



Stallings Bring Ags To Top Of Heap In Three Years

In the short span of three seasons, Gene Stallings elevated the Texas Aggies from the basement to the penthouse in collegiate football circles.

Stallings' slogan of "Make Something Happen" become a reality in 1967 as he guided Texas A&M to the Southwest Conference championship and a climatic 20-16 victory over Alabama in the Cotton Bowl classic.

If the rapid success of Stallings seems unbelievable then you don't know the man.

"Make Something Happen, is the slogan he brought back to his alma mater when he returned as head football coach on Dec. 7, 1964. It was aimed at his football players but it was to be a guideline that he and his staff also would follow.

Devoted and dedicated to Texas A&M and its athletic program, Stallings believes in and practices the theory that hard work, attention to details and thoroughness are the foundations upon which success is built.

He, his staff and his players followed this pattern through a 3-7 season in 1965 and a 4-5-1 mark in 1966, and, in that second campaign they were in the conference title race right up through the final week of action.

After a dismal start in '67 when they lost their first four—three of them by 1, 3 and 4 points—then things started happening and they haven't lost since. They raced to six straight SWC wins to win the undisputed conference title and then nailed 'Bama in the Cotton Bowl. They go into the 1968 season with a seven-game winning streak, second in the nation only to Oklahoma's eight.

Stallings grew up in Paris Tex., wanting to become a coach. He learned the game under two great teachers, Raymond Berry Sr., at

Paris High and Paul W. Bryant at Texas A&M. Their pictures adorn a wall in his office today.

Stallings, who was 33 last March 2, was born in Paris, Tex., in 1935. A natural leader and all-around athlete, he captained football, basketball and golf teams at Paris High and was tri-captain of Texas A&M's undefeated football team in 1956 on which he played end.

Following his final varsity game for the Aggies, he was married to the former Ruth Ann Jack of Paris. They have four children: daughter Anna Lee 10, Laura Nell 9 and Jacklyn 4, and one son, John Mark 6.

He coached the A&M freshmen in the fall of 1957 and then moved with Bryant to Alabama where he spent the next seven seasons. He was assistant head coach to Bryant when A&M hired him after the 1964 season.

It was quite evident that he had learned his gridiron lesson well because when he was hired by A&M, Bryant, a man not noted for thoughtless praise, said: "He's the top young college coaching prospect in America." After Stallings' Aggies beat Bryant's Crimson Tide in the Cotton Bowl, Bryant added a simple footnote, "I told you so."

With the retirement of Barlow (Bones) Irvin this past winter, Stallings was named A&M's Athletic Director, giving him a dual role to perform.

The Aggie athletic boss lists three reasons why "it is easy for me to try to sell a boy on attending Texas A&M . . . First, it is a school that offers an excellent education and has great tradition . . . second, it is a place where one will learn what pride and loyalty really means . . . and, third, it is a place where a young man can play on a good football team."



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