

AD quest continues; Wilson still in limbo

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

When 24 high school football players came to Texas A&M Friday morning for a recruiting visit, they encountered a confusing situation.

Although the athletes had nothing to do with the events occurring here since Thursday, the events had everything to do with them. After all, the prospects had narrowed their college choices to a precious few, and finding the Athletic Department in a state of hysteria wouldn't leave the recruits with positive feelings about Texas A&M University.

But finding themselves in the middle of a search for a new athletic director and a possible replacement for Aggie Head Coach Tom Wilson, the athletes

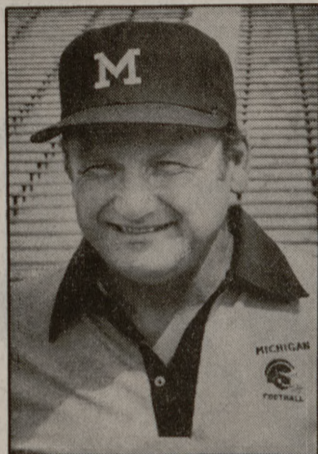
By his own admittance, Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver has no idea what will happen next: "If I knew I'd tell you. If you find out, please let me know."

returned home with the situation unresolved and the Texas A&M Athletic Department still in turmoil.

The mother of one of the recruits said her son seemed to return home from Texas A&M with a different frame of mind than when he had left. "It was almost like he was excited when he left and he came home like he wasn't excited anymore," she said. "(He) was really leaning toward A&M, but now I just don't know."

With University of Michigan Head Coach G.E. "Bo" Schembechler's rejection Friday night of Texas A&M's offer of an athletic director's job worth more than \$2 million, the University still needs an athletic director. Although reports state that a search is also underway for a replacement for Wilson, Texas A&M Board of Regents Chairman H.R. "Bum" Bright has insisted that such is not the case.

"That (the AD post) is the only job that is open," Bright said Friday before Schembechler's announcement refusing the Texas A&M offer.



"Bo" Schembechler

"The AD position is the only one that is open — that's what we're looking for," he reiterated Saturday afternoon from his home in Dallas.

However, Schembechler said in his announcement Friday that he was under the impression that the Texas A&M offer included both the coaching job and the athletic directorship.

Among the names being mentioned for the job(s) are University of Pittsburgh Head Coach Jackie Sherrill, Florida State University AD C.W. "Hootie" Ingram and Dallas Cowboy quarterback coach John Mackovic.

Ingram, who has finished his first year at FSU after having been associate commissioner of the Southeastern Conference, said Saturday from his home in Tallahassee, Fla.: "I'm not in a position to make a statement on (the post), because I've got a job here right now. There is really nothing I can add to it at this time."

The chain of events which has transpired during the past few days began Thursday afternoon, when reports of a Texas A&M offer to Schembechler started circulating. Speculation

about the origin of the reports varied, as did theories about where such an offer could have been made, and by whom.

While rumors and reports were being investigated, officials at Texas A&M either voiced surprise or refused to comment on the situation. University President Frank E. Vandiver issued the following statement Thursday afternoon:

"We have considered several individuals. We are not at a point where we can discuss particular persons. So we can neither confirm or deny any name that might be posed to me."

Interim Athletic Director Wally Groff, who took over when former AD Marvin Tate's resignation took effect Oct. 31, said he knew nothing about negotiations between Texas A&M and Schembechler. He added that, to his knowledge, no events taking place at the NCAA convention warranted these reports.

Dr. Charles Samson, Texas A&M vice president for plan-

ning and chairman of the University Athletic Council, said Thursday night that he could not comment on the possibility of a deal with Schembechler. Samson accompanied Groff to the NCAA convention.

"Two or three people put their names in the hat (for the AD post)... and we chatted with some of the people, but there was nothing that came out of the convention," Samson said. "I can't comment further, because I haven't been involved that closely in the (selection) process."

Friday afternoon, Vandiver released another statement reaffirming the position he had taken Thursday — that he was "not in a position to comment on the progress of this endeavor."

Wilson, who met with Vandiver Friday, said later that, regardless of either Schembechler's decision or which post(s) the Michigan coach would assume if he accepted the offer, Texas A&M probably wouldn't honor the final year on his own contract.

He added that he would not quit his coaching job, and that "it's to the point where they've got to give me a new contract or else fire me." Resignation would

void payment of Wilson's salary.

Bright said Saturday that he saw Schembechler's decision as a two-part story — "his" rejection and "our" rejection.

"It was just that the negotiations couldn't be worked out. He retained an attorney to draw up the proposal he wanted and we

See AD page 12

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