

Ags go to NCAA meet

With 4 individual entrants and relay

By MIKE BRUTON
Sports Editor

Coach Charles Thomas will take qualifiers in three individual events and one relay race to Provo Utah this week to compete in the meet of the swiftest against the finest talent in the land at the NCAA Track and Field Championships.

A&M will throw a one-two punch in the 120-year high hurdles with

All-SWC hurdler Scottie Jones and Shifton Baker. Brad Blair will compete in the polevault and all-purpose sprinter Doug Brodhead will compete in the 220-yard dash to round out the individual qualifiers.

The Aggie's 440-yard relay four-some with the exception of Robert Harris, who injured himself at practice, will also hit the cinders with hopes of grabbing a top spot among the nation's best sprinters. Competing will be: Chuck Butler, Brodhead, Gerald D'Ambrosio and Ray Brooks.

Jones, three-winner of his specialty in the conference, is no stranger to national competition as he has been to the NCAA meet for the past two years. Jones has a career best of 13.5 but has been bothered the majority of this season by an injury to his right hip. His best for this season came two weeks ago when he glided to a record-setting 13.7 in the prelims and finals of the SWC meet after being out of action since February. It appears as if he is getting his winning form back and he should score points for the Aggies.

Tri-captain Baker, who has been A&M's most consistent point-getter this year, is only a step away from his cohort as he turned in a 13.8 time in Lubbock two weeks ago. He

has been steadily improving this spring and appears to be set for a peak performance at Provo. Baker's times have stayed around 14 seconds most of the season but in recent weeks he has recorded 13.9s and a 13.8.

Blair will be A&M's lone entry in the field events. He had a best this season of 16 feet, seven inches. Blair was dethroned at this spring's SWC meet by Longhorn vaulter David Shepherd. He will have to get back to his early season form to score in this highly competitive meet.

Right in the midst of the heat will be another A&M track tri-captain, Brodhead, who will compete in the blazing 220. And I do mean, BLAZING. Brodhead described last year's NCAA 220 in one word, "un-

godly." "Last year sixth place was 20.6," he added.

Two of Brodhead's main opponents in last year's 220 will be back to plague him again. Southern California's James Gilkes, who flashed to a wind-aided 19.9 and Tennessee's Reggie Jones, who finished second behind him at 20.0 will be at Provo to put a little zip in the 220-yard sprint. Brodhead has a best this year of 20.8, which he posted in a track meet at his hometown, Lafayette, Louisiana.

Brodhead said he was more concerned with trying to get a good place in the sprint relay. "I think we can place in the 440 relay, if we get good handoffs. We could've run better than 40.1 in conference but Robert Harris and I had a bad hand-off," the A&M senior commented.

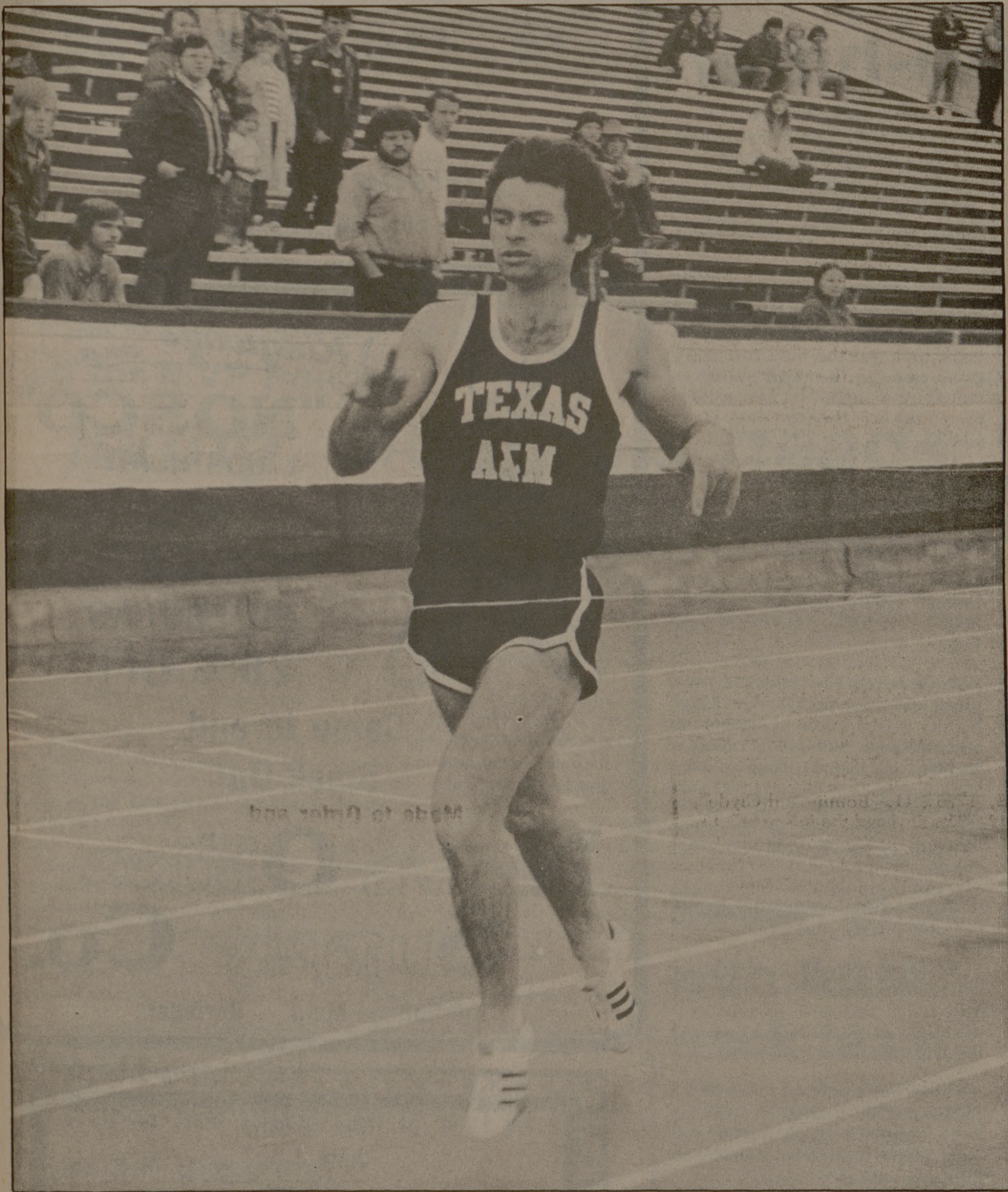
The 440-yard relay will be a hot event with USC leading the field with a best of 39.3 this spring. Other top contenders in this event will be Kansas, UCLA, Tennessee, Kansas and two SWC teams Texas and TCU. Brodhead also said other variables may help the Aggie's chances in the sprint relay. "Sometimes it's hard to keep a team together at nationals," because school is out and many of the athletes are homesick and often many teams drop out of relay events.

The A&M quarter relay will have two freshmen, who will experience national caliber competition for the first time. Oddly enough, they will begin and end the race with Butler coming out of the blocks, replacing Harris and Brooks anchoring.

Brooks has done a reputable job of anchoring the quartet this season. He picked up a few yards on competitors in the SWC meet a couple of weeks ago and really finished strong. "It's just another race," said Brooks in reference to this being his initial trip to the land of the speed demons. "I'm glad to have the fortune to be able to compete against such talented people," he added.

The six A&M thinclads along with coaches Thomas and Ted Nelson will leave for Provo today.

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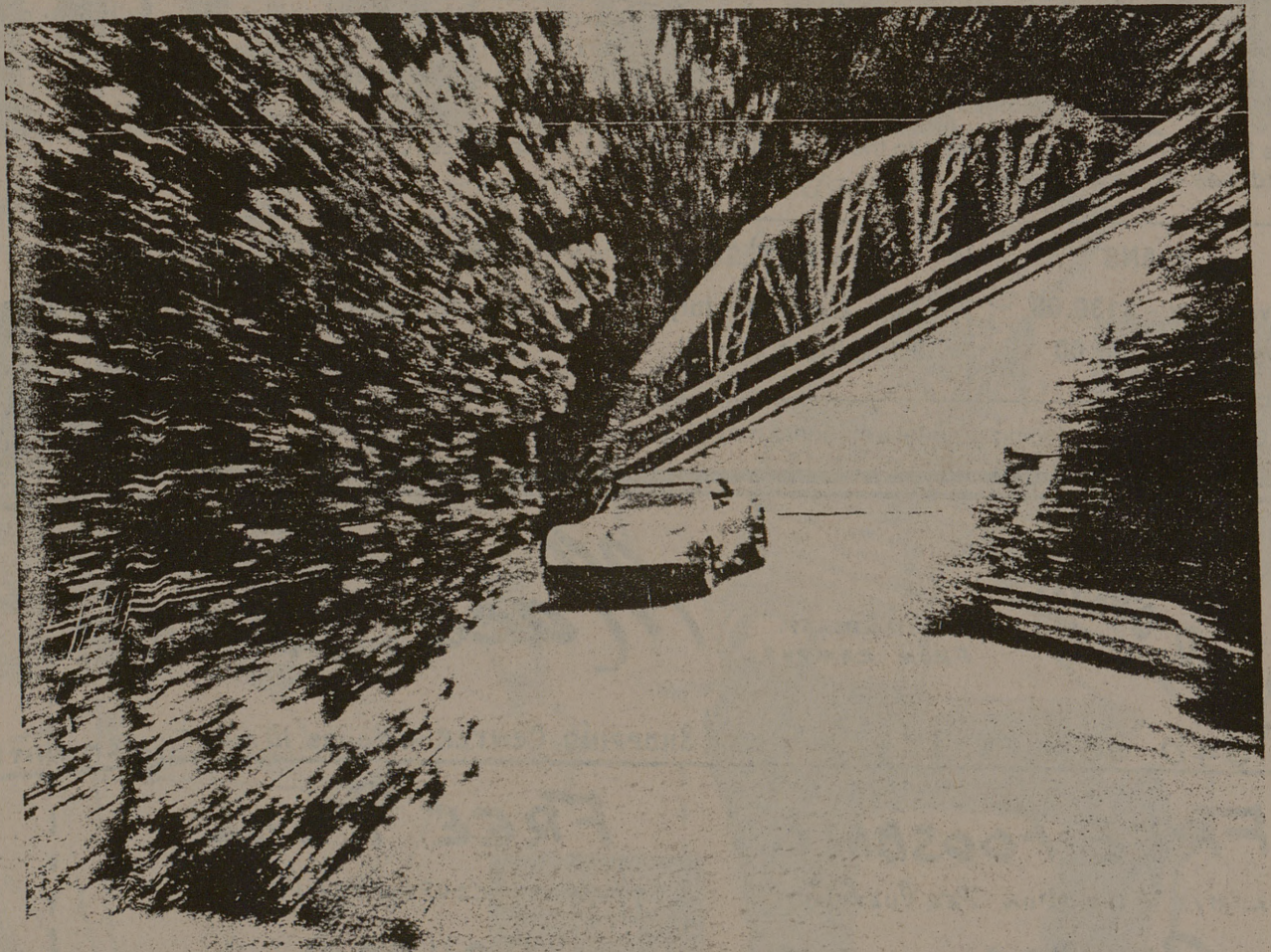
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