

SWC championships highlight 1941-61 A&M athletics

By JERRY JOHNSON
Ed. note: This is the third of four sections tracing the history of organized athletics at A&M.

Southwest Conference Championships highlight the 1941-1960 era of athletics at A&M.

It begins on New Year's Day 1941 in Dallas where the Aggies battled the Fordham Rams. A&M was the victor 13-12.

This period of history had at least one Southwest Conference championship in every year except 1946.

For the third straight year, the Aggies played in a post season football game in 1942. Again it was the Cotton Bowl but the opponent was Alabama and the Aggies lost 29-21.

Three All-Americans in three different sports headed the 1943 laurels. Pete Watkins in the high jump, Danny Green in the freestyle and Jitterbug Henderson in the javelin were the Aggie heroes. Henderson is among those considered, the best athlete to attend A&M as he won 11 varsity letters and three freshman numerals in five sports. He won four letters in the same year and two on the same day as he competed in both track and baseball.

The 1943 football team travelled to Miami, Florida, on New Year's Day 1944 to battle the Tigers of LSU.

Earlier in the season, the Aggies had beaten the Tigers but that wasn't the way it went in the Orange Bowl. LSU beat the Army, 19-14.

Swimming asserted itself as a top Aggie sport in 1944 with the first of

two conference championships. In 1945, Coach L. J. Dimmitt's track team showed a preview of things to come as they won three trophies at the Southwest Recreational meet in Forth Worth.

The year 1947 began a series of six conference track championships in seven years for the Aggies. This was the high point of the years from 1941 to 1957 when the Aggies either won or finished second to the Horns in the SWC meet.

The star of the 1947 team was Art Harden, a quartermiler. In his three years of college competition,

Harden never lost a 440 race. He ran on the 1948 Olympic team as a member of the 1600 meter relay team which won the gold medal. He and shotputter George Kadera were selected to the 1948 All-American team.

Track and cross country wins in almost every meet they entered were the reputations of Andy Anderson's teams through 1953.

Football brought another trophy to campus in 1950. The Aggies finished third behind UT and Baylor but were chosen to play in the Presidential Classic in Washington, D.C.

There they smashed the University of Georgia Bulldogs 40-20 behind the strong running of All-American Bob Smith.

All-Americans and conference championships made the Aggie sports history of 1951. Pitcher Pat Hubert, track weightman Darrow Hooper and high jumper Walt Davis were the honorees. And track, baseball and basketball won the championships.

Davis and Hooper are in the Aggie Hall of Fame. Davis was the first jumper in the world to go over seven feet.

A member of that 1951 baseball team was Wally Moon. He is also in the Aggie Hall. He left A&M to play pro ball with the St. Louis Cardinals and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The 1952 football team won only three games but still tackle Jack Little made the All-America team.

Art Adamson continued to produce swimmers from the Aggie pool. In 1953, breaststroker Richard Weick was named to the All-America team.

The 1956 golf team had a name player to lead it to the conference championship. Bobby Nichols was

that man and he too is an Aggie Hall member.

Adamson's swim teams of 1956 and '57 won the trophies behind the strong leadership of Tetsuo Okamoto. Okamoto was selected to the All-America team both years.

Football got back on the field of winners in 1956, too. Paul "Bear" Bryant was the coach and the team won the title. All-Americans team were Jack Pardee and Dennis Goehring. For some unknown reason, the Aggies didn't go to a post season game that year.

Then came 1957 and A&M's only

Heisman Trophy winner. The trophy goes annually to the top college football player and that year it went to John David Crow. In a late season collapse, the Aggies were third in the conference race and lost in the Gator Bowl to Tennessee 3-0. Also on that '57 team was All-American tackle Charlie Krueger.

Two of the Aggies present coaches came on the scene to close out this period. Tom Chandler's baseball team won the pennant in 1959, his first year on the job, and Henry Ransom's golf team won the whole thing in 1960, his first year also.

Baseball sets playoff dates

LUBBOCK (AP)—The University of Texas Longhorns, the Broncs of Pan American University of Edinburg, and Louisiana Tech were selected Tuesday as the three teams that will compete in the NCAA District 6 baseball playoffs.

The playoffs will be held at Arlington Stadium next May 24-26.

Texas and Louisiana Tech won the invitation because of their conference championships. The Longhorns took the Southwest Conference title and Louisiana Tech was first in the Southland Conference.

The Longhorns, who were 44-4 for the season, took the conference championship in the last day of the season when they defeated the Texas Aggies in a doubleheader. Their conference record was 20-4.

Louisiana Tech had a 27-17 record for the year. The Broncs won their invitation to the playoffs as an at-large team because of their impressive 50-9 record.

Texas will go into the playoffs led by its sophomore pitcher Jim Gideon, who had an 11-0 record with an ERA of 1.94, and by catcher Rick Bradley who batted .424.

The Broncs had their most successful season in the six years that they have played under coach Al Ogletree. They had an exceptional well-balanced pitching staff that collected a total of 45 complete games.

Their top men are southpaw Bruce Wilson, a senior who had a 10-1 record, and Laconia Graham, a right-hander with a 9-1 mark.

Two sophomores, Ron Edquist and Jesse Trinidad, had 9-2 records. The two sophomores also led in strikeouts. Trinidad had 71 and Edquist 64.

The team had a batting average of .310 led by junior catcher Wayne Cato who batted .374. Paul Thomas led the team in homers with five, including two grand slams, and in RBIs with 31.

The Broncs also boast the leading NCAA base stealer. He is Rickey Brockway, a Dallas product, who set a record this past season with 61.

The winner of the playoffs will advance to the College World Series in Omaha, Neb. June 7-14.

Segrist said pairings for the double elimination tournament will be announced next week.

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