

SPORTS

# Isles coach concedes little to Texas foe

## A&M-CC seeks longer tennis match

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Steve Moore never had a problem playing the underdog card in the past when his men's tennis teams made the NCAA postseason.

Opponents always were bigger and stronger, and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi always had to play the perfect game to win.

The Islanders never did — at least for purposes of the official record books.

This season, however, Moore isn't spouting

### COLLEGE STATION REGIONAL

#### FRIDAY

No. 3 A&M-CC (16-7) vs. No. 2 Texas (16-8), 11 a.m.  
No. 1 Texas A&M (17-12) vs. No. 4 Marist (17-3), 2 p.m.

#### SATURDAY

Region final, 3 p.m.

the praise of the perfect match or upstart play. He concedes the physical upper hand to second-seeded Texas, the opponent third-seeded A&M-Corpus Christi meets in the College Station Regional at 11 a.m. Friday at the

Mitchell Tennis Center, but little else to a team that defeated the Islanders 6-1 early in the season.

"We're getting them on a neutral site, and this is a very different (Longhorns) team, a very, very young team," Moore said. "What I think is very important is that we compete with freedom and we know the scheme we want to play for each guy individually."

"In the past, we really lost to teams that were just a level better than us. I thought we maxed out."

Not this time. Moore said this tilt seems more like a chess match with Texas, which is 10-0 all time against A&M-Corpus Christi, including the opening round of the 2008 tournament.

The Longhorns, ranked 21st nationally, are a bigger team. The Islanders, 59th in the nation, are a durable bunch. A&M-Corpus Christi (16-7) will want to extend points, use the entire court and get Texas (16-8) moving.

"Anyone watching this match will see an obvious style contrast," Moore said. "Texas has a lot of big guys that play a power game. We have smaller guys who play a movement game. We want to expand the court and play longer games. Texas will want to make it a physical game. Both teams will have to make moves to make sure that their style is played."

"I feel like one of our big strengths is our fitness, so

we want as long a match as possible. We're not the flashiest, but we're a very fit team. We're certainly hoping for the hottest, windiest conditions possible."

If everything goes right on the chess board, A&M-Corpus Christi could get a first — again — for the record books.

Between Moore's two terms as tennis coach, the Islanders made the 2005 NCAA postseason and beat William & Mary in the first round, falling to Virginia in the second round. But NCAA sanctions purged that victory from the record books, meaning a trip to the second round this week would be regarded as a program first officially.

Since then, A&M-Corpus Christi has been 0-4 in first-round matches, losing to Boise State, Texas, Arizona and Baylor.

A change here would set a new standard and set up a Saturday showdown with either top-region-seed Texas A&M or fourth-seeded Marist with a trip to the Round of 16 in Urbana, Ill. at stake.

"We've talked about really believing we can win, and then really going forward and playing loose," Moore said. "I think we will have our shot. We have a lot of respect for this Texas team but, at the same, I believe in these guys."

"In these moments, you have to rise up and take. We have to take it."

## MITCHELL from 1C

"I think about it every day."

The dream wasn't just the first time Mitchell can remember finishing last in a race. It's the only time she can remember finishing worse than second.

The West Oso junior has been winning state titles since she was old enough to compete. The past two years at the Class 3A state meet, Mitchell won the 200-meter dash as a freshman and a sophomore. On Saturday in Austin, she's going for the 200 three-peat and her first gold medal in the 100 meters.

"We've never had someone from Oso defend a title three years in a row," Mitchell said. "So to have that, a new tradition for the girls' track team, that's very exciting."

West Oso isn't the only school to have never had a three-time state title winner — hardly anyone in Texas can boast such success — but Bears track coach Venita Tryon believes if anyone can do it, Mitchell can.

"She's something really special," Tryon said. "You're blessed when you get an athlete like that who comes along and has the talent and work ethic of wanting to compete, wanting to win. It doesn't come by that often — we don't know where it comes from."

If anyone knows the origins of Mitchell's talents, it's her brothers, Anthony Mitchell and Michael Perry, both 20. It's from them that Akeyla got her first taste for competitive running.

"They used to run track for Miller and, because they competed against me, I started racing them in the streets or at school," Akeyla Mitchell said. "I raced them from elementary school all

### STATE TRACK QUALIFIERS

#### 3A BOYS

- D'Andre Herron, Rockport-Fulton, 200 meters
- Alex Fahrenthold, R-F, 300 hurdles
- Derek Shedd, Sinton, 110 hurdles
- Terrance Robinson, Ingleside, 400
- Colton Cohea, Sinton, pole vault

#### 3A GIRLS

- Malika McPheters, Ingleside, triple jump
- Akeyla Mitchell, West Oso, 100 and 200 meters

#### 2A BOYS

- William Butler, Aransas Pass, long jump
- Ryan Garza, Odem, 300 hurdles

#### 2A GIRLS

- Caroline Bellows, George West, pole vault
- Jacky Jasper, Aransas Pass, shot put
- Molly Martinez, Bishop, triple jump

#### A-D1 GIRLS

- Haleigh Garcia, Three Rivers, triple jump

#### A-D2 BOYS

- Chris Gray, London, triple jump

#### TAPPS 4A BOYS

- Jaran Cadena, IWA, 400 and 800 meters
- Jackson Bright, IWA, 1,600 and 3,200 meters
- Jared Coco, IWA, 1,600 and 3,200 meters
- Vincent Morin, IWA, long jump
- J.L. Bronold, IWA, discus and shot put
- Khoa Nguyen, Vincent Morin, Jason Simank, and Jaran Cadena, 1,600 relay

#### TAPPS 4A GIRLS

- Cassidy Faught, IWA, 800 meters
- Samantha Simank, IWA, 3,200 meters
- Maggie Pesek, IWA, pole vault
- Bianca Valderrama, IWA, shot put and discus

the way to middle school."

While Mitchell's brothers fell away from the sport to focus on football, she continued to embrace it. What initially served as an activity to fill the void when middle school basketball and volleyball were out of season grew into her main event in high school.

"Her freshman year, when it was basketball off-season, they brought them out to the track and I was out here and they had them running and she took off and I'm like 'Whoa!' because she took off so fast," Tryon said. "But that's just Akeyla. That's just something normal for her."

Later that year, Mitchell won her first state title in the 200. It's a moment she still remembers as exhilarating.

"My freshman year, I was shocked because I won it, my sophomore year, I was

OK, but this year and next year I'll probably shed some tears, because next year will be my last year running track for Oso," Mitchell said. "Leaving those memories ... I want to make sure the tradition keeps going and going."

Chasing after title No. 3, Mitchell has the state's best time entering the 100 and 200. But in a sport where championships are won or lost in fractions of a second, she's not about to rest on her laurels. She wants to make sure the specter of defeat remains a thing of only dreams.

"I'm very excited I have the fastest times, but it doesn't mean anything," Mitchell said. "It's pressure, nerves, everything mixed together inside of me. I have confidence I'll win it, but I'm not going in cocky because cocky can always mess you up."

“You're blessed when you get an athlete like that who comes along and has the talent and work ethic of wanting to compete, wanting to win. It doesn't come by that often — we don't know where it comes from.”

Venita Tryon, West Oso track coach, on Akeyla Mitchell

### NFL notebook

#### COWBOYS

### Sensabaugh set to retire with team

IRVING — Gerald Sensabaugh is retiring with Dallas after spending the last half of an eight-year career with them.

The safety signed a one-day contract with the Cowboys on Thursday. He was released for salary cap reasons in March.

The 29-year-old Sensabaugh started 84 of 112 games for Jacksonville and Dallas. He had 14 interceptions and 469 tackles.

Sensabaugh was a fifth-round pick by the Jaguars in 2005 out of North Carolina. His best season came with the Cowboys in 2010, when he had career highs of five interceptions and 10 pass breakups.

### QB released two days after signing

IRVING — Dallas has released quarterback Aaron Corp two days after signing him. They also waived de-

fensive tackle Brian Price. The Cowboys waived Price because of a shoulder problem.

#### BEARS

### LB Bostic agrees to 4-year deal

LAKEFOREST, Ill. — Chicago has agreed to a four-year contract with second-round draft pick Jon Bostic.

A linebacker at Florida, Bostic figures to compete with veteran free agent acquisition D.J. Williams for Brian Urlacher's old job.

Bostic made eight sacks, 19 1/2 tackles for loss and five interceptions in his four-year Florida career. He ran a 4.6-second 40-yard dash at the NFL combine and bench-pressed 225 pounds 22 times.

#### EAGLES

### Five draft picks signed

PHILADELPHIA — The Eagles have signed five draft

picks on the eve of their rookie camp.

Tight end Zach Ertz (2nd), safety Earl Wolff (5th), defensive end Joe Kruger (7th), cornerback Jordan Poyer (7th) and defensive end David King (7th) each agreed to deals on Thursday.

Tackle Lane Johnson (1st), defensive tackle Bennie Logan (3rd) and quarterback Matt Barkley (4th) remain unsigned.

#### RAVENS

### Charge dismissed against McClain

DECATUR, Ala. — A city judge has dismissed a charge accusing Baltimore Ravens linebacker Rolando McClain of lying to police about his identity.

The charge stemmed from McClain writing profanity on a ticket for a window-tint violation on April 21 instead of signing his name.

Associated Press

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