveira 6-0, 6-1 in No. 3 singles and also won in No. 3 doubles to help the Bobcats down Lewis & Clark State College 6-1 on Saturday. Has a 13-10 record in single and 10-6 mark in doubles.

WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Rice senior thrower Sharae Robinson (West Oso): Won the discus with a throw of 167 feet and hammer throw with a mark of 173.5 at Saturday's UTEP Invitational.

Compiled by Coy Slavik. If you have a Hometown Heroes suggestion, please email hometown.heroes@ymail.com

BUTLER from 1C

said. “We're very dependent on him now to do well for us, and he's doing that for us.”

Butler made an immediate impact at UTA as a true freshman last year. He placed fourth in the 200 (22.03) and seventh in the 60 (6.89) at the Southland Conference Indoor Championships. He continued his success into the outdoor season and took third in the 200 at the SLC Championships with a 21.09.

Butler reached the NCAA West Preliminaries in the 100 and 200, where he battled a case of nerves as he competed against some of the country's top sprinters.

“I was pretty scared,” said Butler, who finished 30th out of 46 sprinters in the 200 with a time of 21.27 and 44th out of 47 runners in the 100 with a 10.63. “I had (Texas A&M's) Prez Hardy and Everett Walker of Baylor, who were both in the top five in the meet. I think I choked that night. I was out of my element. I didn't go in confident like I usually do. The same thing happened to me in the 100. I didn't do what I needed to do.”

Butler worked during the summer and fall on his starts and it showed in February's WAC Indoor Championships, where he

a two-day total of 144 to edge Ray senior Rudy Lee Trevino by one stroke to win the individual district title.

Miller coach Paul Nicolaides said it is important for Knox to get off to another good start at regionals because he knows how to finish.

“In golf, you've got to be a closer,” Nicolaides said. “On the 18th hole (on the final day) at the district tournament, he put the ball 12 feet from the pin on his first shot and he had to, to hold off the kid from Ray. He did it under pressure — 155 yards out with the district title on the line while everybody was watching him. He's the real deal.”

Moody senior Kelsey Canales, the 31-4A individual girls champion, will look to challenge Xac at regionals. Canales' two-day total of 147 was eight strokes off Xac's pace in district tournament play.

Canales is looking to get back to the state tournament after leading the Trojans as a team there in 2010.

“She has an excellent chance to advance as an individual, but it's a lot more fun when the whole team goes,” said Moody coach Rudy Valdez, whose Trojans won their fifth consecutive district team title this season.

Like the Trojans' girls team, Ray's boys team also wants to punch its ticket for the state tournament.

Texans boys coach Matthew Hook said this could be Ray's season to take that next step considering its four seniors will be making their fourth straight appearance at the Region IV-4A tournament.

“We have experience playing that course and we have done fairly well there,” said Hook, whose boys team won its third consecutive district team title recently. “We want to advance a little further this season.”

30-4A boys runner-up Gregory-Portland, 31-4A boys runner-up Alice, 30-4A girls runner-up Calallen, 31-4A girls runner-up Ray and Tuloso-Midway junior Hunter Freeman

also qualified for the Region IV-4A tournament.

28-5A champion King's boys and girls teams and 28-5A runner-up Carroll's girls team will also look to continue their impressive postseason runs at the Region IV-5A golf tournament in San Antonio. The two-day Region IV-5A boys tournament begins Monday at San Antonio's Cedar Creek Golf Course and the two-day Region IV-5A girls tournament starts Wednesday at San Antonio's Brackenridge Park Golf Course.

Senior John Rafael, the 28-5A individual boys champion with a two-round total of 158, leads the Mustangs' boys team, while senior Raven Perrin, the 28-5A girls individual runner-up with a two-day total of 172, leads King's girls team into regionals.

Senior Isabella Johnson, the girls district individual champion for the third straight year thanks to a two-round total of 153, leads the Tigers' girls team into the regional tournament.

QUENTIN BUTLER FILE

2013: Came in third in the long jump at the WAC Indoor Championships. ... Had a season-best 24-1 in the long jump at the WAC meet. ... Posted a time of 6.80 in the finals of the 60 meters at the WAC meet after a season-best clocking of 6.79 in the prelims.

2012: Scored points in the 100 and 200 meters at the Southland Conference Indoor Championships. ... Took fourth in the 200 meters (22.03) and seventh in the 60 meters (6.89) at the WAC meet. ... Competed in the 100 and 200 meters at the NCAA West Outdoor Preliminaries. ... Placed third in the 200 (21.09) and sixth in the 100 (10.71) at the Southland Conference Outdoor Championships. Had a season-best time of 10.43 in the 100 at the Track-It Buster Invitational.

High School: Finished second in the 100 and third in the 200 for West Oso at the Class 3A state meet as a senior. ... Led team to district title as a senior by scoring 40 points. ... Finished third in the 100 and third in the 200 at the state meet as a junior. ... Named South Texas Track Athlete of the Year as a junior. ... Was a four-year letter winner in track & field and a three-year letter winner in football. ... Named first-team All-South Texas in football as a junior.

Personal: Born Sept. 18, 1992 in Corpus Christi. ... Son of Clarence and Lavon Butler.



placed sixth in the 60 with a time of 6.80. He also took third in the long jump with a season-best leap of 24-1.

“I got more confidence in my drive phase and my block work,” Butler said. “They weren't as good as they should have been last year. I concentrated on my form and the basic things for this year. I can see that now in my 200. You can see the change in the videos.”

Butler also came back his sophomore year after learning what it took to

be a collegiate athlete as a freshman.

“He's a pretty quiet guy,” Sauerhage said. “He's learning to handle criticisms and suggestions better. It boils down to him maturing as an adult. It has helped him understand what the coaches are trying to do for him and we're working really with him right now.”

At the April 6 Texas State Invitational, Butler went 24-5 on his first jump before he experienced pain in his left knee.

“My knee started bothering me and I got tendinitis in left leg, my jump leg,” Butler said. “It bothered me a lot. My next two jumps were low 24's. I kept going down from there.”

Butler has been getting extra time on the relay teams to fill the void left by All-America sprinter Clayton Vaughn, who has been sidelined with a stress fracture. Sauerhage said he will be careful not to put too much of a load on Butler's legs as he reaches the end of the outdoor season.

“When you're a long jumper/sprinter, the temptation to long jump and sprint every week is there, but you have to be very careful because you can get pretty beat up,” Sauerhage said. “Right now, he's our marquee sprinter until Clayton gets back.”

Butler ranks first in the 200 and third in the 100 among WAC sprinters. In the long jump, he ranks second. Sauerhage said he is confident Butler can compete for the WAC title in all three events.

“If we can keep him healthy, he might have a shot of being an All-American this year,” Sauerhage said. “If he continues to improve the rest of the spring, it is a possibility.”

“I know I can still improve, so hopefully I can finish in the top three in all three of my events,” Butler said. “I want to get as many points as I can to help the team out.”