

Battalion photo by Kevin Venner

These three Texas A&M defensive backs took a short break during yesterday's football practice, while some of the less experienced players went through their defensive drills. Mike Williams (left) plays

cornerback, and Lester Hayes (center) and Reggie Williams play safety for the Aggies. The three said that what the secondary may lack in experience, they will make up with a desire to hit hard.

No dog day for Aggies

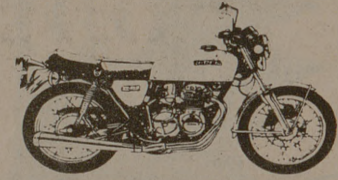
Texas A&M gridders received a welcome reprieve from the sultry dog days of summer yesterday as they continue preparation for their Sept. 11 meeting with Virginia Tech. Lightning crackled in the southern skies while a soothing breeze cooled the Kyle Field surface. It marked the first afternoon that Sol kindly turned his face from the stadium and the players. "This is the hottest it's been since we've been on (Astro) turf," Trainer Billy Pickard said about the discomforting heat and humidity. "We've averaged 1,000 lbs. of ice per practice until today."

The sound of padded bodies colliding offered a rhythmic contrast to the occasional thunderclaps heard over the bellowing voices and low grunts of exertion. The Aggie running backs looked fit and quick with action in all phases appearing sharp as the afternoon progressed. "The first team is looking like they came back ready to play," Offensive Co-ordinator Tom Wilson said during one of the several breaks in yesterday's work out. "They all have a great attitude." Defensive back Reggie Williams parried the misnomer that the Ag-

gies have lost too much talent to be competitive. "Last year is just past performance. We were only 10-2 last year." Williams was one of several members of the secondary working on variations of previous pass coverages. Texas A&M Defensive Co-ordinator Melvin Robertson devised the new wrinkles for the University of Houston and Baylor, games further along in the Aggie schedule. Virginia Tech runs the Wishbone, the only team other than Texas which operates that formation. Ironically, Tech and Texas open and close the Aggies' 1976 campaign.

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Connors, Evert head U.S. Open field

Former couple seeded first

Associated Press
FOREST HILLS, N.Y. — A host of contenders and an ailing queen-elect should make this year's United States Open Tennis Championships more puzzling than most. And 128 men and 96 women will begin trying to solve the puzzle as the Open begins its 12-day run Wednesday at the West Side Tennis Club. Almost 40 matches will be played before the singles and doubles winners are crowned. The event will be contested on the slow Har-Tru surface that replaced the grass courts last year. For the second straight year there will be night play through the first eight days of the tournament. And prize

money of \$416,600 will be distributed when it's all over. Jimmy Connors and Chris Evert are the top seeds in singles. Connors had been playing brilliantly and had won 22 straight matches before he was upset last week by Mexico's Raul Ramirez in the quarter-finals of the U.S. Pro Championships. Connors, who won at Forest Hills two years ago and wound up second last year, will have no lack of competition. Wimbledon titlist Bjorn Borg of Sweden, seeded second, is coming off a big victory in the U.S. Pro event and is always tough on clay. Romanian Ilie Nastase, with the short fuse and long bag of shots; Argentina's Guillermo Vilas; Italy's Adriano Panatta, winner of the

French and Italian championships, and American "Bagel Twins" Harold Solomon and Eddie Dibbs are all strong clay-court players. So is defending champion Manuel Orantes. But the Spanish left-hander has a bad arm — the left one — and may not be able to play. Miss Evert, 21, the top woman player in the world, is virtually unbeatable on clay. She waltzed through last year's tournament, scarcely breaking a sweat until the final. But this year she is hurting. Miss Evert dropped out of Federation Cup play last week due to inflamed tendons in the middle finger of her right hand. She is scheduled to play her first match Saturday and will decide a couple of days before

that if she intends to play. Australian star Evonne Cawley is seeded second and, barring those miracle upsets that occur in women's tennis, is only one who has much of a chance of beating a healthy Miss Evert. Should Christie's assist, then the field will be erably more open. Miss Gandy could surprise — Martina Ratilova perhaps, or maybe horse like Sue Barker of England. The final few days of the tournament are sold out and CBS televising live weekend matches and taped weekday highlights in its 12-day tournament.

Tempers flare at Oiler camp

Associated Press
HOUSTON — Houston Oiler defensive end Tody Smith denied Tuesday he pulled a gun on linebacker Gregg Bingham during a scuffle between the two players at the team's training camp. "I'm on Tody's side against anybody who says Tody pulled a gun," Bingham said. "I'll testify for him on that." Smith said he intended to speak with a lawyer. "I can see myself years from now

applying for a broadcasting job, and the guy behind the desk thinking 'This is Tody Smith, the guy who pulled a gun,'" Smith said. Oiler Coach O. A. "Bum" Phillips, trying to pull the Oilers together for their preseason finale Saturday against the Dallas Cowboys, said there was no truth to the gun allegation and he didn't even want to discuss it. "Anything I say will just add fuel to the flame," Phillips said. "Why should Tody have to keep denying

something he didn't do. He deserves to have to keep denying about that in the newspaper." "It's really tough when you catches all the heat," Phillips said. "His brother was cut last year. Tody gets the whole brass cism." Phillips said as far as the incident at Sam Houston State University was concerned, there was a common occurrence in the camp.

The new coverages are designed to provide a degree of misdirection for the opposing offense, disguising the keys quarterbacks must read. Robertson said they looked "lousy" in yesterday's drills, but it was only the first day of work on the new pass defenses. Cornerback Willie Thompson expects the Aggie secondary to be tested quite often during the season. "Nobody's going to run on us, nobody in the world," the senior from El Paso said. Thompson stressed the amount of talent present amongst the defensive ranks, lacking only the experience of the nation's top defense last year. The Aggies have stayed relatively free from injury with only a handful of players sporting minor ailments. Pickard said nearly all the players were in good shape when they reported in. "If we get by this week (without injuries) we'll be doing alright," he said.

Arkansas back is arrested

Associated Press
FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Jerry L. Eckwood, 21, a running back for the Arkansas Razorbacks, was arrested today by Fayetteville police and University of Arkansas Public Safety officers in connection with the theft of a potted plant. Eckwood was released on \$509 bond, and a hearing was set for Wednesday. Police said the plant, a waxed-leaf begonia in a plastic pot, was stolen from the Stone Street residence of Marc Skulman, 22. A neighbor telephoned police saying she had seen a man take the plant and drive away. A car matching the description was spotted by Fayetteville officer Toni Hussey about 15 minutes later. Police said the driver was identified as Eckwood and the plant was recovered.

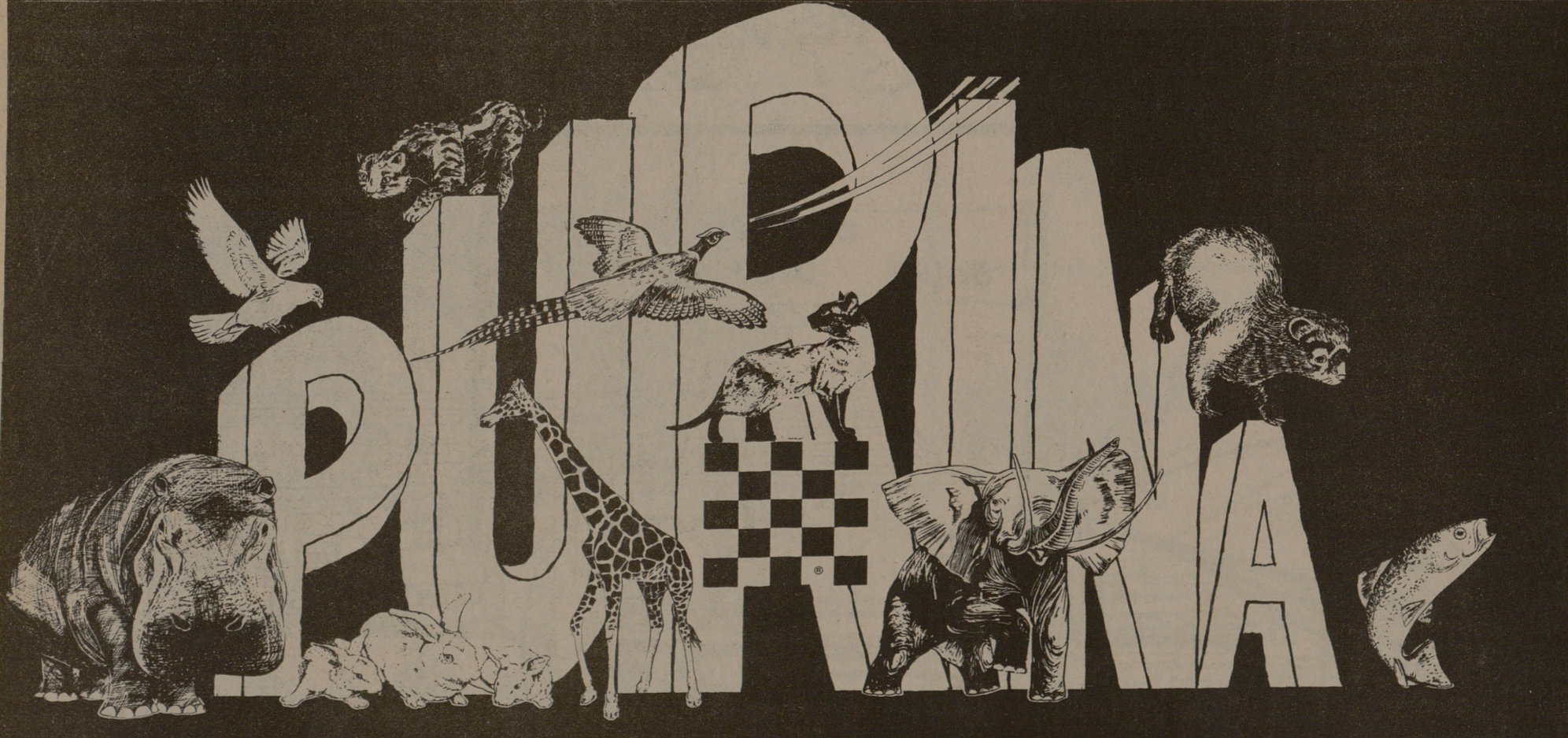


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