

Kevin's Korner



By KEVIN COFFEY, Sports Editor

There was an obvious tenseness on the ninth floor of the Rudder Tower yesterday. An almost deathly silence hung in the air as none of the regular occupants of those offices were in town.

Why? Every football coach was on the road signing talent for future Texas Aggie football campaigns. At 7:30 a.m. people file in to sweat out the initial hours of signings. The silence is broken only by corny jokes, somebody searching for comic relief.

The first day of official Southwest Conference grid signings doesn't begin until 8 a.m. A&M has 22 players committed but everybody is worrying that somebody might change his mind. Texas beats A&M to the punch for Conroe running back, casting a temporary cloud over the proceedings. Win some, lose some.

Local radio and newspaper reporters are eating donuts. Basketball coach Norman Reuther stops by to chat about basketball recruiting but everyone is just waiting on the clock. At 8:05 a.m. coach John Paul Young calls in the first signing. Signing day, Aggie style 1974, has begun.

Recruiting has been called the lifeblood of a football program. Say what you want about attitude and morale but the team with the most stud players wins most of the time. If you don't believe me, just look over the all-SWC teams of the last few years and they bear a very distinct orange and white hue.

By 10 yesterday morning, with Emory Bellard's third shot at A&M recruiting just two hours old, 22 players had signed to play on Kyle Field. All schools in the NCAA are under a 30 scholarship limit this season.

For Bellard, it was a long day. The Aggie mentor jetted from El Paso to New Orleans collecting signatures and visiting prospects for the other eight spaces the Aggies have open.

Bellard was pleased with the first day's haul. "Our signings are progressing as anticipated around the state," he said. "We're signing everyone we had hoped to and we still have a number of top recruits from whom we're awaiting decisions."

With all 22 starters returning from last year's 5-6 team, A&M was very specialized in who they picked. Big linemen and linebackers dominated the selections.

Frank Myers, a 6-4, 240 pounder from San Angelo, Steve Spitzenberger, 6-3, 230 pounds and 6-4, 240 pound tackle Ronnie Walker were among the top big men inked yesterday.

With two seniors returning in defensive back spots, Bellard inked some defensive speedsters for future use. Carl McCormack, a 6-1, 185 pounder with 4.6 speed in the forty from Fort Worth Southwest and Bobby Hart, 6-0, 175 pounder from Houston Memorial. Hart also runs a 4.6 forty.

Freshmen running backs in the A&M camp will be of quality, not quantity. Ricky Patton, a 6-2, 188-pounder from Camden, Ark. is the type runner that in most years could play as a Fish. He was on the Arkansas blue-chip list and an All-America. He runs a 4.6 forty.

The quarterback spot is even healthier as Carl Menger a 6-1, 196 strong arm, inked. Menger is already in class here after completing some academic work in the fall. The Houston Westchester star now will join a bevy of promising quarterbacks when spring training opens April 1.

A look at the Aggie signees reveals that Bellard got what he needed. This is the third straight year of top recruiting by the former Texas assistant. Even though the blue-chip players that dominated the last two years of signings are missing, quality ball players are under the wing of A&M.

Several top players did not yet decide on which school they will continue their careers so the visiting and haggling for the coaching staff is not yet finished. Eight spots remain. After they are finally signed, it's time to start on next year.

Girl roundballers notch first victory

Cissy Auclair hit 15 of her 17 points in the first half and Connie Karcher led a devastating TAMU fast break as the women's basketball knocked their first victory ever. Mary Hardin Baylor fell 64-34 as A&M ran its record to 1-3 in the first season of women's basketball played here.

Auclair dominated inside play in the early going as A&M built a 35-15 halftime lead. Karcher hit six points in the last 50 seconds of the half to help lead the assault.

Coach Kay Don was ecstatic over the victory. "I am extremely proud for the girls and happy for them," she said. "They have started a precedent at A&M and I hope it is one that is supported and will prosper."

Over 200 fans witnessed the contest in G. Rollie White. "The crowd was super," Don said. "We need and appreciate the support."

A&M's pressing defense resulted in Mary Hardin Baylor turnovers that Karcher turned in to fast break scoring plays. Larita Fickey also cashed in on the miscues for seven Aggie points.

MHB now stands at 2-2 following the defeat.

Bonnie Gueden hit eight points, Dana Callaway six with Cindy Horton, Pam Moulton, Ruth Whiteley and Debbie Berrier two each to round out the A&M scoring.

Future plans for the Aggies include playing preliminary games to Southwest Action later in the season.

"I am very optimistic of the future for this team," Don said. "We've come a long way by a lot of hard work but of course we have a long way to go. I think we can continue a successful season and develop a truly successful program. We all worked hard for this win and I think I can count on more of this type play."

Friday the Ags face Trinity at 10:30 a.m. as they compete in the 32-team Houston Invitational Tournament.

A&M will face Baylor's girls on February prior to the men's games here. Baylor beat A&M in the first game of intersectional basketball ever played by the Aggies earlier in the year.

"Intramural News"

Dennis Corrington, Director of Intramurals, reiterated rules concerning use of DeWare Fieldhouse.

Use of the facility is limited to students, faculty and staff with admission gained by presentation of ID. Handball courts are available for reservation Mon-Fri. at noon and 4-10 p. m. and Sat. and Sun. at 6 p. m. Courts may be reserved one day in advance by calling the intramural office, 845-2624.

A TAMU record number of entries was received this year for softball, eclipsing the previous record of 104 set in 1973. The 155 teams entered include a large number of of-campus, women's and coed groups.

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