

the sports

# Lemon's bunch favored in 1979 conference race

*United Press International*  
This is the sixth in a series of articles profiling Texas A&M's 1979 Southwest Conference basketball opponents.

AUSTIN — The season before Abe Lemons came to the University of Texas the Longhorns posted a 9-17 basketball season.

Two years later they went 26-5 and won the championship of the National Invitation Tournament.

And with four of the starters back from the 1977-78 team Lemons' bunch has to be a runaway favorite to win the Southwest Conference.

Most everybody agrees with that, except Lemons.

"We are having a hard time recapturing the spirit that we had last year," Lemons said. "Last year nothing went wrong. This year we have had a lot of little piddling things go wrong."

Among them is a back ailment suffered by Ron Baxter, the chunky, 6-4 Californian who averaged 19 points a game.

"It's expected that Baxter's back is hurting," Lemons said. "He weighs 235 pounds."

Baxter will be joined by Jim Krivacs, John Moore and Tyrone Branan — all starters off the NIT title club. But Lemons is having a hard time settling on who the fifth starter will be.

"We don't have a pivot man," said Lemons. "Well, we have one, but he's not very good. I think we might wind up going with Phillip Stroud (6-7)."

## Texas assistant wants OSU job

*United Press International*  
AUSTIN — Texas defensive coordinator Leon Fuller said he has applied for the head coaching job at Oklahoma State University but has not been contacted by the school about the position.

Fuller, Joe Morrison of Tennessee-Chatanooga and Hayden Fry of North Texas State all have been mentioned as possible successors to Jim Stanley who was fired as OSU coach two weeks ago.

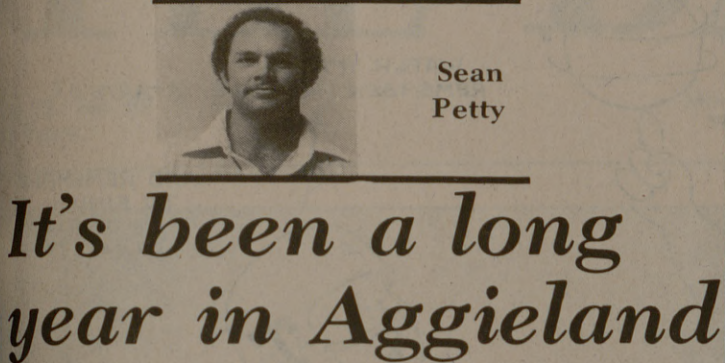
Fuller was an assistant coach at Oklahoma State in 1964 and 1965 and said he sent in his application for the head coaching job after he was encouraged to do so by a friend at Oklahoma State.

"I haven't heard from them since," he said.

Fuller said "Most coaches' goal is to eventually be a head coach. It's getting time. I'd sure be interested in talking if it's the right place. But I've got the best assistant coach's job in the country now."

## THE BATT DOES IT DAILY

Monday through Friday



Sean Petty

# It's been a long year in Aggieland

Hello everyone. I was reminded of the television commercial with Lowell Thomas standing in the snow in Alaska as the cold wind blew right threw me while I scurried around campus yesterday.

As I hurried to make up quizzes here and there and get ready for finals in general, I thought of what kind of year it had been for sports in Aggieland.

I thought of the great success the 1978 Aggie baseball and track teams had, both winning Southwest Conference championships. How great it was to have some real winners around campus.

But that did not last long as the Aggie baseball team went out in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Then, the track team, which had so overpoweringly won the conference track crown, was hit with injuries and made a poor showing at the NCAA meet in Oregon.

WHILE BOTH TEAMS had problems immediately after their conference championships, they did have some outstanding performances on the way to those respective crowns.

Mark Thurmond pitched his first collegiate no-hitter against Texas Tech while Curtis Dickey won the NCAA indoor 60-yard dash, the 100-meter dash at the SWC meet, and placed second in the 100-meter dash at the NCAA outdoor championships.

While the track and baseball teams were busy stirring up excitement week after week, the football team started its spring football drills. The Aggies had "a new look." Somehow someone had talked then head coach Emory Ballard into using the I-formation along with the Wishbone, which would still be the Ags' main offensive weapon.

WE WERE TOLD that the I would give Dickey the chance to use his outstanding speed and get outside. We also knew that we had Texas A&M's all-time leading rusher in big George Woodard who would surely keep the opposing teams honest up the middle. We knew that with Dickey at halfback and Mike Mosley at quarterback, the Ags might just have to add another digit to the Kyle Field scoreboard and install computers to keep up with the yardage the Aggie offense would churn out.

Oh, we had heard championship talk before but somehow it seemed feasible this year. A more balanced offensive attack made a lot of sense. The Ags' only problem seemed to be the defense. Sure we could score tons of points we thought but would the other team outscore us like we had seen USC do in the Bluebonnet Bowl? Would our scores look like basketball scores?

WELL, IT WAS HOT early in the spring and we would just have to wait until football season in the hot, early fall to see how the defense would come around.

August rolled around and the Ags took to the gridiron once again. But, there was the first of some major changes that would befall the Aggies before the season was over. Woodard was lost for the season with a broken ankle he suffered while playing softball.

So much for keeping them honest up the middle. The season finally started and the Ags soon showed just what they were made of, or so we thought. The offense was explosive as expected, rolling up tons of points. The defense established itself early by keeping opposing teams out of the end zone for several games.

Wow, it's true we thought. I think we've made it. Aggie fans became cotton-mouthed.

BUT WHAT'S THIS? Houston who? Thirty-three to what? Oh no, our hopes started to fade more rapidly than they had climbed earlier in the year.

From then on, Texas A&M football history became very bleak. The school lost a man who everyone but the alumni seemed to love and respect, win or lose. Emory Ballard's resignation would be a scar that Texas A&M University would have to bare publicly. It seemed odd at a university that boasts of sticking together through thick and thin, that a man with Ballard's record would be forced to resign.

The Aggies had to face reality. College football is big business and in business you must keep the stockholders happy.

Yet, all was not lost. The Aggies rallied behind a young, sharp man named Tom Wilson who took over the reins in the middle of the season and coached the team to a victory that same week.

Things changed and they changed rapidly. We heard that there would be no more wishbone at Texas A&M University. This was hard to believe because Texas A&M was where the wishbone lived and eventually, died.

Change is good. And it is good for Texas A&M. All we can do is wait and see...again. So long.

Lemons did not recruit all that heavily after the championship season. He went after a few big men and when they did not sign he eased off the recruiting trail.

There will be only three freshmen and one sophomore transfer who will be new to the squad.

"That New Orleans kid we got (6-6 Wade Blundell) is better than good," appraised Lemons. "He is an outstanding shooter. He will be playing some. But that's the only real newcomer we've got."

Last year the Longhorns sort of crept up on people. They played a tough non-conference schedule and lost three games, but then stunned the Arkansas Razorbacks in Austin, 75-69.

That got people's attention and the Longhorns went on to post a 26-5 record.

Texas won every home game last year in the first campaign played in the 16,231-seat Super Drum arena and with almost every seat already sold for this year the Longhorns will no doubt have an excellent homecourt advantage.

"I figure they went ahead and sold all the tickets ahead of time so they could go ahead and do something else," said Lemons. "It's just too bad the coaches don't get any of the money."

"But I'm glad all those people are going to be there to see us. I can remember a time when they didn't care."

Lemons has riled some of his fellow coaches during the past two years because his off-handed comments sometimes are not all that complimentary.

So this year they have a chance to get back at him — by picking him first.

"Texas has to be the favorite," said Arkansas coach Eddie Sutton in what has been a typical comment. "They've got four people back so they should be favorite."

Sutton has never known to be wrong," Lemons retorted. "He studied under the Amazing Kreskin."

The Longhorns have a 3-2 record so far this season, losing to Long Beach State and Oklahoma.



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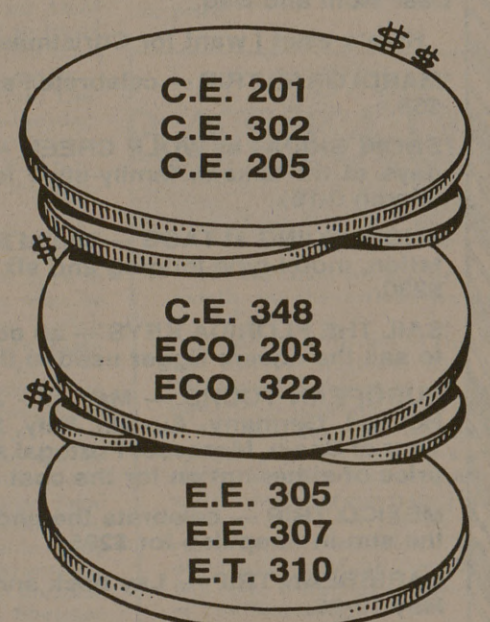
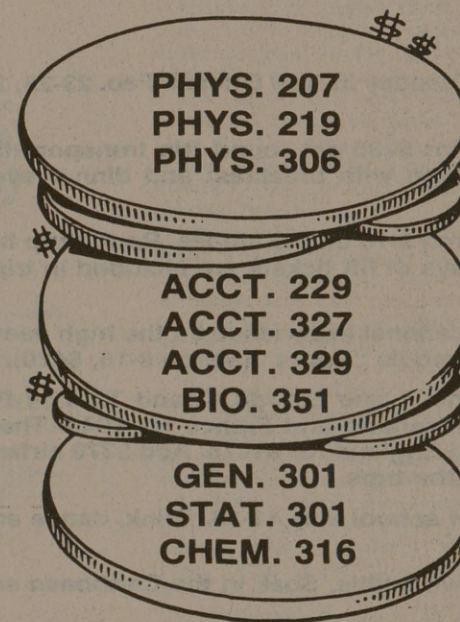
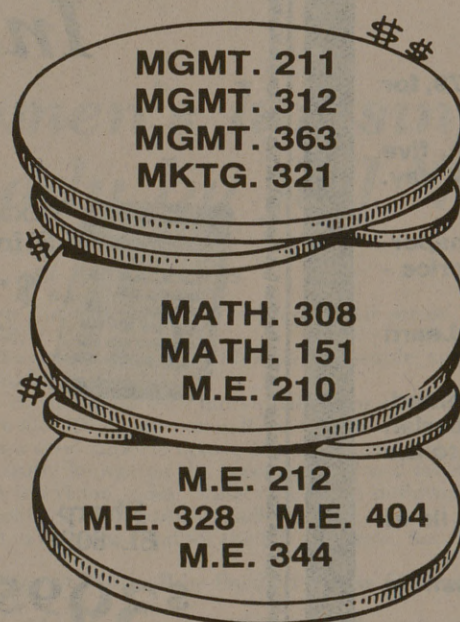


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