

A&M enjoys rich sports history

Bible's undefeated football teams highlight early years

Editor's note: The following is the first of a four part series on the history of organized sports at A&M.

By **JERRY JOHNSON**

From the first semester in 1876 until a baseball game was played in 1894, there is no recorded history of sports at A&M. By 1920, however, intercollegiate competition was firmly entrenched at Aggieland and A&M sports enjoyed enormous success during the early years.

The highlight of this period is the Aggies two undefeated, untied and unscored on football teams of 1917 and 1919. Coaching those teams was D. X. Bible who became known as the man whose specialty was undefeated teams.

But before one gets to those teams, it's good to go back to the years when sports got their start at Aggieland.

In 1894, Texas A&M fielded a baseball team without a coach. They were the first team to represent the Aggies in college competition. They won three of the four games they played. A&M didn't again compete in baseball until 1904.

Football came on the scene that same year as an interested student and a professor formed the team. F. D. Perkins and Prof. A. M. Soule are given credit for the start. That team was one and one with the loss coming to the hands of Texas 38-0.

In 1902, J. E. Platt started the Aggie track team. They finished second to someone but it is unclear who won the championship.

The final team to be started at Aggieland was the basketball team in 1913. Coach F. D. Steger and his players competed with the likes of Marlin High School and the Galveston YMCA. Their record was four and two with the losses coming at the hands of the YMCA team and Houston High School. They lost both games by two points.

Since its inception in 1894, the Aggies have fielded a football team every year except 1895. Perhaps the best of the early teams was Coach J. E. Platt's team of 1902. In the midst of a struggle to outlaw football by then President Theodore Roosevelt, the Aggies were undefeated in nine games. They were tied by Trinity and Texas. In the second contest with the Longhorns that year, the Aggies stopped the Varsity 11-0. This was the first time the Aggies had ever scored on or beaten Texas.

Football took the campus by storm and produced the first Saturday afternoon heroes. Aggie Hall of Famers Joe Utay and Charley DeWare captained the 1907 and 1908 teams. The coach was Uncle Charlie Moran. He was in charge of the football, baseball and track programs until 1914.

Also in the Aggie Hall from this period are Dutch Hohn and Tyree Bell who captained the 1912 football team. That team scored 366 points in nine games,

an A&M record.

Then came Bible. 1917 was his first year at A&M. He started fall practice with four returning "T" men and none of them were backs. They worked for two weeks and beat Austin College 66-0. One week later, they allowed Dallas University only one first down and scored 98 points. The season ended with the Aggies 10-

0 victory over Rice. They were crowned the "Champions of the Southwest" after that perfect season.

Two years later, Bible had the Aggies in position again. They opened the 1919 season with a double header against San Marcos Teachers College and Sam Houston State. San Marcos lost 28-0 and Sam Houston lost 77-0. So

began a second perfect season and another "Champions of the Southwest" crown.

The 1919-20 school year was especially successful because the basketball team was also undefeated. Coach Billy Driver took them through 19 games and finalized the season with a 17-13 win over the Longhorns.

By the year 1920, sports at

A&M had begun to progress. The football and basketball teams were coming off perfect seasons. The baseball team finished second to the Longhorns and the track team was fourth in the conference. That year, the Aggies also had their first representative to the Olympics. Aggie Hall member Jack Mahan placed fifth in the javelin.

Aaron Stadium?

ATLANTA (AP)—Mayor Maynard Jackson wants Atlanta Stadium renamed Henry Aaron Stadium to honor the Braves slugger.

More than 35 million persons watched Aaron hit his 715th career home run there and break the record set by Babe Ruth, Mayor Jackson said Monday night in a regular monthly telecast.

He urged the city council to recognize Aaron's accomplishment in naming the stadium after him.

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