

National qualifier

Blair vaults to success

By PAUL McGRATH
Staff Sports Writer

After winning the Southwest Conference last year as a freshman, one might ask what Texas A&M pole vaulter Brad Blair could do for an encore.

Well, it didn't take him very long to provide an answer. With the track season about half over Blair has already qualified for nationals with a 16-7 vault last weekend. It was the third time in a row the Aggie sophomore had cleared 16 feet or more in meet competition.

In addition to qualifying for Na-

tional Collegiate Athletic Association meet held June 6 at Provo Utah, Blair's vault Saturday set a school record. He topped Harold McMahan's old mark by an inch, a mark that was set in 1971. Blair came within an inch of putting his name in the SWC record book as his jump was just that short from crasing Dickie Phillips' 16-8 set in 1970.

"Brad is coming along real good," said A&M Track Coach Charles Thomas. "He has a chance to get 17 feet if he keeps working at it."

Blair came to A&M from Carthage high school where he earned six varsity letters in both football and track. He began his vaulting career in the seventh grade and continued it into high school where his top

mark was 15 feet. Last year, as a frosh, he reached 16 feet for the first time. Blair was sixth among the Aggie thinclads in point scoring, amassing 46½ tallies for last year's SWC second place team.

In the SWC meet last season, Blair said he "squirreled" into first place.

"I felt lucky to win it," says Blair. David Shephard of Texas was the pre-meet favorite but ended up not even placing in the top six.

Blair admits he was shooting to break the A&M record last weekend.

"I guess you could say that was one of my goals," he said.

He hopes to top the SWC mark but "can't make any predictions. It's too unpredictable."

Thomas feels this year's winning vault will be in the high 16's or in the 17's. As it stands now, Blair is the man to beat although Shephard is right behind him with a recent vault of 16-6. Blair named Rice's Mike McElvin as another top adversary in the event.

Coach Thomas has only one criticism of his second year letterman. "Brad might be an 18-footer if he would stand up on the pole. He needs to get vertical with the pole and he hasn't quite done that yet." Blair agrees with Thomas and says he uses films and pictures to help him correct his mistakes.

Blair uses a 16½ foot pole for his vaults but says that all poles are just about the same. The approach to the bar is about 145 feet although Blair never uses the whole distance to make his attempt.

"You have to get prepared mentally. If everything is not right, you won't make it, I'll guarantee you that," he said.

Blair will compete this weekend against some of the top vaulters in the country as the Aggies participate in the Dallas Invitational. Teams such as Southern Cal, UTEP, Kansas State and Oklahoma State will be providing opposition for A&M.

"Those guys are probably about ten times better than I am," said Blair.

However, using Blair's own words, "you can't make any predictions."

Batt sports

Hitting at .371 clip

Schraeder still consistent as Aggie secondsacker

By NICK VOINIS
Staff Sports Writer

Ask any Aggie baseball fan, "Who's on second?", and the usual answer will be, Mike Schraeder.

Schraeder has had a good year so far. He has 26 hits in 70 times at bat for a .371 average.

"I started off pretty well," Schraeder said. "I got off on my stroke, at Tulane, but I've gotten it back now and I'm hitting well again."

The 6 foot 175 pound Houstonian hopes to be the repeat choice for All-Southwest Conference second

baseman this year. He hit with a .408 average last year.

"It's hard to say, there are a lot of good second basemen in our league," he said. "If I can continue my hitting, I think I will have a good chance."

Schraeder missed the last 14 games of last season because of a ruptured spleen he suffered in an intrasquad game collision. He said he has completely recovered from that injury.

Schraeder feels the team to beat this year will be the University of Texas, but it will be hard for them to go undefeated in conference play, since there are some good teams in the SWC.

"Texas really doesn't have as good a team as they've had in the past, but they always have an excellent club," Schraeder said. "They have a hell-of-a-pitcher in Jim Gideon."

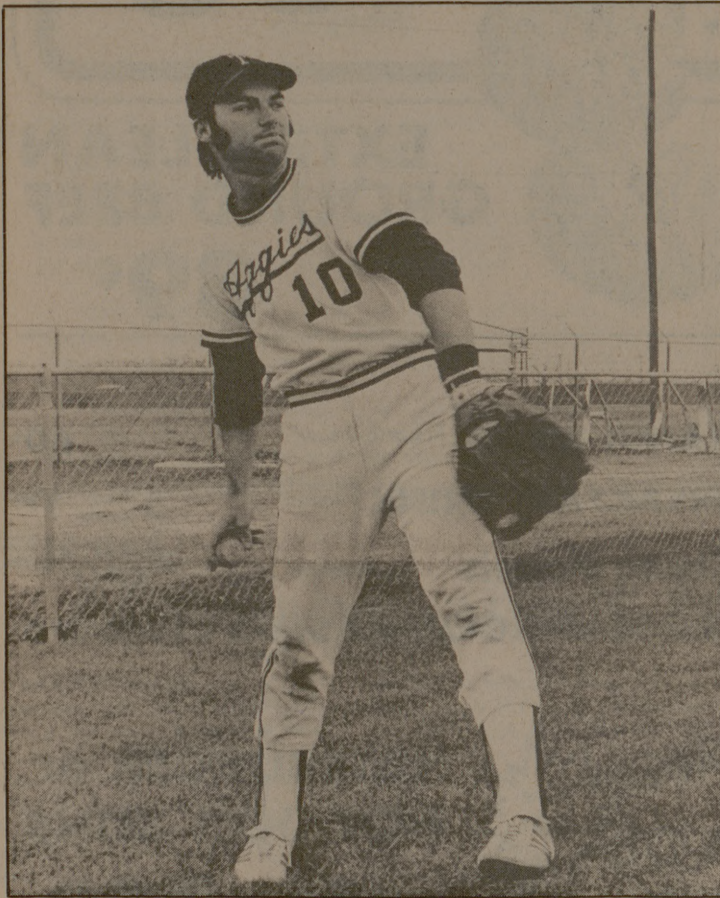
Schraeder thinks the Aggies have a good chance to contend with Texas if they can win this weekend at TCU.

"We'll need to have a good series against TCU and win at least 2 out of the 3 games with them," he said.

The senior finance major would like to play professional baseball and was drafted by the American League Milwaukee Brewers after his graduation from Sam Houston High School in Houston.

"I'd like to give it a shot," he said. "I have always looked forward to it, since I've played baseball so long."

Schraeder has not set any personal goals this year, although he would like to finish the season with a high batting average, some RBIs and a little power. With his credentials so far he shouldn't have much to worry about.



Mike Schraeder winding up for warmup throw



Up, up and away goes A&M vaulter Brad Blair

(Photo by David McCall)

Wooden says earlier success will not effect current playoffs

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Coach John Wooden wants neither the success nor the failures of earlier UCLA teams to have any effect on the new young Bruins who try to give the school its 10th NCAA basketball title in 11 years this weekend.

"This is a new group," Wooden said of his No. 1-ranked team that faces Louisville in San Diego Saturday in the NCAA semifinals.

"We're an almost entirely different group. Dave Meyers is the only one who is starting this time," Wooden said.

Last season's team, led by Bill Walton, was favored to win an

eight consecutive NCAA title, but instead lost in double overtime to North Carolina State in the semifinals.

The Bruins won their first NCAA championship in 1964 and repeated in 1965. They failed to make it the following year but in 1967 UCLA began a dynasty that ruled through seven straight seasons until 1974.

Wooden said he wants his players to realize that he doesn't want them

to try to live up to the accomplishments of other teams of other years. He emphasizes that earlier victories cannot help now, but they should not be a burden, and the same goes for any disappointments that might have gone before.

"This is a group that is working for it on its own, not because of last year. They are trying to do it for their own pride and satisfaction," Wooden said.

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