

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL...

Relentless Rattlers slide past Unicorns

By **JOE VOZZELLI**
Daily Record Sports

NEW BRAUNFELS — Opponents pay heed: When you play the San Marcos Rattlers, you had better be ready for anything. San Marcos utilized an aggressive approach on the base paths during its 5-1 victory over New Braunfels last Friday night. With the win, the Rattlers evened their District 25-5A record at 1-1 and improved to 12-

7 overall. "We had let a few ball games get by because we were sitting back and waiting for the big hit," San Marcos head coach Bryan Webb said. "I could kind of feel it was like it was on Tuesday (4-1 loss to Smithson Valley), it was a 1-0 ball game. Tonight we forced the issue. We finally found a weakness and exploited it." Up 2-1 in the sixth, the
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Daily Record Photo by **Joe Vozzelli**

San Marcos sophomore David Hamilton takes third after tagging up on a fly ball. Hamilton went 1 for 2 with two stolen bases in the game.

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL...

Badda boom

SM clubs three HRs in 12-3 home victory

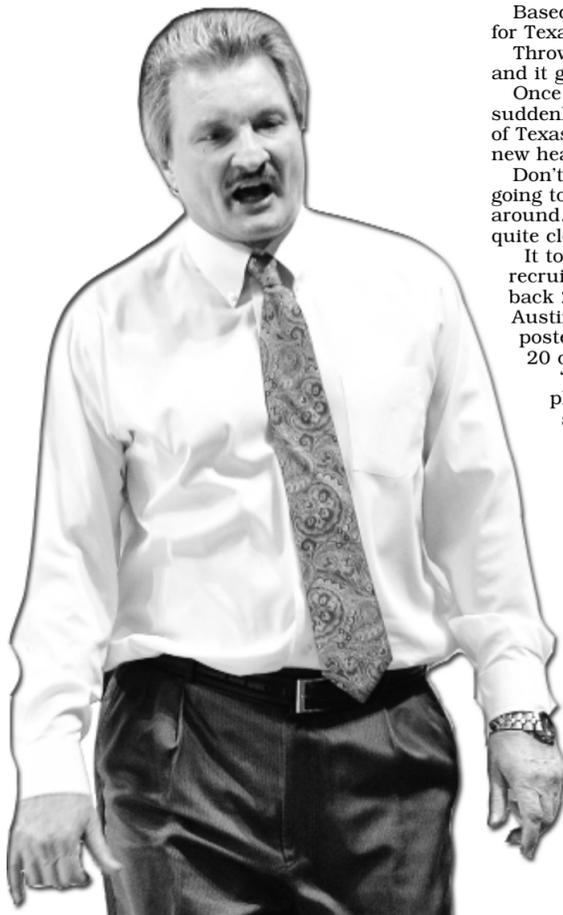
By **TYLER MAYFORTH**
Sports Editor

Patience paid off in a big way last Friday for Vianey Villalpando and the San Marcos Lady Rattlers. Through four innings, San Marcos and San Antonio Wagner were locked in a tight game. Based entirely off recent results and on how the Lady Rattler offense had been clicking, it shouldn't have been close that long — but San Marcos couldn't get out of its own way and Wagner's
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OPINION...

PIECING IT TOGETHER

"There were a lot of issues to be taken care of. If I didn't believe in the potential of this university and the leadership we have here, I would have probably walked away." — Texas State head coach **Danny Kaspar**



Danny Kaspar

Based on record alone, this past season for Texas State was a disaster. Throw in the Bobcats' futility on offense and it gets worse. Once you add the name "Danny Kaspar," suddenly the future looks bright regardless of Texas State's brutal first year under the new head coach. Don't be fooled. Kaspar knew he wasn't going to immediately turn this program around. His team's 8-23 record made that quite clear. It took Kaspar two full years and three recruiting classes until he had back-to-back 21-win seasons at Stephen F. Austin. Over the next nine years, Kaspar posted eight winning seasons and won 20 or more games five times. "I don't want this to be a three-year plan — that's not my goal," Kaspar said over lunch at The Tap Room last Wednesday. "At my age and with my track record, I'm not into long rebuilding. My hopes are that in three years we can have this program where I want it to be. "I wanted it to be a two-year turnaround, but after a few months of getting to know the situation, I felt like this would be a three-year rebuilding project. "I didn't have that idea coming into the hiring process. You learn more about your program as you get into it. I found those things out this year, not just in a day or a week. It took a month or two. Some things aren't what they seem to be. Some things are more positive than I thought they would be. Some things are more negative than I thought they would be." Fortunately — or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it — Kaspar worked with a blank, but

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Daily Record Photo by **Gerald Castillo**

For the first time in a long time, defense was consistently played inside Strahan Coliseum. Texas State sophomore forward Emami Gant (shown above) contests the shot of Troy forward Kevin Thomas during a game this past season as Joel Wright watches the play unfold.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL...

Fran demands more

Head coach wants consistent focus

By **JOE VOZZELLI**
Daily Record Sports

Texas State head coach Dennis Franchione stepped a bit out of character as his team wrapped up its first week of spring camp. The usually soft-spoken Franchione lit into a few players during Saturday's practice inside Bobcat Stadium, specifically slot receiver C.J. Best, who forgot where he was

supposed to be on the field. Best was near the sideline when he should have been in the formation. "That's just the intensity of practice," Franchione said. "If you practice to play Division-I football, they've got to bring it. If they don't bring it, I have to bring it for them. It can be coach-driven or player-driven. I prefer it to be player-driven." See **Bobcats**, Page 11A

Practice Dates

If you want to catch Texas State practice this spring, here are the dates you need to know. All practices are open to the public and held inside Bobcat Stadium.

Date	Type	Time
March 24	Practice	3:30 p.m.
March 25	Practice	3:30 p.m.
March 27	Practice	3:30 p.m.
March 29	Scrimmage	10:30 a.m.
March 31	Practice	3:30 p.m.
April 1	Practice	3:30 p.m.
April 3	Practice	3:30 p.m.
April 5	Scrimmage	10:45 a.m.
April 8	Practice	3:30 p.m.
April 9	M&G Draft	TBA
April 10	Practice	3:30 p.m.
April 12	Spring Game	1 p.m.

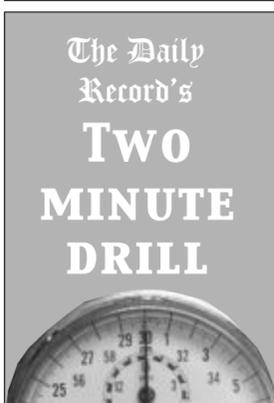
COLLEGE BASEBALL...

'Cats split with WKU

From Staff Reports

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Texas State head coach Ty Harrington has confidence in Garrett Matlage whenever the switch-hitting junior shortstop steps into the batter's box. "Garrett is one of those guys who is always ready to go," Harrington said after watching Matlage knock in more than half of the Bobcats' runs in a 13-4 win

Saturday afternoon over Western Kentucky. "It's rare that you need to get his attention. He loves to play and love to hit." Matlage mauled the Hilltoppers for seven RBIs, finishing two shy of the school record set by John Thompkins on March 28, 1999. Those seven RBIs were the most by any Texas State player since Spenser Dennis did the same in an
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LOCAL SCHEDULE...

- Sunday, March 23**
College Baseball
• Texas State at Western Kentucky, 1 p.m.
College Softball
• Texas State at Texas Tech, 12 p.m.
- Monday, March 24**
Men's College Golf
• Texas State at UTSA Lone Star Invitational, All Day
- Tuesday, March 25**
College Baseball
• Texas State at Texas, 6 p.m.
High School Baseball

- Converse-Judson at San Marcos, 7 p.m.
- Cornerstone at San Marcos Academy, 4:15 p.m.
- High School Softball**
• San Marcos at New Braunfels Canyon, 7 p.m.
- St. Dominic de Savio at San Marcos Academy, 4:30 p.m.
- Women's College Tennis**
• Arkansas State at Texas State, 1 p.m.
- Men's College Golf**
• Texas State at UTSA Lone Star Invitational, All Day
- Wednesday, March 26**
College Softball
• Lamar at Texas State, 6 p.m.
College Track & Field
• Texas State at University of Texas Relays

- Thursday, March 27**
High School Softball
• Smithson Valley at San Marcos, 7 p.m.
• San Marcos Academy at Holy Cross, 5 p.m.
- College Track & Field**
• Texas State at University of Texas Relays
- Friday, March 28**
College Baseball
• Texas State at Arkansas State, 6 p.m.
High School Baseball
• San Marcos at San Antonio Wagner, 7 p.m.
- High School Track & Field**
• San Marcos at University of Texas Relays in Austin, All Day
- College Track & Field**
• Texas State at University of Texas Relays in Austin, All Day

- High School Tennis**
• San Marcos at Boerne Champion Invitational, All Day
- Saturday, March 29**
College Baseball
• Texas State at Arkansas State, 4 p.m.
College Softball
• Texas State at UL-Lafayette, 2 p.m.
• Texas State at UL-Lafayette, 4 p.m.
- High School Baseball**
• San Marcos Academy at Regents, 1 p.m.
- High School Softball**
• Hyde Park at San Marcos Academy, 10 a.m.
- College Track & Field**
• Texas State at University of Texas Relays in Austin, All Day

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Kaspar...

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broken slate his first year in San Marcos.

After seven years of Dougie Ball, fans craved some semblance of defense. Lucky steals weren't cutting it any longer and giving up 75 or more points 62 percent of the time the Bobcats stepped on the floor under former head coach Doug Davalos was just silly.

Texas State absorbed what Kaspar, a defense-first, -second and -third coach, taught — to an extent — and made great strides. The Bobcats led the Sun Belt Conference in scoring defense (66 points allowed per game), held eight opponents to fewer than 58 points (most since 1995-96) and suffocated UL Monroe in a 61-36 win that probably brought tears to Kaspar's eyes.

"We were night and day from the first time I worked with these guys until now," Kaspar said. "There is still room to improve, but I commend my players for their growth in that aspect."

Defense could only take Texas State so far, however, as its anemic offense and low collective basketball IQ held the team

back. In addition to scoring the eighth fewest points in the nation, the Bobcats turned the ball over 13.7 times per game and it's a miracle they were able to walk with how many times they shot themselves in the foot — especially in late-game situations.

"We had 10 games that were decided in the last two minutes or less and only a couple went our way," Kaspar said. "We have to be able to execute and not panic or lose our poise."

Texas State had the same problems since 2006 when Davalos took over for Dennis Nutt. It was only in the 2013 Western Athletic Conference Tournament that the Bobcats gelled under Davalos and played team-centric basketball, not the fractured pick-up version.

Not to bury Davalos deeper, but he left the program in shambles. Kaspar didn't know that before he took the job and seriously weighed his options.

"I was a little taken aback by the amount of work needed both academically and athletically," Kaspar said. "There were a lot of issues to be taken care of. If

I didn't believe in the potential of this university and the leadership we have here, I would have probably walked away."

Anybody who watched several seasons of Dougie Ball — and better yet, had inside knowledge of the program — knows the foundation of every problem. Davalos recruited his system and not the player, took a devil-may-care attitude because he knew he wouldn't be fired — and worst of all, valued a jump shot over character.

Egos constantly clashed and when Kaspar assumed control with his no-nonsense approach, it only magnified. A hard-headed senior class often dictated the downward trajectory of the season. Kaspar suspended three of the five seniors (Reid Koenen, Corey Stern and Joel Wright) at least once during the season for academic reasons or violations of team rules.

"What really struck me was with how much structure was needed to get the program going where I wanted it to go," Kaspar said. "I don't think players were

held as accountable for mistakes on and off the court that I feel like they should be."

So where's the pony at the bottom of all this mess?

Here's the tail: Texas State is finally playing defense.

How about the head: When the Bobcats practice for the first time this offseason, the only tangible remain of the former regime will be Wesley Davis. The soon-to-be senior guard is regarded as Texas State's best on-ball defender and is fourth in career steals.

"I'm going to be pretty much dealing with players I brought in this spring," Kaspar said. "We had some issues and problems this year, but we need to put that behind us and move on."

This pony isn't going to turn into a thoroughbred overnight, but at least it's finally headed in the right direction with a successful jockey holding the reins.

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