

Intramural refs gain experience, swell in numbers

By ROBERT DUNN

There comes a time every year when all Aggies unite against a so-called common enemy: the intramural referee.

"Everyone yells at you because you're not calling fouls or you're calling too many," said Mike Benedict, one of the underdogs. "You have to take some hassle from those in the game and on the sidelines but if you can let it just go in one ear and out the other, you'll be okay."

So far this year, A&M's intramural office had more than 60 referees, as compared to about 20 at this time last year, according to Jim Jeter, assistant intra-

mural director. "The caliber of referees this year is far more improved. We're extremely lucky to have good well-qualified officials here at A&M. Some of our officials had refereed elsewhere before coming here."

"About the only qualification we have around here is a referee must be a student," Jeter continued. "For those who don't know the rules, we have clinics before every sport season to brief them. Even if he doesn't have the judgment to referee, we use him; mostly as a supervisor of a certain field."

"I've refereed softball and football games in San Antonio for the

last couple of years," said Gary Clark. "It's a lot of fun to referee. I like to see people play and if no one officiates, they may not play fairly."

"Although I've refereed some women's games, I find faster, moving action with the men. They seem to have more skill."

"I think they're both pretty exciting," said Deni Bone. "The guys are really great, while the girls have more excitement."

There are some problems that go with the job of being a referee. "Too many people that don't know the rules come out here to play and get mad when you enforce a rule they've never heard,"

said Mike Ellerbrock, "it's their responsibility to know them."

"I'd say I knew about 90 percent of them when I came up here. The little technical ones I had to learn. I've played sports all my life and this is a good way to make money while in school."

"I just wish there was some way to make everyone learn the rules before they get out here so they wouldn't fuss at the refs so often," Ellerbrock said.

"Softball is probably the best sport to umpire," said Kevin Vinal. "The calls are more distinctive than basketball or football. When I first started, I had a tendency to make calls too soon, and some-

time I had to reverse my decisions.

"As a player in one of the leagues, I think there ought to be more than four games a season, but I realize there are a lot of teams and it's hard to schedule everybody."

"We had a 50 percent increase in softball teams," said Jeter. "Also, we had more girls' teams than last year, and next year we're expecting more than 150 football teams. I think the reason we had less protests this year is because of the three or four men officiating football games instead of just one or two as we had last year."

The university plans to initiate a 7-man football system next year, according to Jeter. "There are several reasons for this change. (1) It equalizes the teams. An off-campus group would have as good a chance to win with nine men as a dorm group with 20, and (2) there's a lot more strategy involved."

"Nine man football is too rough," said Mike Ellerbrock. "There are too many injuries and it's not as high scoring a game."

Whatever the system, the school will still need referees to officiate games, and most of those this year will come back. "I think basketball and football are pretty neat," said Bone. "I'm looking forward to them next year."

Rugby guns for rematch with LSU

Five members of the national champion Texas A&M rugby team presented an award trophy to TAMU President Jack K. Williams.

Team members also delivered two championship plaques which rotate among winning schools. The plaques will be displayed at TAMU until another team wins the National Intercollegiate Rugby Championship Tournament. The trophy presented to Dr. Williams will be permanently housed here.

John Gunn, team coach, said the championship still seemed somewhat like a dream to his players.

Gunn announced a rematch between TAMU and LSU, the team the Aggies defeated 12-3 to win the title, will be held here March 9. He said all three squads from both teams will compete.

"We just went to the tournament in Baton Rouge in hopes of making a good showing and gaining valuable experience," he said. "But following the first game Saturday morning, we all had the feeling we might have a crack at the title."

He noted that team members from the Palmer College squad, twice defending champions, referred to the Aggie team as a bunch of "ruffians."

"They were upset in the first round of the tournament," Gunn noted, "then were defeated a second time. Since rugby is to Palmer College is what football is to Texas A&M, we can understand their disappointment."

Dr. Williams called the national title an impressive accomplishment for the Aggie rugby squad and for the university.

"We know how hard you've worked to prepare for this tournament," he said, "and your efforts certainly have paid off."

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