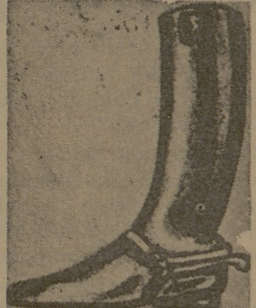


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Scotty G. Baldwin

John Curylo

Diamond Darlings were excellent innovation at A&M

Regardless of the outcome of the Southwest Conference baseball race, it is certain that the 1972 baseball season at A&M will be famous for one achievement: batgirls.

The Diamond Darlings, 12 Aggie coeds who are the first women to be included in any phase of A&M athletics, ended their season Monday and Tuesday during the final home series.

The idea to have batgirls origi-

nated with Iowa State. Coach Tom Chandler saw them at the College World Series last summer and decided to have a similar program here. Joe Hughes, a freshman yell leader, was in charge of selection.

Two other schools in the area, Sam Houston and Baylor, started batgirl programs this season, but the Diamond Darlings of A&M have been better in every department.

First, when the program was announced, 65 coeds applied. Preliminary interviews were held, finalists were chosen and presented at a basketball game, and the candidates appeared on several local television shows.

Second, the attitude, enthusiasm, maturity and knowledge shown by A&M's Diamond Darlings was impressive in many ways. Many of the girls started out knowing very little about baseball and their jobs. Through the efforts of Chandler and Hughes, the girls learned about the game and performed their duties with an air of professionalism. It was a first class operation all the way.

The batgirls not only took over the jobs formerly performed by batboys, they also assisted in retrieving foul balls, sweeping the bases and handling public address announcements and operation of the scoreboard.

But the most impressive of their undertakings was their effort to attend out-of-town games. There have been only four road series since the Diamond Darlings were selected, since the Aggies play most of their games at home. Yet, the batgirls, at their own expense, travelled to and worked the Southern Methodist series in Dallas, a four-game series in San Antonio during the Easter holidays and last week's doubleheader in Houston.

On these trips, opposing coaches, players, fans and newsmen were impressed with the girls' conduct during the games. The

fact that they paid attention to the game and did not try to show off made A&M look very good. Several of the schools in the conference liked the idea so well that they are going to start similar programs next year.

One of the road trips the girls were unable to attend was the Texas Tech series in Lubbock two weeks ago. Yet, when the team was leaving the campus at 5:00 a.m. the day before the first game, the Diamond Darlings were there with boxes of candy, cookies, raisins and other snacks for the players. Each box was individually prepared, with each player's name and number on the box. When the Aggies returned at 2:00 a.m. the Sunday morning after the final game, the batgirls were there to meet

the bus.

But the girls did not limit their duties just to games. Many times, they were at practice, catching in for fungo hitters and chasing foul balls. All these activities were in addition to classes and other extracurricular organizations.

Finally, the best thing the batgirls did was liven up a sport which is traditionally slow and losing the popularity it once had. The fact that 65 girls were interested enough to apply proves this.

Since this program was so successful, it is certain that women will be included in other aspects of athletics. In the next few years, press box hostesses in

football and pom-pom girls in basketball will probably be used by the athletic department. With the female segment of the student body rising in number and percentage each year, this is only fair and right.

Next year, the Diamond Darlings will probably work every A&M home game and all but a few of the road games. With the added experience and time to prepare and make arrangements, the program should be even more successful than it was this season.

The selection process for next year has not been decided upon, but the logical thing would be to allow any of this year's batgirls who want to be Diamond Darlings next year to continue in the program. Experience is such

an important factor that it

be a mistake not to do this. This year's batgirls are Cannon, captain of the group; Becky Upham, College Susan Cummings, Gwen Merrill Mitchell and Linda Bryan; Mina Akins, Linda Penny Ball, San Antonio Schiefelbein, Floresville; Turk, Terre Haute, Indiana; Cunningham, Dallas; and Wolfe, Richardson.

To these girls the team the student body express thanks for a job well done. Diamond Darlings have the image of A&M and new, refreshing dimension Aggie athletics.

Aggie tracksters compete in Drake Relay Classic

By **BILL HENRY**
Assistant Sports Editor

A ten-man team will carry the maroon and white to the Drake Relays this weekend to compete in one of the nation's top collegiate track meets.

The meet begins today in Des Moines, Iowa, with A&M hoping for a comeback after last week's mishap at the Kansas Relays.

Harold McMahan is entered in the pole vault and Marvin Taylor will compete in the high jump for the only individual A&M entries.

This week coach Charley Thomas' troops will compete in only two relay events. He feels only the sprint medley relay and mile relay teams have any chance to make a good showing in this meet of champions.

Bill Porter and Marvin Mills will again run the 220-yard legs of the sprint medley with Horace

Grant taking the 440-yard leg and Willie Blackman the 880 part.

In the mile, the team will be made up of Robert Brew, Doug Brodhead, Grant and either Mills, Blackmon or Porter, depending on the physical condition of each.

Last week in the sprint medley relay, A&M won its prelimi-

nary heat 20 yards in front of its top contender. In the finals, however, disaster struck. Leading the field coming into the first exchange, a missed handoff between Mills and Porter caused the baton to drop on to the synthetic track and force the Aggies out of the event.

A&M rugby team to defend state title

A&M's Northern Division Rugby Champions will try to defend last year's state crown here on the Drill Field Saturday afternoon against Galveston at 3:00.

The Aggies won the right to take on Galveston by defeating Austin Black, 14-7, here last Sat-

urday afternoon.

Last year A&M was undefeated in all its games and had to beat Rice for the state title. This year, with seven starters due to graduate, the Aggies are aiming for another state championship on which to end their season.

Galveston will field a powerful, hard-hitting team in an effort to spoil the Aggie chances.

During the season A&M lost one conference match which was to the Austin Gold club and that led the Aggies by one-half game going into last Saturday's match. Austin's loss came at the hands of San Antonio, whom the Aggies easily defeated.

Austin lost the bid due to a tie it suffered during the season.

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