

College Station, Texas Tuesday, August 31, 1971

Ags loaded with people — now to put it together

Coach Gene Stallings greeted more than a hundred prospective football players Tuesday, August 17, as the Texas Aggies got together to begin preparation for the 1971 season which opens September 11, on Kyle field against Wichita State.

After spending the first half week on conditioning drills, Stallings took his charges through two-a-day workouts in pads for a week before the start of fall classes.

The Aggies have 45 lettermen back from last year's team and are trying to snap out of a nine game losing string that put the squad in the Southwest Conference cellar a year ago.

Stallings says that the experience the Ags have back is the biggest plus in their favor.

"I think it is a big plus for us that we have at least one experienced returnee at every position except free safety and at some places we have two veterans. We also have good seniors."

The Aggies have 25 seniors to be exact as compared to four last season. Free safety is the only position A&M doesn't return a

regular as All-American Dave Elmendorf has graduated.

Trying to break the losing skid is the biggest problem on the Aggies agenda this fall and Stallings has made a few changes that he hopes will instill new fire in the atmosphere.

He has changed his basic attitude toward the offense.

"If you have a basic attack and are good enough to keep it then you can go straight at peo-

Broyles picks

1. Texas-Austin
2. Arkansas
3. Texas Tech
4. Texas A&M
5. TCU
6. Rice
7. SMU
8. Baylor

ple and not have to fool them. I think we can do it this year where in past years we couldn't because I think we are overall stronger than last year," he said.

Junior Lex James from Houston Sam Houston is back after missing spring training due to

infectious hepatitis, to resume his battle for the quarterbacking duties with senior Joe Mac King from Mineola and a trio of sophomores.

The leader among the sophomores is Mark Green from Odessa, an impressive athlete, who was named to the All-Southwest Conference freshman team as a safety last year, and has been mentioned as a possible running back or defensive back just as a means of getting his talent in the lineup. Stallings says he first plans to try Green as a quarterback.

Tim Trimmier from San Antonio Lee and Mike Rigby from Houston Spring Woods did most of the quarterbacking for the Fish a year ago will also be in the race. Trimmier reported in outstanding shape, the coach said.

Another change in the coaches strategy will be that he will give more of the job to his quarterback for calling the plays.

"I personally like to have a quarterback who can call his game," Stallings said, but added, "last year we felt it might be better to call most of the plays

and take the pressure off Lex so we did most of the calling."

Stallings said he talked to James just before workouts started and told him that he would be doing more of the play calling this season. The coach added that it is very possible that he could have been crossing up James by helping him so much last year.

Most impressive among the runningbacks in the spring was sophomore Bobby Merren from Nederland, who moved in as the number two tailback behind senior Steve Burks, after gaining only 28 yards on the Fish squad due to a leg injury. Burks, a Dumas product rushed for 413 yards and scored five touchdowns last season.

Four lettermen will head the battle for fullback with the team's leading rusher, senior Doug Neill and junior Brad Dusek heading the group. Neill rushed for 426 yards last year and Dusek 267, third best on the squad. Marc Black, senior who missed spring training while taking time to excel in the javelin with the Aggie track squad, and Doug Robbins, who saw limited action last year, will also be in the fight.

Clifford Thomas, who missed last season due to a shoulder separation suffered in the first workout of the fall, after winning a starting halfback post from his spring efforts will be used either way Stallings says. Thomas worked in the defensive secondary during the spring but Stallings is talking of giving him another shot at the offensive unit.

Sophomore Pat Herring, leading rusher on the Fish team last year is still questionable. A graduate of Beaumont South Park high school, Herring suffered a broken leg during the spring workouts and is still recuperating from the injury.

During the spring, the Aggies biggest problem was to find the right combination in the offensive line, the coach says. Through a massive program of switching and trying different players at different positions, he came up with what he feels is a solution to the problem.

Only one of last year's starters held down his position after spring training had ended, senior Leonard Forey, who was named to several SWC All-Star teams last year, was still at right guard. Behind Forey is junior Mike Park, who played center a year ago.

Coach Stallings' shifts in the offensive line has Ralph Sacra, who was shifted to offense in mid-season last year, at right

tackle with Robert Gerasimowicz and junior college transfer Skip Keuhn at center. Keuhn was the number one center for a time but was injured in spring practice and Gerasimowicz finished the spring as the leader.

Todd Christopher, who started last season as a promising sophomore defensive end and moved to linebacker when the position became saturated with injuries now is the number one left guard, opposite Forey.

Four lettermen are working at left tackle with Buster Calloway leading at the time. Ted Smith, who played center last year and Clifton Thomas are close behind. Senior letterman Andy Philley and junior letterman Batch Kamps both were injured in the

spring but will vie for Sacra's right tackle position.

Joey Herr and Hugh McElroy, two seniors who were the teams leading wide receivers last year with 21 receptions apiece, will be the leading candidates for the wingback position although the leading freshman pass catcher Bobby Hughes from Houston Sam Houston and Billy Joe Polasek, who missed last season with an injury, are rated as contenders.

"He can play for anybody," is what Stallings says of tight end Homer May from Lubbock. The 6-2, 225 junior led the Aggies with 26 catches and is rated as the pre-season pick for All-SWC tight end by Texas Football (See Loaded, page 2)

Another toughie for Ags

With five of the top 10 teams in the country on the Texas Aggies schedule last season it's doubtful you will ever find anything tougher, but the 1971 Aggie opponents aren't exactly pushovers with at least five of the teams bonified top 20 units — including the two teams that were voted by the wire services as national champions, Nebraska and the University of Texas at Austin.

The Aggies open the season at home with the Wichita State Shockers Sept. 11 at 7:30 p.m. WSU still is rebuilding from the tragic air crash which killed a large number of Shocker players as well as their coach. Wichita will return more lettermen, 49, than the Aggies since their freshman were made eligible for the remainder of the season after the air crash. Defensive end John Hoheisel, tackle Dave Lewis, running back Randy Jackson and Bob Renner were surviv-

ors of the crash and return to lead the Shockers.

The next two weeks resemble the schedule of a year ago which had the LSU Tigers at Baton Rouge and then Ohio State in Columbus. This year the Tigers will be out for revenge and are still smarting from a 20-18 victory the Aggies dealt in the final seconds last year. The loss for the Bengals was the only one they had all season until they were beaten 3-0 by Notre Dame.

Nebraska returns 38 lettermen from an 11-0-1 team and could be the best team in the country despite some major losses.

The Aggies then return home for their final nonconference game as they host the University of Cincinnati in the first meeting ever between the two schools. The Bearcats are coming off a 7-4 season record and last year, led by senior quarterback Albert

Johnson, averaged 274 yards a game rushing — which was ranked eighth nationally — and also ranked seventh nationally in scoring defense, allowing only 9.8 points per game.

Poised by a preseason boast that his Red Raiders were going to win the Southwest Conference championship, Coach Jim Carlen's Texas Tech takes on the Aggies in Lubbock this fall. The Red Raiders posted an 8-4 record last year including a 17-9 loss to Georgia Tech in the Sun Bowl.

Quarterback Charlie Napper returns to give the Raiders an experienced control to guide their well balanced attack that includes All-SWC fullback Doug McCutchen.

The Aggies invade Fort Worth to try to snap a two-game losing streak to the TCU Frogs that included a humiliating 31-15 de- (See Another Toughie, page 2)



Lex James



Homer May



Mike Lord

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