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World's fastest man of 1944 successful coach here

By BILL HENRY

Assistant Sports Editor

Eighteen years ago, a University of Texas trackster was acclaimed by Track and Field magazine as the world's fastest man in the 220-yard dash.

This man, Charley Thomas, is now the highly successful track coach beginning his fourteenth season at A&M.

In his freshman year, as in 1972, an Olympic year was upon him and a burning desire was within to make the U. S. team.

There were three places avail-

able on the squad for 220-yard dashmen, the odds-on favorites being Andy Stanfield, Thane Baker and Thomas.

"I knew I would qualify but I wasn't sure about Thane and I really wanted him to make it," Thomas says remembering that fateful day in California.

"I knew a way for Thane to come in a sure third."

In those days the 220 was run on a straightaway in normal meet competition but for international competition it was run on a curve as it is now. So, most runners didn't know how to run it.

Thomas' plan for Baker was for him to sprint through the first curve and come out even with Thomas, a strategy intended to insure Baker the third place finish.

"The problem was that when the race started, Baker came out ahead of me on that first curve and it really shook me up. I still had faith because even if he was to get second, I would get third."

That was not to be the case as an Air Force trackster overtook the pressured freshman from Texas, leaving Thomas with a fourth place finish.

"I just went to pieces during the race," Thomas remembers. "I knew that I had it made but when those people started gaining on me I just lost my composure and the race."

The three who qualified, Stanfield, Baker and Ron Gethard also finished 1-2-3 in the 1952 Olympic Games.

Throughout the remainder of his track career at Texas, where

Sports schedule

Friday
Baseball: TCU, here, doubleheader, 1:00

Saturday
Baseball: TCU, here, 2:00
Track: Arlington Relays
Tennis: Oklahoma, dual meet, there

Monday
Baseball: Minnesota, here, doubleheader, 1:00
Football: Spring practice begins

Tuesday
Baseball: Minnesota, here, doubleheader, 1:00
Football: Spring workout, 4:00

he still holds the school and UT's Memorial Track record in the 220-yard event on straightaway with a 20.5, he never lost a 220 race to any of the people who ousted him from his Olympic bid. This includes the Olympic champion, Stanfield.

The possibility for an Aggie to go to the Olympics this year looks doubtful. But if Thomas could have coached the world's second fastest 220 man while being only a freshman in college, there is no telling what he can pull out of his travel bag in 1972 for the Aggies.

Polo club tries for finals berth

The A&M polo team tries to advance to the national finals tonight when they play the University of Virginia.

The tournament, being held in Darienne, Conn., features five-time national champion Yale in a semifinal match with Connecticut tonight. The winners of this game and the A&M-Virginia contest play in Saturday's finals.

Action at the indoor arena of the Ox Ridge Hunt Club this week had Virginia winning over Howard, 15-9, and Connecticut downing Cornell, 16-15.

The trip to nationals for the polo club was financed by the donations of many former students and fans. The largest contribution, \$600, came from Jerry L. Holmes.

A&M golf team in weekend meet

A&M, Rice and Baylor will clash in a triangular golf match at Briarcrest Country Club in Bryan at 12:30 Saturday.

Each team will enter five golfers. There will be medal play, two-ball and five-man team play.

The five-man Aggies squad has not been determined, as nine golfers are still battling for the five spots in Saturday's meet.

Those nine include Steve Veriato, Tom Gilbert, Tom Johnson, Tom Shelton, Clay Dozier, Bill Schmidt, Randy Tickner, Paul Dieckert and Wayne Batten.

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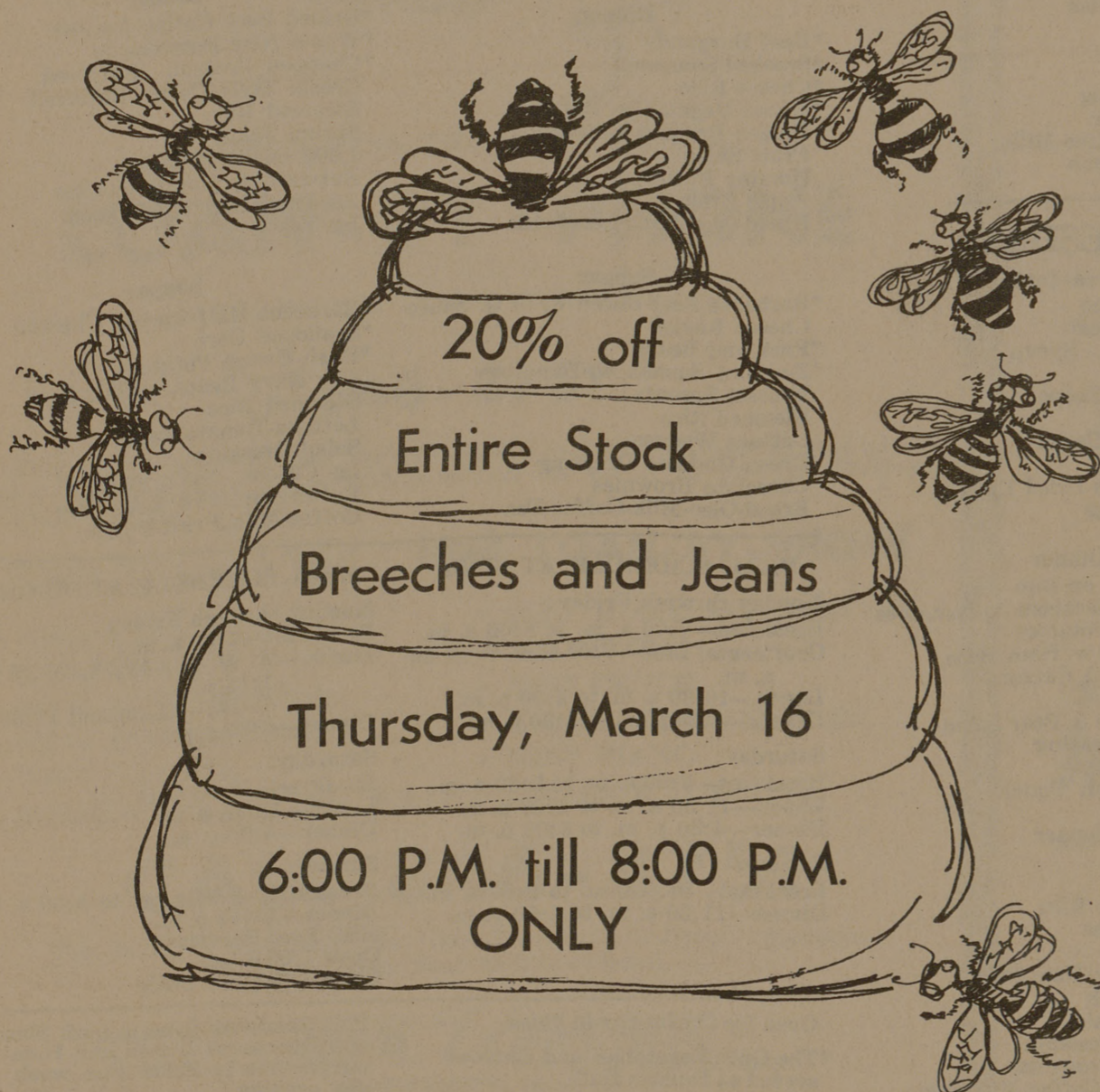
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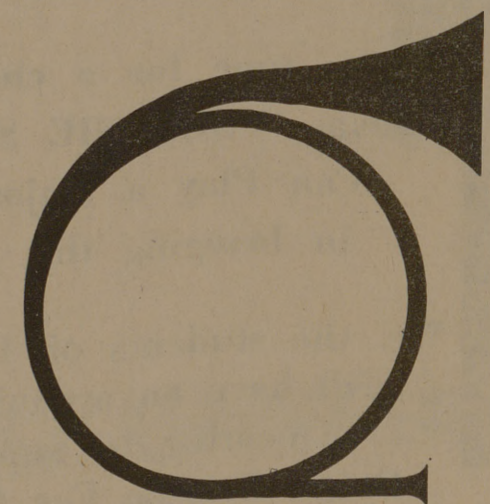
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