

Football Fortunes Look Up

It's recruiting time, the most important season of the year. And with signing time hitting the final stretch, the zealous Aggie recruiters can claim a first division finish in the Southwest Conference's most competitive sport.

With 90% of the state's school-by elite headed for points throughout Texas, A&M and Texas University remain in a dead heat in the SWC quantity race with 44 signatures each.

Qualitywise, the Aggies have also scored highly. Although hindered by a 2-year probation handed down by the conference hierarchy last December, A&M raked in first-team all-state selections and six second-team performers.

The first-teamers include half-back Jack Woodward of Crockett and linemen Charles Hendricks of Baytown, Lee Roberts of Aldine, Dan Eckerman of Bellville, Joe Shaw of Brownwood and Larry Stagent from Houston St. Thomas.

A conference edict setting minimum scholastic requirements also affected some coaches' programs. For the first time, athletes are required to score at least 700, out of 1600, on the college board exam.

But the new rule doesn't affect the Stallings machine, because for several years A&M has required at least 700 for the admission of any student.

"If we don't get another boy," said Stallings, "we've had a good year. Any more would just add the cream."

The cream that's left is sparse but mighty rich. Only a handful of blue-chippers remain uncolored, but several are leaning the Aggie way. Included are Terry Brewster, Jacksboro tackle; Jimmy Piper, Brownwood halfback; Barney Harris, San Antonio MacArthur halfback; Bruce Kempf, San Antonio Lee fullback; and Brian Blessing, Dallas Hillcrest halfback.

Blessing is a 200-pound work-horse who played all backfield positions on offense and crushed people at defensive linebacker. A first-team all-stater, Blessing is the brother of Scott Blessing, who attends A&M on a track and football scholarship.

Rivaling A&M in recruiting success are Baylor and Texas. Coach John Bridgers' Bears copped the greatest number of first-team all-staters, 7. Commented Bridgers, "Overall this is probably as good a group as we've ever gotten."

Texas pulled the rug out from under the Ags by snatching Bellville hoss Ted Koy, a widely sought-after all-state halfback. But never one to hold grudges, Stallings grabbed Koy's running mate, Bill Knolle, a star in his own right, and Eckerman.

The Aggie recruiting roster looks rather out of proportion, as Stallings went for interior linemen in a big way. Twenty-six dot the list and only 2 quarter-backs are penned at this time.

The full list of recruits includes:

Ends—Jimmy Adams, Houston Waltrip; Ronald Rudloff, Bellville; Bob Young, San Antonio MacArthur; Wayne King, Houston Reagan; Bob Pinson, Forney; Bobby Kirchmer, Port Arthur.

Interior linemen—James Selvidge, Tyler Lee; Lee Roberts, Alpine; Boog Powell, Lay Lafayette, La.; Rusty Stallings, Midland Lee; Bill Gilliam, Del Rio; Joe Shaw, Brownwood; Ronnie Gooch, Bryan; Dan Eckerman, Bellville; Bill Buford, Terrell; Don Owens, Carthage; Leslie Dickson, Waco High; Waymon Lightfoot, Walter Mohn, and Tommy Chaffee, San Antonio MacArthur; Dick Adams, Mike Smith, and Billy Husbands, South Houston; Billy Kubecka, Palacios; Charles Hendricks, Baytown; Don Robertson, and Lynn Odum, Corsicana; Winston Beam, Odessa; Gary Gruben, Tulia; Max Stinson, Fort Worth Arlington Heights; Robert Thomas, Liberty; and Lee Roy Fry, Tyler Jc.

Quarterbacks—Robert Stansbury, Edna, and Gary Koposta, Shreveport Jesuit.

Running backs—Larry Stagent, Houston St. Thomas; Brian Christen, Cypress - Fairbanks; Danny McBride, Edna; Jack Woodward, Crockett; Mark Moseley, Livingston; Ronnie Elmore, Plains; James Lockridge, Kress; Tim Adams, Houston Waltrip; Bill Knolle, Bellville; and Richard Bailey, Pharr.



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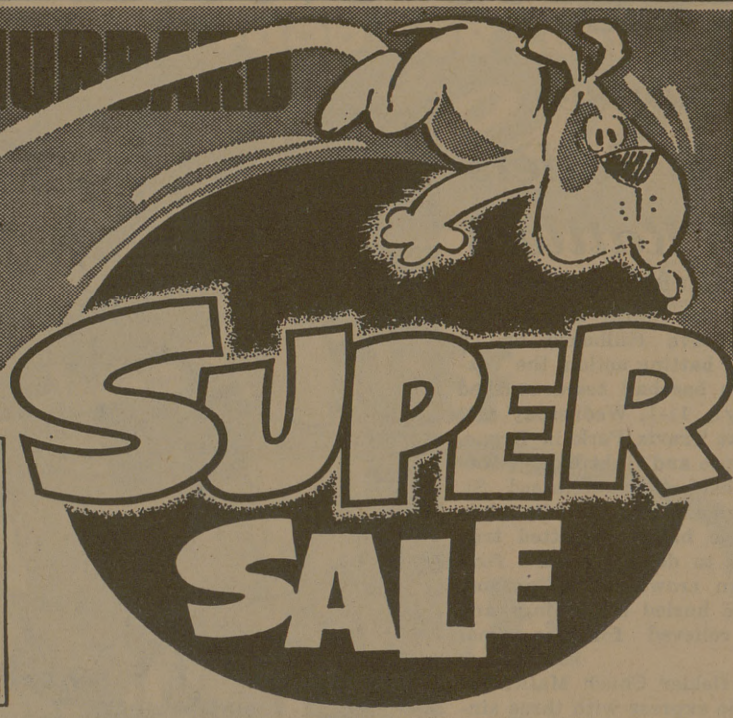
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