

Burks Wants LSU Win

Football coaches are always searching for "winners" and there couldn't be a more thoroughbred breed of winner than Texas A&M's Steve Burks.

Three years at Dumas High School under coach Bill Spann produced three district titles and two bi-district championships. Burks moved his headquarters to A&M and was starting tailback for the first undefeated freshman team in the school's records.

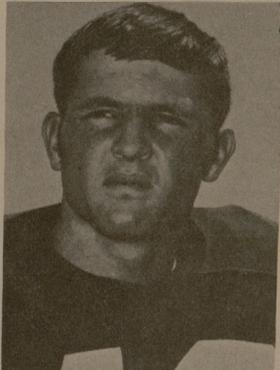
The 5-11, 170-pound sophomore will make his varsity debut Saturday night against LSU in Baton Rouge as one of a large group of rookies who are looking to continue their winning ways. Based on his spring showing, Burks will see a lot of action this season.

With Stegent sitting out the LSU tilt due to a pulled hamstring Burks is now the No. 1 tailback. His spring showing prompted coach Gene Stallings to say that tailback would be in good hands this fall. "We won't lose much by putting Burks in there," Stallings said. That is high praise for the sophomore considering that starter Larry Stegent is expected to be one of the nation's best ballcarriers this

fall.

Burks has shown surprising durability for his size, carrying the ball 30 times or more in spring scrimmages. Stallings already knew he had exceptional speed since Burks won his district 100-yard dash in 9.7 and 220-yard dash in 21.7, so the durability was a real bonus.

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Benny Burks of Dumas, Steve spent the



STEVE BURKS

summer working in College Station and getting in shape for the fall.

"I'm really looking forward to the season," he said. "There is a lot of spirit among the players. They all want to win. We don't look at it as a rebuilding year."

During the spring, Burks discovered that the adjustment from freshman ball to varsity was harder than from high school to the frosh team. "The assignments are much more complicated, and the players you are competing with and against are more experienced."

He also learned that he has to work on his blocking. "You can't just stand in their way and hope they trip over you. If you do,

they'll just knock you down and run over you."

Burks doesn't have any second thoughts about his choice of schools. "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else," he said. "A&M doesn't have all the conflict that others have."

In his spare time Burks likes to straddle a horse and take a jog in the country. But with plans to be a veterinarian, he won't have much spare time in the next few years.

Meanwhile, he'll be satisfied just to keep his winning streak going.

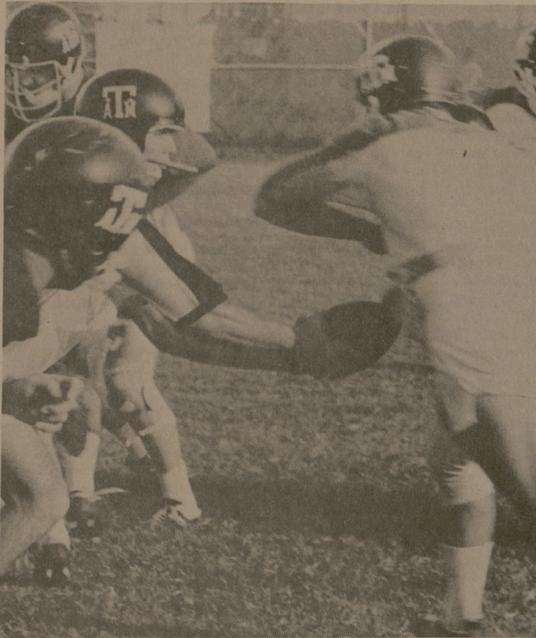
Cross Country Opens Saturday

Texas A&M's cross country team will open its 1969 season Sept. 20 in Baton Rouge against LSU.

Coach Ted Nelson said his team would be young and inexperienced with three freshmen joining two sophomores and a senior on the squad. The roster includes Paul Shimon, senior from Alexandria, Va.; Charles Barton, sophomore from San Antonio; Steve Gonzalez, sophomore from San Antonio; Sammy Skinner, freshman from Deer Park; Charles Johnson, freshman from San Francisco, Calif.; and Dennis O'Brien, freshman from Houston Memorial.

The schedule has 11 meets, closing with the Southwest Conference meet Nov. 17 in Lubbock and the NCAA meet Nov. 24 in New York.

- The schedule
- 1969 Cross Country Schedule
- Sept. 20 LSU in Baton Rouge
 - Sept. 26 University of Houston at College Station
 - Oct. 3 Lamar Tech and Houston in Houston
 - Oct. 9 Baylor and Texas in Austin
 - Oct. 11 Texas Tech in Lubbock
 - Oct. 17 Baylor and Texas in College Station
 - Oct. 24 Baylor and Texas in Waco
 - Oct. 31 Texas Invitational in Austin
 - Nov. 11 TCU and Houston in College Station
 - Nov. 17 SWC Meet in Lubbock
 - Nov. 24 NCAA Meet in New York



GETTING READY

Aggie QB Jimmy Sheffield hands the ball off to fullback Marc Black in Wednesday's practice for the LSU game Saturday night in Baton Rouge. Both Sheffield and Black will be starting for the Maroon and White. (Photo by Mike Wright)

Kicker Bellar Finds A&M Home

College football coaches spend a lot of time, effort and worry each year trying to persuade high school athletes that their particular college is the place to play. The thoroughness of recruiting leaves very little chance for a good one to get away.

Texas A&M's Mike Bellar proves that coaches aren't infallible, though . . . particularly a coach at Eastern New Mexico, a school that had Bellar before A&M.

But let the sophomore place-kicking specialist tell the story: "I didn't have many offers after high school, so I went to Eastern New Mexico. The coach there said I wasn't good enough to be a college kicker. Robin Davis (a high school teammate at Sudan and now a sophomore lineman at A&M) said to come on down to A&M. He said Coach Stallings gave everyone a chance, and that the coach would lay it on the line whether I was good enough or not. It was either that or go into the service, so I came to A&M."

Bellar had to sit out a year to establish his eligibility, but A&M coach Gene Stallings caught a couple glimpses of Bellar practicing by himself and saw enough to call Bellar "the best kicking

prospect I have ever seen." During a fall scrimmage session, Bellar attempted field goals of 37, 38 and 47 yards . . . and split the uprights on every one. Stallings' only concern is how the 5-11, 175-pounder will do under game conditions.

"I've thought about that, Bellar admits. "There is more pressure in a game. And there is more pressure just coming off the bench and kicking rather than playing and kicking. But the way Coach Stallings runs practices, I don't think the pressure will affect me that much. I'll just have to concentrate on kicking."

Bellar will also handle kick-offs for the Aggies. "He'll kick the ball out of the endzone every time, if we don't overwork him," Stallings says.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Waymon Bellar of Sudan, Bellar was an all-round athlete in high school. He played linebacker and fullback in football and was all-district in golf, basketball and track.

Bellar credits A&M's weight program with strengthening his legs and enabling him to better his best high school effort of 37 yards. He is majoring in physical education at A&M and plans on a coaching career.

FROM THE PRESSBOX

Hogs, Horns Collide For SWC Title Dec. 6

by Richard Campbell

This Saturday plunges the Southwest Conference officially into action with only Southern Methodist getting a preview last week. The Mustangs fell to Air Force in a nationally televised game and now the other teams will get their chance.

1969 will be the season of artificial turf, televised games and predictably, lots of excitement. Both Arkansas and Texas have installed AstroTurf surfaces for the fall grid wars and eight games have been scheduled thus far on TV involving SWC teams. As for excitement, Arkansas has a balanced attack with cool junior quarterback Bill Montgomery directing while Texas brings their bruising ground game back under the tutelage of talented signal-caller James Street. SMU is the unofficial champion of the nation in providing thrills as junior passer Chuck Hixson runs their NCAA passing machine to perfection.

In looking at the conference as a whole, it should be certainly stronger than last year with at least two teams, the Razorbacks and Longhorns, ranked at various positions in the Top Ten depending upon which poll. With the talent distributed as evenly as it is, with only Texas and Arkansas clearcut leaders, the task of picking the order of finish for the SWC becomes a guessing game at best. But I feel when the dust clears on Dec. 6 after the presupposed title match between the Hogs and Horns in the Ozarks, this will be the way they stand:

ARKANSAS — The Sugar Bowl champs look too strong for the rest of the field. They have talent, experience, momentum, and best of all, smooth quarterback Bill Montgomery. Their schedule is anything but tough and you know that Coach Frank Broyles is smiling this year in the Ozarks.

TEXAS — The Longhorns were the strongest finishing team of anyone in the nation last year and many felt that they should have shared the national title with Ohio State. This may have been premature last year, but watch out this year. The 'Wishbone T' boys minus one are back in the person of Steve Worster, Ted Koy, and, of course, supercool QB James Street. With some breaks, the 1969 national title could have an orange hue.

TEXAS TECH — Just a hunch, but the Raiders are depending upon defense for their forte this year and a team doing that can't be beaten too bad. Admittedly they lack a certain ingredient on the offensive side, but I remember their quarterback Joe Matulich from last year against A&M and he's back again.

SMU — This one is based almost solely on the performance of the Mustangs in the Air Force contest last week. QB Hixson had a typical performance but the defensive team looked pathetic at times, especially the secondary. I don't think that Excitement '69 will be anything like it was in '68.

A&M — This one is strictly a dark-horse pick. The Aggies are green with more than 60 sophomores on their roster. But these sophs are brimming over with talent and if they mature in the tough preseason games then the upset-minded Cadets will figure somewhere in the title picture.

BAYLOR — With a new head coach (Bill Beall) came a new mascot symbol, a growling bear instead of the Gentle Ben type they previously had. Also new is the enthusiasm of the '69 squad and don't be suprised if they win a few because of the changes. Their schedule is rough but, perhaps, so are the Bears.

TCU — The Horned Frogs are the picture of frustration. They finally found a good quarterback, but he is soph Steve Judy, with no experience. They finally have bruiser Norman Bulaich ready to tote the ball, but he is injury-prone. Should they make it through their non-conference schedule they may be too shellshocked to go through the conference race. They tackle Purdue, Ohio State, and Miami (Fla.). Enough said.

RICE — Even if the Owls win one game this year, it will be an improvement over last year's 0-9-1 mark. Again they play a tough schedule and with the conference teams so evenly matched in strength, they have few bright spots. One bright one will be soph QB Stable Vincent, the first black signal caller in the SWC. Expect an upset or two from the Owls but beyond that, don't count on much.

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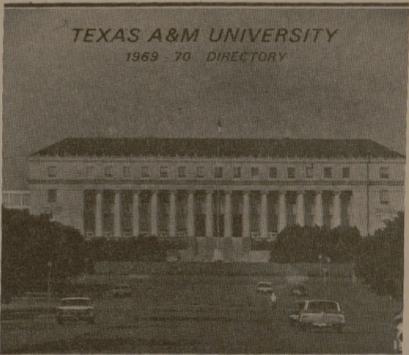


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