

Bad weather may strike out Aggies' opening day

By **DAVID BOGGAN**
Battalion Sports Editor

The Texas Aggies begin their 1979 season Thursday. Contrary to what College Station's recent weather conditions might indicate, it will not be opening day for the Texas A&M two-man bobsled team or the A&M rowing team, but rather for the Aggie baseball team.

The two-time defending Southwest Conference champions begin their season with an exhibition game against Hosei University of Tokyo, Japan.

The Aggies and the Son Goku (mythological monkeys), however, will be battling a common opponent — the weather. Olsen Field is little more than a giant sponge with basepaths. And the forecast is not promising, calling for overcast skies and a chance of rain Thursday. As Texas A&M coach Tom Chandler explained, neither his field nor his players are in top condition.

"Isn't this brutal," Chandler said looking at his soggy infield. "We just can't get any sunshine to dry the field out."

"Of course, the weather has affected the players. Our pitchers haven't been hurt as much as our hitters. The pitchers can get in the gym and throw but the hitters can't hit in there."

But ready or not, rain or shine the season is about to begin, and Chandler said baseball fans will see an interesting game Thursday, weather permitting.

"This is one of the top college teams in Japan," Chandler said of Coach Katsuo Kamoda's team, which also has stops scheduled at Baylor and Texas. "Japan has had

great baseball for a number of years and their collegiate programs are improving steadily. People think of baseball as the American pastime, but Americans aren't the only ones who know how to play baseball."

Opening ceremonies, with Texas A&M President Jarvis Miller throwing out the first ball, will begin at 3 p.m. Thursday.

Looking ahead to the upcoming SWC pennant race, Chandler said he anticipates a closely fought battle with five or six teams in the running.

"Southwest Conference baseball is a lot like Southwest Conference basketball," the Aggie coach said. "With the new scholarship rules, the league is so well balanced. There are five or six teams that are top contenders."

Does Chandler foresee a third consecutive SWC championship?

"We are going to have to get a lot of breaks," he said. "But we're looking forward to the year. We have a good nucleus to have a great ball club."

Texas A&M does not return a strong nucleus, but there will also be important elements from last year's team missing.

"There's no question about us missing (shortstop) Robert Bonner, (third baseman) Robert Verde and (outfielder) Tim Feickert," Chandler said. Bonner, an All-America shortstop, will be hard to replace because, as Chandler said, "He was an anchor man on that infield."

Brian Little, a junior college transfer from Charlotte, N.C., will start at shortstop for the Aggies. The

switch-hitting sophomore hit .355 for Louisburg Junior College last year.

"Mark Warriner had a season plagued by injuries last year, but he has been pretty impressive at third base," Chandler said. First baseman Kyle Hawthorne, second baseman Randy Woodruff and catcher Buster Turner are all returning starters from last year's championship team.

The Aggie outfield will take on a new appearance this spring. Shelton McMath will return to right field after missing most of last season

with a knee injury.

"We will probably move Mike Hurdle from center to left," Chandler said. "This is not to take anything away from Mike because he's a good ball player. But we've recruited Simon Glenn (a junior college transfer from Navasota) and he is really fast. And there's a lot of ground to cover in center field."

The Aggies' pitching staff will feature seniors Mark Thurmond (13-1 last season) and Mark Ross (11-4). "We have a great one-two punch in Mark Ross and Mark Thurmond,"

Chandler said. Freshman Taylor from Port Arthur will fill the third position in the rotation, a spot held by David Zynski last season. Taylor is scheduled to start against Baylor.

Randy McDonald, John Perry Swanson and utility player Rodney Hodde will aid Taylor from the bullpen. Hodde and Bryant will be used as designated hitters.

Texas A&M is scheduled to play LSU in two games Friday and Saturday.

Giants continue search

United Press International

NEW YORK — George Young isn't the kind of man who fools around. He's big and more than amply upholstered at 250 pounds, but he moves as nimbly and effectively as a ballet dancer. He has moved so quickly and accomplished so much in the past five days he has virtually made up his mind on who will be the next head coach for the New York Giants.

Without taking any time off at all after being named the Giants' general manager last Wednesday evening, Young began his whirlwind five-day cross-country trip.

He jetted first to Los Angeles where he interviewed Ray Perkins, offensive coordinator for the San Diego Chargers, and Jerry Rhome, the Seattle Seahawks' offensive coach, during the weekend at the home of attorney Marvin Demhoff, who represents both men.

From there, George Young got on another plane for Dallas where he had a long private session Monday with Dan Reeves, the Cowboys' offensive coordinator.

Young has interviews scheduled with a couple of more candidates. But the three key ones were Perkins, Rhome and Reeves, and after he was through interviewing those three, George Young came to a decision Monday.

According to my source, the man Young has decided upon as new coach of the Giants is Dan Reeves, and you can look for the official announcement most anytime now.

Reeves is a former running back for the Cowboys who first began coaching for them under Tom Landry while he was still active as a player nine years ago.

The 35-year-old Americus, Ga., native comes to the Giants bearing everybody's endorsement. The Giants' two owners, Wellington and Tim Mara, both like him, which naturally was a big plus in his favor. Tom Landry also likes him and never hesitated to say so whenever he was asked about his youthful-looking assistant coach. Young had a good impression of Reeves before even speaking with him Monday. As someone who knows his football, knows ballplayers and also knows how to communicate with them, Reeves stands out as an obviously intelligent choice.

Young listened to Reeves' ideas and also the way he presented them. The fact that Reeves stays in excellent physical shape (he plays a great deal of racquet ball) and will provide a first-class image for the Giants wasn't entirely lost on Young, either.

At the conclusion of Monday's meeting, Young made Reeves no offer and did not tell him either yes or no, merely saying he would get back to him. Reeves will hear from the Giants' general manager shortly.

Two weeks ago, Reeves was invited to New York by Wellington Mara to talk about the Giants' job. He seemed to be growing a bit discouraged when he heard no more from the Giants until contacted by Young following the general manager's visits with Perkins and Rhome in Los Angeles. All the time he awaited further word from the Giants, Reeves made it clear he would like a crack at the head coaching job.

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