

athletic oatmeal



By TONY GALLUCCI
Sports Editor

Attending workouts and practices in various sports is a hazard of sportswriting. It is dangerous in many respects. First of all it may lead one to suspect that just because our beloved Alma Mater performs so well against itself it must also do likewise against its opponents.

This is possibly false on two accounts. Primarily, the people who are playing each other down there on the field are friends, or hopefully, at least acquaintances. They are drilled daily with each other and are instilled with a strong knowledge of how each other plays. The scout teams are told how to approximate the plays the opponents will be using. Meanwhile the players who have made the roster are drilled on the same material, that is, what to expect from the opponent.

If the A team, say, goes onto the practice field against the scout team and both are drilled in, say Mississippi plays, then both teams will be following the script.

The A team likely will look very good against the blackboard Ole Miss scout team, because they know what to expect. Well, you say, the scout team knows what to expect also. That's true, but they lack in experience mostly, possibly talent and never in spirit. That's why they are the scout teams. Second of all, they are friends, and I may be wrong, but there's just something about playing with friends. You just don't go all out against them, if it's nothing more than the fear that this guy has to play in that upcoming game and if you cream him, ole rinky dink there will have to take his place.

Two other fallacies of this logic (if we can do it here, we can do it there) are that, one, the opponents don't perform according to the blackboard model. There is always something different, someone who still has a goofy play hidden in the deep recesses of his mind. Second, that our own teams must adjust to inaccuracies and therefore requiring the other team to adjust and so on down the line.

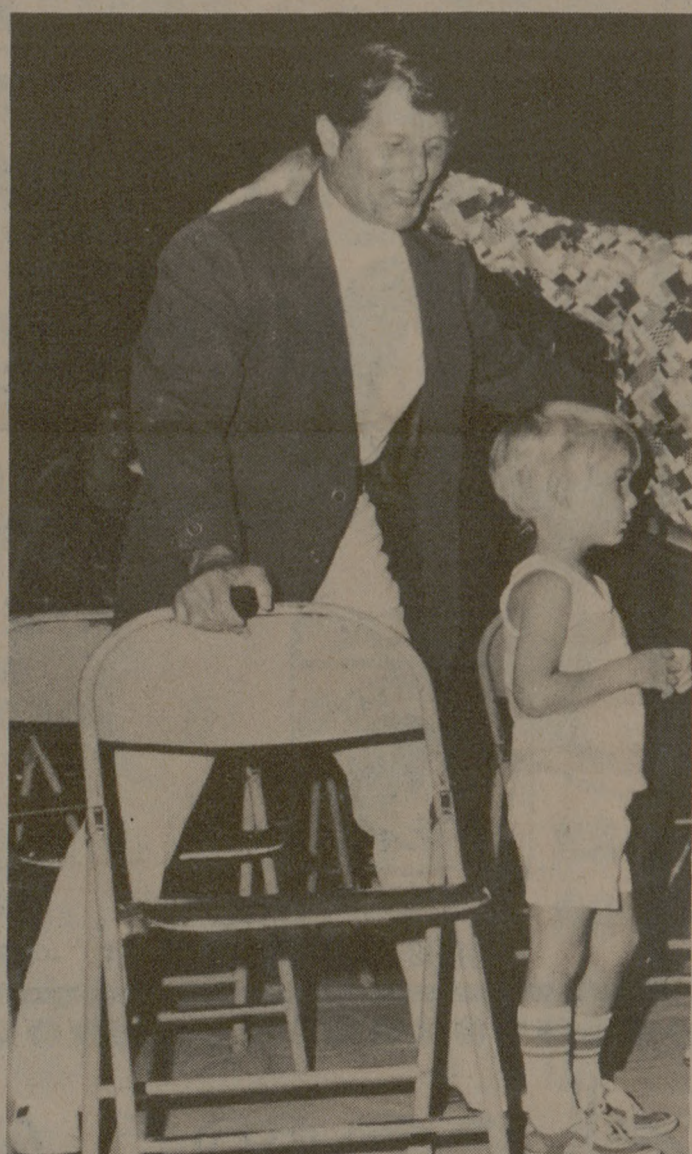
Talent is a hard thing to put on the blackboard, as are personalities and personal techniques. Like long distance, watching them is the next best thing to playing them. I applaud the Aggie coaches in their decision, however long in the making, to take the Aggie team to Waco this Saturday to watch Ole Miss play Baylor. Going will serve a multitudinous purpose. First the coaches will get to see ahead of time, not one but two future opponents in action. They will be able to detect any changes in lineup or procedure since their last contact with that team in action. They will also be able to see newcomers in action for the first time with their teams and see exactly how they fit in. Each of the players will be able to study the exact person he will be matched against. His personal techniques, style of play and personality. He can even watch the players on the bench to detect character traits he would not see on TV or game films. All could be a tremendous help.

One of the biggest plusses is what is known in sports as an advantage. The Aggies will have the chance to see their first opponent in action without granting the same privilege. Should add twelve points to the scoreboard. Let's hope they won't need them.

Sitting at practice the other day, I was partaking of the shade with Sports Information Director Spec Gammon. Gammon mentioned that a certain player we were ogling was the best athlete he had seen on the turf since Dave Elmendorf.

I really began to think. Granted, Gammon surely meant all-around athlete, but I was looking here at a field covered by great talent. Athletes who were better at their 'trade' on the field than any other such athlete in the nation (which is to say the world) as well as others who just needed time to develop. People dream about just being in the same city block.

It used to be that Aggie coaches and players and fans would look at the schedule for the upcoming season and say, "Oh look at that, why they're a national power, how will we ever compete." It occurs to me now that other coaches, players and fans are looking at their schedules and saying, "Oh look at that, A&M, why they're..."



Head Football Coach Emory Bellard takes his turn at 'humpin' it' and sawing varsity's horns off at All-University night on Monday.

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