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# Sport Shorts

## Bellard optimistic; Ags lose Leatherwood

Coach Emory Bellard's Texas A&M squad has received most of the early votes as the Southwest Conference favorite for the fall football season. While Bellard points out the Aggies' lack of depth in several key positions, especially on defense, he is nonetheless optimistic—and with good reason.

The Aggies three top scorers will return this fall which includes the league's top two point producers. Fullback George Woodard, placekicker Tony Franklin and halfback Curtis Dickey totaled 233 points between them out of A&M's total of 364 points. Woodard led the league with 102 points on 17 touchdowns while Franklin was runnerup with 81 points.

The Aggies also return their three leading rushers, Woodard, Dickey and quarterback David Walker. Walker was also the team's top passer and Dickey was the second leading pass receiver.

Punter David Appleby is another returnee Bellard says he will gladly welcome.

Of the above mentioned returnees, only Walker will be gone after the upcoming season. Bellard just smiles and smiles.

Texas A&M Baseball Coach Tom Chandler will be without one of his key relief pitchers next spring as junior righthander Del Leatherwood signed a professional contract with the Houston Astros.

Leatherwood, from Houston St. Thomas, was one of two athletes signed by the Houston organization following the club's summer tryout camp.

Leatherwood posted a 3-1 record with the Aggies last season, striking out 20 batters in his 28 1/3 innings on the mound. He recorded an earned run average of 4.71 and walked 25 batters.

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# Sportsfolio

By PAUL McGRATH

Wanted: One level-headed college graduate, preferably but not necessarily a math or statistics major. Anyone with a small degree of common sense and with the ability to count past 100 will meet our qualifications. Contact the National Collegiate Athletic Association as soon as possible.

Taking into account the multi-million dollar television contracts and the amount of statistical work done by the NCAA each year, it's difficult to believe that such an organization cannot handle figures less than 150.

Well, the NCAA just flunked a math test recently by producing the 30-95 scholarship rule.

The ruling restricts the total number of football scholarships at member institutions to 95. However, since 1974 universities have been able to hand out 30 football scholarships per year.

Perhaps the NCAA's calculator blew or fuse or maybe there weren't any pencils handy, but four times 30 does not come close to 95.

Uh, oh.

The NCAA has been accused of many things, but never of not being able to do grammar school mathematics. This is the organization to which universities look for guidance and leadership. Hummm.

The NCAA assumes that normal attrition and responsible recruiting will cause four times 30 to eventually equal 95. But what is normal attrition? And what is "responsible" recruiting? The NCAA declines to say.

Thus far, only several Pac-8 Conference schools say they could adjust to the rule successfully. But, the ruling has drawn flack from nearly everywhere else.

"It's a horrible rule," John Majors, new Tennessee head coach said. "I've never failed to renew a player's scholarship if he came to practice every day and put out, but I may have to because of this rule."

Worse yet, college coaches may have to resume the grim practice of running off players. In the past coaches would cull their squads of untalented players to give schol-

ships to more talented players recruits. To do so, special drills were made mandatory for those players who were culled. Often these drills were exceptionally brutal, but all were done with one purpose in mind—to cause a player to voluntarily give up his scholarship.

Nebraska's Tom Osborne said, "It's a cruel thing to do, but they're forcing us to do it."

NCAA Executive Director Peter Byers is staunch in the defense of the ruling.

"Some schools have been running what could be called large freshman tryout programs. The 30 (scholarship limit) rule is designed to control those. The 95 rule is designed to deal with redshirts," he said.

To be redshirted means an extension of eligibility for one year. If a player is badly injured one season, he may be redshirted in order to not lose that year of eligibility.

The NCAA also instituted the rule to cut economic corners.

"In addition to cutting out Byers said, "the goal is to help the competitive balance of college football. It's better for the game and for those interested in football who more teams have a better chance."

To make things equal, World War II made Karl Marx proud.

Naturally, those universities with large football programs find another burr in the saddle.

"We're just under the limit this season, but the following year is going to be a problem for me and a lot of other folks," LSU Coach Claude McClendon said. "Say you have the limit of 95 this year. Well, you're not going to graduate 95 players."

Osborne added, "We've been penalized for doing a good job of keeping kids in school. A kid who in the middle of his education really got hammered by 30-95 thought the whole grant-in-aid deal was to help a kid through college."

Place an emphasis on the word "hammered". A football scholar at USC, for example, is worth nearly \$27,000.

That's a figure the NCAA apparently didn't take into account.

# Aeros join NHL

United Press International

**HOUSTON** — The Houston Aeros management Friday could not care less about the details of a proposed professional hockey merger.

"We're in," said Harrison Vickers, the executive vice president of the team, at a hastily called news conference. "We were advised that the National League Board of Governors had agreed to a merger."

Word from the NHL, which was meeting in Chicago, said a committee was formed to explore the possibility of joining the five-year-old World Hockey Association with the well established NHL.

But the Aeros preferred not look at the NHL's proposed merger plan in which Houston would be one of five other WHA teams would be in their own separate division in the NHL next season, and abundant champagne in the Aeros' office showed the management's pleasure.

"As is presently anticipated, 'Aeros will be part of a WHA division of the NHL next year," Vickers said. "We will qualify for the Stanley Cup playoffs and our players will qualify for the NHL all-star game."

"And all I can say is it's the best news we've ever had," Vickers said and details of the proposed merger were sketchy but he said he understood the major road block left was the approval of an agreement by the WHA of South Vietnam City.

"I don't anticipate any problem in accepting their invitation," he said. "When we do accept it as is told, then we will be full-fledged members of the NHL period."

Reports have indicated the WHA teams each will pay \$3.2 million entry fee. But Vickers said the fee is "less than \$3.2 million."

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