

PEANUTS

By Charles M. Schulz



Aggie baseball season opens Friday

Questionable pitching, power hitting highlight 1974 prospects

By KEVIN COFFEY
Sports Editor

Questionable pitching and a fast approaching cold front are just two problems facing Coach Tom Chandler as his Texas Aggie baseball team prepares to open the 1974 season. Louisiana Tech provides the opposition for the 1 p. m. Friday and Saturday doubleheaders.

Chandler, in his 16th season at the A&M helm, returns no experienced moundmen but has an abundance of talented hitters.

A&M lost its top two returning pitchers. Bobby Falson, the national strikeout leader last year, signed a pro contract with the Kansas City organization. Bobby Wittkamp was a scholastic casualty. Those hurlers represented 10 of the Aggies 19 wins of last year. A&M lost nine, not including a 7-2 record against professional competition in Florida.

The Aggies finished third in Southwest Conference play last season and were ranked 18th in the nation. When speaking of his pitching losses, Chandler said, "If we only had them back..." his mind beginning to daydream.

Forty-eight games await the Ags, 29 on Kyle Field. This may be the last season of baseball on the ancient Aggie ball park as plans for a new field across the railroad tracks may be a reality by 1975.

Pitching

Nine pitchers are figuring in the Aggies plans as Chandler begins a search for strong arms. Jackie Binks is currently running at the top of list. The senior left-hander was 3-0 last season. He is slated to start Friday.

Clint Thomas is currently battling a case of flu but is tentatively scheduled to pitch the second game Friday. The sophomore squadman was injury riddled last year with a sore arm and mononucleosis. "Thomas has been impressive so far this year," said Chandler.

Jimmy Juhl, Binks and Jim Wallace are the senior members of the pitching staff. Juhl was a top reliever last year and is expected to remain in that role thru 1974. Wallace is a two year letterman.

Don Bravenec, a junior college transfer from San Jacinto, brings impressive credentials to Aggieland. "He is a good one but he may need some time. I expect some help from Don this season," said Chandler.

Sophomore David Lockett "has the capability to help us," said Chandler. The 6-4, 200 pounder was drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies when in high school.

Perry Arthur had been impressive in Aggie scrimmages and is expected to start Saturday. Arthur, a Bryan native, transferred from the University of Houston where he was a member of the golf team.

Bubba Riels is another Aggie to forsake the pros. Drafted by Baltimore two years ago, the La

Grange native is expected to bolster this years staff.

Freshman pitchers include Jeff Scheumack and Allan Wilson. Scheumack was drafted by Cincinnati last season. "He could see a lot of action," said Chandler.

Wilson, a lefty from Corpus Christi, is termed a "real contender" by the Aggie coach.

Infield

Experience and depth return behind the plate for the Aggies. Catchers Mike Frazier and Tommy Hawthorne, both juniors, are expected to share the duties again this season.

Frazier hit .333 last year and won "The Wally Moon Award" as the team's most improved player. Hawthorne hit .286 and lettered as a freshman.

Jim Bratsen will switch from right field to first base. Bratsen hit .292 last year and is A&M's power hitter.

Junior Mike Schraeder, a .306 hitter in '73, is slated to see duty at second base. Chandler says Schraeder is off to a fast start in spring drills.

All-SWC and all-America amateur team member Jim Hacker holds down third base. Hacker is a three year letterman. He hit .281 last year.

David Buxkamper and Fred Russ are currently in hot battle for the shortstop spot. Buxkamper was "a pleasant surprise last year," hitting .339 in his freshman campaign. Russ was an all-American at San Jacinto Junior College. He may see action at third with Hacker moving to the outfield.

Outfield

"Dependable" Paul Miller is A&M's right fielder. Miller, a senior, hit .300 last year after transferring from San Jacinto.

"Speedy" Alvin Woods, the out-

field's best defensive performer, is slated for duty in center field. Chandler said Woods, "can really run."

Billy Raymier, a .371 hitter as a freshman last year, will be the starting right fielder.

The SWC will experience some rule changes this year. The designated hitter, a rule which enables better sticks to bat in place of weak hitting pitchers, will be instituted in 1974. "It brings a new dimension to the game," says Chandler. "Our pitchers have time to work on other things now that they don't worry about hitting."

Aluminum bats will also be allowed this season.

Conference action, moved up two weeks because of the addition

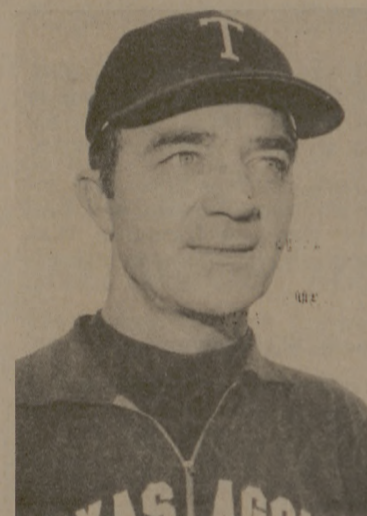
of Arkansas to SWC play, on March 1 with Baylor visit here.

Game time for all single games is 3 p. m. with doubleheaders starting at 1 p. m. Conference doubleheaders will be played Saturdays this season.

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Jim Hacker

1974 Baseball Schedule

Feb. 22-23	Louisiana Tech	H
Feb. 26	St. Mary's University	H
Mar. 1-2	Baylor University	H
Mar. 4-5	Southwestern Louisiana	H
Mar. 8-9	S.M.U.	T
Mar. 12	St. Mary's University	T
Mar. 14*	Missouri	T
Mar. 15*	Kansas	T
Mar. 16*	Pan American	T
Mar. 22-23	Arkansas	H
Mar. 27-28	Minnesota	H
Mar. 29-30	T.C.U.	H
Apr. 5-6	University of Houston	T
Apr. 10	Cornell University	H
Apr. 12-13	Texas Tech	T
Apr. 19-20	Rice University	H
Apr. 26-27	Texas	T

* To be played in Edinburg, Texas

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