

Aggie baseballers chase elusive SWC crown

CLIFFORD BROYLES

Aggie baseballers thwarted from winning the Southwest Conference championship with late surges by the University of Texas at Austin, Texas Aggie baseball team returns its infield intact and one of the Southwest Conference outfielders to see if they can catch the elusive title.

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since catcher Billy Hodge has signed a professional contract with the San Diego Padres and All-Southwest Conference pitcher Paul Czerwinaki also has completed his eligibility.

The Aggies' big plus is an infield returning untarnished with Chris Sans at first, Carroll Lilly at second, Butch Ghutzman at shortstop and Jimmy Hacker and Sandy Bate sharing third. Ghutzman was chosen the All-SWC utility infielder after batting .301 from the leadoff spot. Sans, an All-league pick as a sophomore two years ago, batted .302 for the season and .358 in league play but John Longherhans at Texas had a super year and was picked over the Aggie glove master.

Lilly returns a .333 average and Hacker and Bate both filled in admirably at third base. Both were freshmen. Hacker, the number one draft choice of the Boston Red Sox a year ago, batted .269 and Bate batted .176 in light duty.

Mike Schraeder, a shortstop from Houston Sam Houston and Steve Fronk, first baseman from class AAAA stat champ Houston Bellaire, were the only infielders

signed by Chandler this season. Schraeder was drafted by the Milwaukee Brewers. Fronk led the city of Houston in runs batted in.

In the outfield R. J. Englert was an All-SWC pick while batting .367 and collecting 55 hits in only 39 games. He will probably move over to centerfield to replace Elmendorf and the other two spots are up for grabs.

Sophomore-to-be Jim Atterbury, who batted .346 in parttime duty, is a good bet for one of the spots and it will be a supreme battle for the other spot with letterman Gene Reinarz, squadman Kari Bystrom and freshman recruits Mike Frazier and Romie Loomis.

Reinarz batted .227 last year but was tremendous in the clutch and had three straight game-

clucking hits at one time last season. Bystrom didn't see any action on the varsity last season. Frazier is a prize recruit.

A catcher at Houston Elmore, Frazier will probably play outfield for the Aggies. He is the first black baseball recruit for the Aggies and one of the first in the Southwest Conference. Frazier was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers, who also drafted and signed his older brother Dyan only a year ago.

But the biggest problem and a hole Chandler says must be filled is that of catcher. Hodge left behind two years of outstanding platoon work.

There are at least four candidates for the top job with Frazier

a possibility along with Terry Overton, who handled the job last season when Hodge was sidelined with a thumb injury.

Loomis and Dan Witty. Tommy Hawthorne, a catcher and third baseman from Beaumont Forest Park and another freshman Gene Edens, of Fort Worth Southwest, are also prospects. Hawthorne was on All-District selection for the city champion team.

Starters Bruce Katt, 4-2, 3.58; Charlie Jenkins, 5-0, 2.83; and Jackie Binks, 5-0, 2.66, return to give the Aggie a good nucleus. Ace reliever Charlie Kelley, coming off back-to-back super years, will lead the bullpen crew although it's a possibility he could

be developed into a starter. The senior from West Columbia had a 7-1 record with 2.14 era last season and two years ago had a 1-1 mark with an 0.00 era, despite appearing on the mound 10 times.

A final Aggie recruit, pitcher Bobby Wittkamp from Houston Milby, could push a starting job. Wittkamp is playing in the Karl Young Amateur League in Houston this summer after posting an 11-1 record for Milby. His lone loss was in the state playoffs to eventual state champion Houston Bellaire.

A revamping of the league's schedule puts the Aggies against the Frogs in the season opening series and maybe that isn't the only thing that's changed.

Ags in the pros

Dave Elmendorf, Jimmy Sheffield, Steve Niles and Billy Hodge have something in common.

They are all former Aggie athletes, who are now trying to make a go at professional athletics.

Elmendorf is in the training camp of the Los Angeles Rams of the National Football League and seems a sure bet to stick with the club, who dealt one of their veterans Richie Petitbon, to the Washington Redskins and left him with a starting position. In a recent exhibition Elmendorf blocked a punt and intercepted a pass to propel the Rams to a victory. Sheffield, the second leading punter in the Southwest Conference last year, was recently cut by the Buffalo Bills of the NFL, who selected him in the league's annual collegiate player draft.

Niles was drafted by the New York Nicks of the National Basketball Association and if he makes it will be the only Aggie playing in that league. John Beasley, who holds a bunch of Aggie scoring records, is one of the original Dallas Chaparrals of the American Basketball Association.

Hodge, the Aggies All-SWC catcher, signed with the San Diego Padres and is now playing for Lodi of the California League.

Other Aggie football players now in pro football are Jack Pardee, Washington Redskins; Charley Krueger, San Francisco 49'ers; Grady Allen, Atlanta Falcons; Mike Clark, Dallas Cowboys; Edd Hargett, New Orleans; Rolf Krueger, St. Louis Cardinals; Billy Hobbs, Philadelphia Eagles; Mo Moorman, Kansas City Chiefs; Leroy Caffey and Ross Brupbacher, Chicago Bears; Larry Stegent, St. Louis Cardinals; Steve O'Neal, New York Jets and Tommy Maxwell, Oakland Raiders.

Former Aggies Bobby Nichols and Ralph Johnston are on the pro golf tour and SMU golf coach Billy Martindale, an Aggie is a former touring pro.

Aside from Hodge in pro baseball, the Aggies have Dave Johnson, Baltimore Orioles; Doug Rau, Los Angeles Dodgers and now at Spokane of the Pacific Coast League; Lou Camilli, Cleveland Indians and now at Wichita of the American Association; Bob Long, Los Angeles Dodgers now at Albuquerque of the Dixie Association; Cliff Davis, of the Houston Astros now at Columbus, Ga., of the Dixie Association; and Hardy Frazier, California Angels and now playing in the California League.

Ag swimmers face stiff competition — themselves

By CLIFFORD BROYLES

If competition breeds championships, the Texas Aggie swimming team should be well on the way.

Coach Dennis Fodick, entering his second season as head of the Aggie swim program, says he has word from at least 32 swimmers who will be trying out for the squad this fall.

Including last year's group of which only one, Tom Sparks, was a senior, Fodick expects over 50 prospects to try for the team.

Only about 18 players can make the traveling squad and Fodick says that there is a possibility that he will have a B team, which gives more swimmers a chance to compete.

But the road ahead is a rough one as perennial champion Southern Methodist is—as usual—number one. Their standing is more secure than UCLA's hold on the basketball crown and that's saying something.

Fodick says the University of Texas at Austin under coach Pat Patterson, who left A&M a year ago to go to accept the head job at his alma mater, has recruited

exceptionally well and might actually threaten SMU.

The Aggie coach has some top newcomers coming also and feels that with a good year the Aggies could move up to third in the race over a fifth-place finish a year ago.

Top newcomers for the Aggies are Lester Hammen, from the college of San Mateo, California, where he was a teammate of the Aggies' Fred Meyers, who transferred to A&M during the spring. Hammen was a two-time water polo All-American and was an All-American in swimming in at least six events.

Plans are for him to be used in the distance freestyle events, which Fodick pointed out as one of the main weaknesses of the team.

Kent Berryman from Seattle, Wash., is expected to help soften up another weakness in the butterfly events. Doug Meaden, from Houston Memorial, will be in the freestyle events for the Aggies and is a top prospect, the coach said.

Scott Jones, another newcomer,

is expected to help considerably in the backstroke and butterfly. Jones is from San Jose, Calif.

Sophomore-to-be Steve Prentice heads the returning swimmers. The Houston product set three school marks in both backstroke events and in the intermediate medley.

Eric Wolff, who swam along with Prentice at the National meet last spring, holds school marks in the 100 and 200 yard freestyle.

Workouts for the team begin the first day of school, the coach pointed out, adding A&M will host two water polo tournaments in the fall as it tries to build up the sport in the southwest.

Last year the Aggies posted a 6-1 record while asserting themselves as one of the top teams in the area. The first of the tournaments will be a novice tourney which will be open for freshman and high school teams and the second will be A&M hosting the Southwestern Water Polo championships, Nov. 5-6 at P. L. Downs Natatorium.

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