

Ags go to Drake Relays

By PAUL McGRATH
Des Moines, Iowa is usually a quiet, conservative midwestern city of about 400,000 folks. Of course, one of the city's population have been known to frequent those shady areas in the middle of town. But for the most part, the prime excitement is watching the local college students rip up the main drag in vehicles right out of American Graffiti.

Every April, however, the city becomes alive with parades and other such hubbub. The Drake Relays extravaganza is coming to town.

This year's version is the 67th anniversary of what is one of the most prestigious track meets in the nation. Over 60 university, college, junior college and high school teams converge on the one-time French fortress with the intent of sharing some of the glamour of the Drake Relays.

Texas A&M captured some of this limelight in 1970 when the 880-yard relay foursome of Donnie Rogers, Rocky Woods, Marvin Mills and Curtis Mills broke the tape in 1:21.7, a world's record. The mark still stands as a world and American record although strangely, Southern Cal holds the national collegiate record in the event with a 1:20.7.

In running the four 220s, the Aggie quartet averaged 20.4 a leg, — not exactly a bad piece of running. Rogers was a long jumper when not on the track and still holds the A&M records for indoors and outdoors in that event. Woods was a superb sprinter and hurdler who the year earlier had run a 9.3 100-yard dash in the NCAA meet at Knoxville, Tenn. Marvin was the younger half of the Mills brothers act and the A&M re-

cord book bears his name six times. And of course there was Curtis, the anchorman of that record-setting quartet. Mills had already been in the national spotlight with a 44.7 open quarter at the NCAA meet, a world record at the time. The elder Mills had also anchored a 3:05.7 mile relay effort in the Astrodome, a globe mark for indoors.

That was six years ago, though, and most of the records set by that group are history now. This year the Aggies of Coach Charles Thomas hope for a new brand of Drake glory.

Thomas takes a 17-man squad to Des Moines with the preliminaries beginning this morning and the finals being run Saturday morning and afternoon.

Texas A&M's main hopes lie on the two-mile relay team of Jim Brannen, Tommy Glass, Joel Vogt and Tony Wheeler. Brannen has had a personal best in the open 880-yard dash of 1:50.5 and although just a sophomore, is the oldest of the four. That is, if you exclude 23-year-old freshman Tony Wheeler from categorization as "old." The South African import has the best 880 time in the Southwest Conference thus far in the year, 1:48.7.

The Aggies will be hard-pressed by Baylor's foursome of Walker Lea,

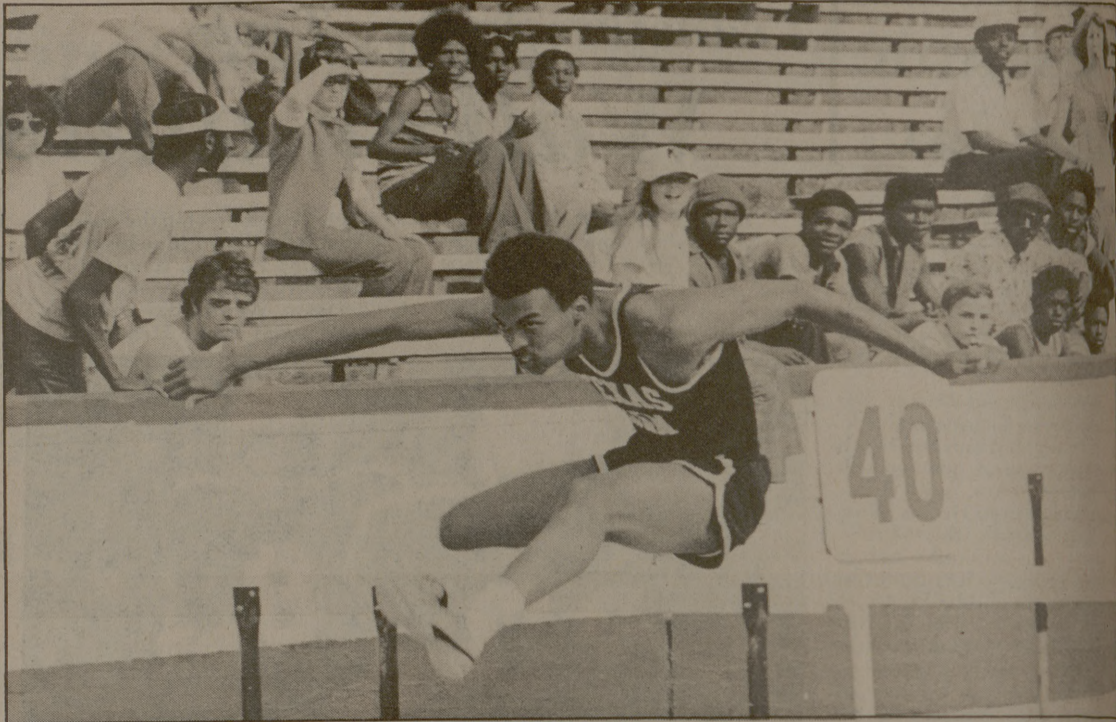
Mark Lawless, Phil McClendon and Arthur Nious. Twice this year the Bears have embarrassed the Ags by winning in more than comfortable margins.

The Aggies will also compete in the 440- and 880-yard relays with Shifton Baker, Ray Brooks, Charles Dawson and Chuck Butler handling the baton in each event. The distance medley team of Butler, Vogt, Manfred Kohrs and Walter Jachimowicz will also take part in the relay carnival.

Baker will compete in the high and intermediate hurdles as well as the two relays. He took third in the 120-yard highs last year to Larry Shipp and Allen Misher of LSU. Teammate Curtis Collier, a freshman, is slated for the intermediates.

In the field events A&M will have Brad Blair in the pole vault, Ronnie Keys in the high jump, Tom Owen in the long jump, Bill Newton in the javelin, Frank West in the shot put and Steve Stewart in the discus. Stewart had his best throw ever last weekend with a 186-3 foot toss.

All Southwest Conference schools but Texas and Rice will travel to the meet with the SWC having top entries of TCU in the 440-yard relay and Baylor in the mile and two-mile relays.



Shifton Baker shows his hurdling form which won him third place at the Drake Relays last year. The Aggies will compete at the Des Moines, Iowa meet this weekend.

Worshipping God is only the start of something great.



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Letters to Steelers bring surprises, strange requests

Associated Press
Kids write the darndest things to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"You guys are so fanatic every time you play I bet at least a \$1.00," Ricky Tuckerman wrote from Elmira, N.Y.

"I have a beer can with a picture of the Steelers on it, but that isn't why I changed," Scott Kling of Yoder, Ind., wrote in announcing he's now a fan of the Steelers instead of the "Dolphinians."

"If you're still there when I grow up I might become one of your players," Jonathan Reed informed Spring Grove, Pa. "But nobody will get hurt because I don't like to see that stuff."

The Steelers received about 5,000 such letters in a single month after

the last Super Bowl, and they still get more than 100 a week.

A few carry comments like "You stink" and "No way you'll win three in a row." But most are friendly, with "Please send me" appeals for team photos, autographs, stickers and anything else you have.

Paul Stromberg of Fairfax, Va., was more ambitious. "Send me five season's tickets for me and my family. Please!" he asked Steeler owner Art Rooney.

Rooney's generous, but five season tickets are a bit much. So Stromberg's letter will join stacks of others that are sent to Asco, Inc., in Minnesota.

Asco, which expects to provide a similar service for 15 other NFL teams this season, sends each writer

a Steeler team photo, some of them and a catalog listing football souvenirs to buy.

Asco estimates it costs 28 cents each reply. The Steelers pay 28 cents and Asco offsets the rest from revenue from the catalog.

George Masisak of Bradford, Pa., is obviously aware of the freebie available. He sent a photocopied letter that began with "Dear Sir" and closed with "Hope to hear from you in the near future."

Most letters are in longhand, occasional erasures and adventitious spellings.

"Your couch is one of the couches in the world," Jonathan Reed, praising Chalkley not the sofas in the Steeler locker room.

Many writers go beyond plain into personal matters.

"P.S. — Wish Terry Bradshaw luck in his marriage," Matt said from Scotia, N.Y.

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