

One year older, wiser

Balanced Aggie offense stirs optimism for '77

By PAUL McGRATH

To Texas A&M offensive coordinator Ben Hurt, the T-bone is much more than a type of steak.

The T-bone formation employed by the Aggies was greatly responsible for the many records set by the A&M gridgers. The Aggies set marks for total offense (4,064 yards), total offense per game (369.5 yards), and first downs (208). The 1973 Aggies were the third highest scoring team in A&M history with 38 touchdowns and 292 total points.

A&M ranked third in rushing offense and fourth in passing while finishing fourth overall offensively in the Southwest Conference last year.

Hurt is optimistic about this year's outlook. "I felt like the boys had a real good spring. They have still got a ways to come, but they showed marked improvement in every phase. Everyone had a super attitude and put forth good effort."

He added, "We have good size linemen and good speed in our backfield and receivers. We also have adequate depth at every position."

Hurt said one problem that may develop is a lack of additional depth at the running back positions.

"To a man, we are a year older," said Hurt. "That gives one year's aging, one year's maturing, and one year's experience."

The Aggie offense will have 20 returning lettermen at its disposal, including nine of last year's starters.

Sophomore David Walker will have the reins at quarterback, while junior Mike Jay is held in reserve.

Split end sees Carl Roaches back and at tight end, Richard Osborne and David Greeno return. All three are juniors. Senior Mike Keese also figures in the picture.

In the backfield, the Aggies return juniors Bubba Bean, Ronnie Hubby, Skip Walker, Bucky Sams, and Jim Hartman. Jerry Honore is

the only senior amongst the running backs.

Returning linemen are Ricky Seeker and Henry Tracy at center, Bruce Welch, Craig Glendenning and Billy Lemons at the guard positions, Glenn Bujnoch, Dennis Smelser and Dennis Swilley at the tackle slots. Of this group only Seeker, is a senior, Glendenning, Lemons, and Swilley are sophomores, and the rest are juniors.

Of the 20 returnees, only three

are seniors. Thus a majority of the offense will be back next season.

However, emphasis for the time being is placed on this year's prospects. The Aggies will swing a two-edged sword with their balanced running and passing attack.

The Aggies are primarily a running team but will be prepared to throw according to game situations. Good blocking by both linemen and backs was cited as a key to the A&M running game by Hurt. Aggie run-

ners set a record for rushing yardage last year, amassing 2,920 yards.

The passing attack is spearheaded by the arm of quarterback, Walker, combining with the talents of Roaches and Osborne. Hurt believes that play action passes should do well if the ground attack is successful. Onr advantage of the T-bone formation is that it allows the backs to get into the pass pattern faster than the Wishbone. The use of backs as receivers should aid the

passing game.

If and when the Aggie offense falters, junior punter Mark Stanley will be called upon to get the Aggies out of danger. Stanley averaged 38 yards a punt last year. Placekicker Randy Haddox, a senior, provides another scoring threat with his accurate toe. Haddox made good on ten of 17 field goal attempts and had 62 total points—tops for the Aggies.

The 1974 Aggie offense is in a considerably better position at this

point than last year's eleven. It lacked a solid quarterback, had no experience, and had depth difficulties. These problems have been solved and head football coach Emory Bellard has maintained the same offense to allow Aggies to apply what they learned last year to this year's offense. But no one, including Hurt or Bellard, will know what the Aggie have learned until their first game in September against Clemson.

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Strike goes on

No end appears in sight as the National Football League player strike continues despite all-day closed sessions with federal mediators.

Progress of the sessions is unknown because of a secrecy vow undertaken by the owners and the striking players. A settlement did not appear imminent due to the sheer volume of the proposals by the Player's Association. President of the NFL Player's Association, Bill Curry, said the players will continue striking until concessions are made on the so-called "freedom issues." These issues include elimination of the Rozelle compensation rule, the waiver and option clauses, and the practice of fining players as routine punishment.

Federal mediator in the strike, James Searce, declined to make a prediction on how far the sessions, held in the United States Labor Department, may extend.

Local boys prepare for AAU meet

Jim Brannen and Joel Thomas will be two College Station Junior Olympians to advance to the national AAU meet in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Borger Meet was a five state that had the best track and field talent from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Oklahoma represented.

Winners in the events qualified to go to Lincoln for the nationally televised meet.

Brannen took first in the 880 with a time of 1:59.02. Brannen is the state Class AAA schoolboy champ at the same distance.

Joel Thomas won his ticket to Lincoln by winning the 120 yard high hurdles in a time of 14.03.

Another College Station entry in the half mile, Doug Chester placed sixth but did not qualify for the Lincoln meet.

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