

the sports

SWC champs prepare for new season

By SEAN PETTY
Battalion Staff

It was a year ago Saturday that the Texas A&M University track team started its successful drive for the Southwest Conference track championship. It was the first indoor track meet of the season for the Aggies in Baton Rouge, La.

It was also a year ago that coaches Charles Thomas and Ted Nelson had no idea what the 1977-78 Aggie track team would be like because of the number of young, inexperienced members.

"We just were not sure how all of our freshmen would do last year," said Nelson, who will take the Aggies to Baton Rouge again this weekend for the first indoor meet of the new season. "We knew they could be good but didn't realize how good they really were."

The first-year men started to show just how good they were at the start of the outdoor season, lowering their times on the track and lengthening their distances in the field events. By the end of the season, the freshmen had firmly established themselves among the older, experienced members of the team.

In fact, of the top ten scorers on the 1978 SWC champion team, five were freshmen.

Freshman quarterback-sprinter-hurdler Mike Mosley led all Aggies with 120 points for the season. And he didn't even run in all of the meets because of spring football training.

Leslie "Snook" Kerr came to Texas A&M having never run the 400-meter dash before, ended up winning that event at the conference meet with a time of 45.71. He also battled Texas' Johnny "Lam" Jones to the wire in the 1600-meter relay to give the Aggies the victory

in that event. Kerr was fourth leading scorer.

Pole vaulter Randy Hall brought a long list of credentials with him to Texas A&M and proved that he was worth his scholarship by breaking the SWC conference record with a vault of 16 feet 10 1/4 inches. Hall was ninth leading score for the Ags.

First-year men Arthur Williams and Billy Busch were tied for 10th place in scoring. Williams ran a 45.3 leg on the 1600-meter relay team and placed second in the 400-meter dash at the conference meet. Busch ran the 110- and 400-meter hurdles all year placing sixth in the 110-meter hurdles at the conference meet.

Needless to say, coaches Thomas and Nelson know where they stand at the beginning of this season as they start work towards a second consecutive conference championship.

"We will have a very competitive track team," Nelson said. "We feel a little better about the team this year because they are all a little older. We have a little more confidence in them."

But last year's success was not all due to the rookies. In fact, it was senior sprinter Ray Brooks who led the Aggies to the conference championship. Brooks scored 18.5 points by running on the winning 400-meter relay team, winning the 200-meter dash and placing third in the 100-meter dash.

"It's going to be hard to replace some of the guys who won't be back this year," Nelson said. Manfred Kohrs, Brooks and Randy Scott won't be back.

Scott made a rare decision when he decided to give up his scholarship because he said he was not giving enough time to throwing the

shot put and felt it was unfair to the school.

Manfred Kohrs was a solid performer in the 1500-meter dash for the Aggies all year. He was third in total points.

"Manfred is going to be hard to replace because he would take away points from teams like Rice who dominate the long races," Nelson said.

"We have a lot of people from last year's team coming back and some more real good freshmen coming in," Nelson said. "But the main key to any team's success anywhere is the injury situation."

"You are fortunate if you can stay away from injuries and we did all last year until the NCAA meet when Brooks was hurt. That really hurt us because he was running so well at the end of the season."

The Aggies had a good recruiting year with emphasis on 400-meter dash men.

"We really concentrated on 400-meter men because we want to have a strong relay team to make up for any other weaknesses we might have," Nelson said. "There will be five or six people who can make the 1600-meter relay team. I've been real pleased with freshman Steve Willis who is running the 400 meter now than Kerr was at this time last year."

"We were pretty good in the 1600-meter relay last year but we should be good this year," he said. If a time of 3:06.13 in the 1600-meter relay is just "pretty good," what is good? The Aggies' relay team was among the top ten in the country last year also.

While the Aggie coaches concentrated on 400-meter dash men, they have not forgotten the other areas of the team in their recruiting.

"We are getting Michael Finley, who is a fine sprinter from Mesa Community College in Arizona at the beginning of next semester," he said. "He has run the 220-yard dash in 20.4 so he should help out our 400-meter relay team."

"We've got two freshmen high jumpers who are jumping very well. One has cleared 6 feet 8 inches and the other 6-foot-10."

The coaches are also looking for improvement out of the older members on the team.

"Tim Scott has improved so much already from last year because he worked very hard on his strength over the summer," he said. "He has already thrown 58 feet in the shot put and his longest throw last year

was 55 feet. We expect big things from him in the discus also."

"Tony Wheeler, Joel Vogt and Tom Glass should come through for us once again in the 800-meter dash."

Another freshman, Darryl Shoemaker, should help also. He won the class A 880-yard dash championship four years in a row," he said.

Football players Mosley and Curtis Dickey have received the green light from head football coach Tom Wilson to run track this spring.

"I think I could afford to lose some football games," Wilson said jokingly, "but if I didn't let Curtis run track I could lose my job."

Dickey made the all-America team in both indoor and outdoor track and was the NCAA indoor 60-yard dash champion.

The meet this Saturday in Baton Rouge is basically for fun Nelson said.

"If we do good, fine; if we don't that's fine," he said. "This is mainly to get the guys thinking about track

over the holidays and give incentive to work hard during break.

"We know they are not ready to run yet but it will know where they stand."

The 1978-79 Aggie track team appears to be even stronger this year's and as long as the mains healthy, they may have very memorable wins.

May in Austin as they go back conference championship.



One on one

Battalion photo by

Texas A&M's David Britton goes against Calvin Garrett of Oral Roberts in Monday night's game, which the Aggies won 85-79. Tonight both the men's team and the women's team host

Sam Houston State University in G. Rollie White Coliseum. The women, who have a season record of 9-2, tip off at 7:30. The men put their 4-1 record on the line at 7:30.

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Oilers receive injury report

United Press International
HOUSTON — Wide receiver Mike Renfro had knee surgery Tuesday and will miss the remainder of the season, the Houston Oilers announced.

Renfro, a rookie from Texas Christian, had been starting for the Oilers because of injuries and was one of several players hurt in Sunday's 13-3 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers. Houston now has only three healthy wide receivers.

Earl Campbell, the NFL's leading rusher who missed last week's game after taking a hard hit on the right side, suffered a cracked rib and is expected to play Sunday in New Orleans. Quarterback Dan Fouts had rib damage — cracked eighth, 10th and 11th ribs — and is expected to work out this Sunday.

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