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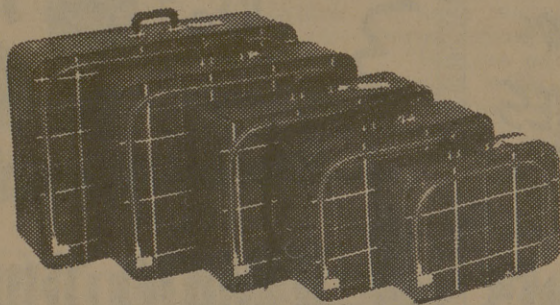
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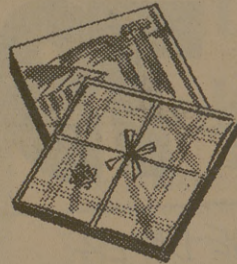
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FROM THE SIDELINES

By **Gerald Garcia**

"Well, I'm all alone now until he throws," said Baylor's Jim Lancaster after he had just heaved the shot put over the 52-foot line.

The he Lancaster was referring to was Texas A&M's Randy Matson, then a lanky shot putter who had the track world in a whirl because all the experts believed he would someday break Dallas Long's record of 67 feet, 10 inches and later become the first 70 footer.

What the experts did not know was that their predictions would come true this calm, cloudless night in May, 1965. It was the 8th day of the month to be exact and it was during this meet — the Southwest Conference meet in Kyle Field — that Mr. Matson would record the greatest weight "double" ever. The maroon and white giant pushed the shot to a record 70 feet, 7 1/4 inches and the discus 199 feet, 7 1/2 inches.

Lancaster must have known something that night others didn't because as it turned out he was still all alone after Matson threw. The crowd swarmed Randy and left Lancaster and the other putters just standing there all alone.

For Matson his dreams were coming true. The silver medal winner in the 1964 Olympics always had dreamed of being the world champion. His second dream — of winning the gold medal — will have to wait until 1968 in Mexico City.

Now Matson had one of his dreams so in the fall of 1965 he again shook the sports world by reporting to basketball with the Texas Aggies. Everybody thought the move was great until Matson injured a knee which had bothered him before. Then, the criticism started.

People who had at first thought the move was great called Matson's decision stupid. They said that the injury would hamper his shot putting. And how right they were. Except that it was a multitude of things that made the world champion just an average weightman this spring.

After basketball Randy had trouble regaining his throwing weight, and his putting suffered. The criticism grew, and Randy was not alone anymore as Lancaster had described him before. Now he was just an average putter and Neal Stienhauer from the University of Oregon and John Cole from Arizona State had better throws than the Aggie in the shot and discus, respectively.

But Randy and Emil Mamaligia, A&M's weight coach, did not lose faith. Both knew that it would just be a matter of time before the strength and form would come back.

"I just can't do any weight training with the knee and without the training I can't get my strength back," Matson said after basketball season. "This is what is holding me back."

But Randy kept pushing and scrapping until last weekend at the Coliseum Relays in Los Angeles he regained his old form and threw 69 feet, 2 1/2 inches to beat Steinhauer and in the same evening he flipped the iron platter 195 feet, 6 inches to best Cole. So in the same night, A&M's pride pushed aside both of his challengers.

Now Mr. Matson has shaken the sports world three times. First, when he threw 70 feet. Secondly, when he decided to participate in basketball. Thirdly, when he came back from a dismal start to top the other challengers. Mamaligia thinks that another shock is coming.

"All Randy has to do is to get up to about 260 (what he weighed when he threw 70 feet) and start doing deep squats with weight," Mamaligia said. "After this, he should be at full strength and there is no telling what he can do."

Mamaligia is not making any predictions on how far Matson will throw this year, but the weight coach does think that his prize pupil will throw 70 feet again this summer and again shake the world.

What about other sports for Matson? Even Randy does not know what he is going to do. "Right now I am just concentrating on track," he said. "Nothing else is on my mind."

Matson still has several meets this year in which he could reach 70 feet again. He will participate in the California Relays at Modesto, Calif., May 28, the District Federation Meet in Houston, June 4, the NCAA meet, June 16-18, and several meets this summer in which the United States will compete against foreign teams.

It could well be that at one of these meets another shot putter like Lancaster will say, "Well, I'm all alone now until he throws." That shot putter does not know how right he is because Randy Matson is the world's best.

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