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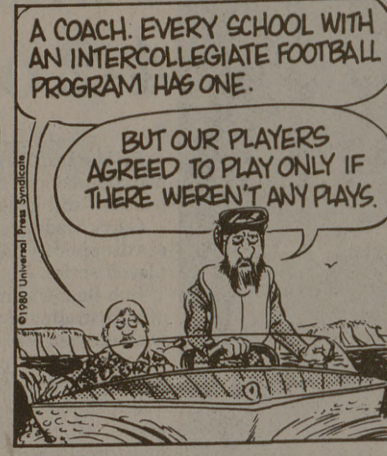
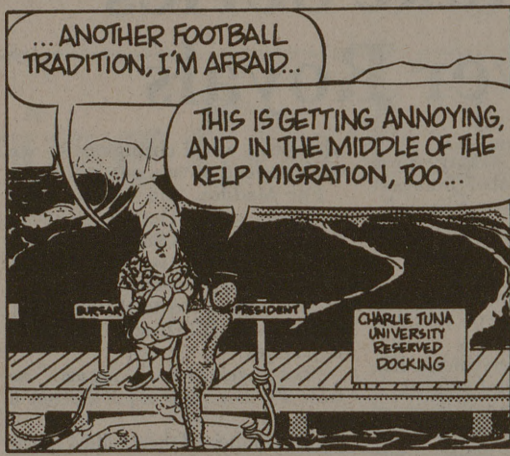
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Baseball team ends scrimmages

Chandler excited about 1981

By RICHARD OLIVER
Sports Editor

Despite the cool, crisp winds of fall, at least one man on the Texas A&M campus is looking ahead to the warm, shifting winds of March.

Aggie Head Baseball Coach Tom Chandler has walked a new crop of players through a tough fall intrasquad scrimmage schedule, and watched as some dependable veterans fueled his hopes for a good 1981 SWC baseball season.

The Aggies were the surprise team of the Southwest Conference in the spring of 1980, finishing a mere one-half game behind the eventual SWC post-season tournament champion

Texas Longhorns, and this season should be no different.

The Ags ended the daily fall scrimmages last Wednesday and Chandler came away optimistic for the most part.

"There were some pleasant surprises," he said Tuesday. "(David) Flores, (Robert) Slavens and (Rick) Luecken had good falls. The starting pitching should be solid."

That would be no surprise.

The trio was the driving force behind the Aggie drive in 1980, with Slavens compiling an 11-1 record with a 2.92 earned run average, Luecken a 9-5 record and a 2.70 ERA and Flores a 4-2 record and a 3.80 ERA.

The pitching is only the beginning, however.

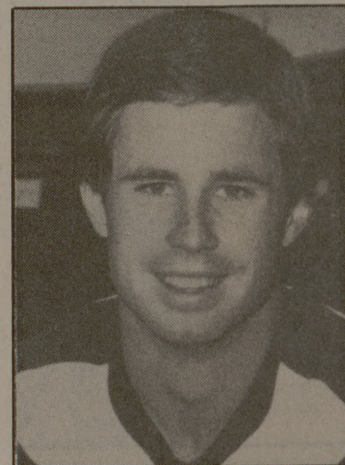
"This year, we're going to be much faster," said Chandler. "We'll have more speed than the past few years, and pretty good power. Not as much power as the past few years, but a lot of speed."

The addition of transfer athletes Grant Priest at third base and Terry Lawrence in center field (both from Blinn Junior College), along with Billy Cannon Jr. at shortstop should provide the Aggies with the makings of a fine team.

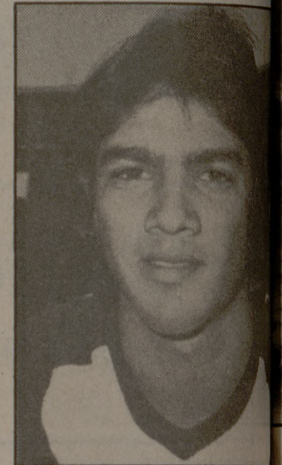
Along with those three likely new starters, veterans such as sophomore catcher Joey Szekely will be back, and senior Rodney Hodde will provide power and leadership at first base.

Joe Paul Bramhall will once again take left field, and sophomore Bobby Beach will be the designated hitter.

The right field and second base spots are still up for grabs. Second,



Joe Paul Bramhall



David Flores

though, will be a hot spot. "Second base is going to be somewhat fought over all season long. We'll probably have two or three boys battling for that job," Chandler said.

Chandler added, however, he was impressed with transfer Clint Heard of El Campo at that position.

Regardless of the improvements, Texas and Arkansas will also be fielding tough teams, and Chandler gives the two the nod to fight it out for the SWC title. The remaining teams, he

said, should scramble among themselves.

But, guessing the SWC championship has never been an easy task.

"It's gonna be pretty tough this year," Chandler said. "In a short season, anything can happen. You've got the winter. These men have to remain scholastic eligible. A lot of things can happen."

"I really am optimistic. Our favorites are to battle 'em and play we can."

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