

Football staff ready by weekend

# Sherrill excited about new post

by Frank L. Christlieb  
Sports Editor

Jackie Sherrill had to think twice to make sure he hadn't lost track of time.

As busy as he's been since first receiving an offer the past weekend to become Texas A&M's head football coach and athletic director, Sherrill almost couldn't remember what day of the week it was when he spoke at a news conference Wednesday in Cain Hall.

So he must have wondered how anyone could expect him to make an honest prediction about the 1982 Texas A&M football season. But he did have an honest answer when someone wanted to know if the Aggies had a chance to play in the Cotton Bowl next Jan. 1.

"I have a philosophy — you don't write checks you can't cash," Sherrill said. "So if you hear me say something, you'll know that I plan on cashing that check."

The former University of Pittsburgh head coach, who Tuesday accepted a six-year contract with Texas A&M, expressed ambition and eagerness about his new job as athletic director and football coach.

"I believe that Texas A&M is the biggest and best coaching opportunity in the business right now," Sherrill said.

"You've got to have something

**New Texas A&M athletic director and head football coach Jackie Sherrill said: "I believe that Texas A&M is the biggest and best coaching opportunity in the business right now."**

that makes your ticker run. If it gets stagnant, you've got to find something that'll make it run, and this (the Texas A&M post) certainly does that."

He said his decision was based on personal and financial needs, a contrast to that of Michigan Head Coach G.E. "Bo" Schembechler, who Friday rejected a Texas A&M offer of the same post for reasons of loyalty to his school and state.

"I think that I have and always will evaluate my goals, personal and family ... I don't know how much longer I would have coached if I had stayed at Pitt," Sherrill said. "You have to do what is best for you and your family."

University President Frank E. Vandiver gave a statement at the opening of the session, in which he explained the terms of Sherrill's agreement with Texas A&M.

"I have read and heard media reports that Texas A&M is committed to an astounding financial package for Coach Sherrill," Vandiver said. "As you might expect, this has raised some eyebrows in that it has left the impression that Texas A&M University has funds that it does not need for other critical purposes."

"It is difficult to put a precise value on the combined base salary and the other perquisites (gratuities) that were committed



Staff photo by Colin Valentine

**Jackie Sherrill; Texas A&M's new athletic director and head football coach; answers questions at his first press conference here. The event was held Wednesday afternoon in Cain Hall.**

to ... Sherrill. However, let me emphasize that his base salary will be \$95,000. This will be reflected in the University budget just like every other employee's salary.

"I also want to stress that it will be paid from Athletic Department funds, which do not include any state appropriated money or any money from the University Available Fund," Vandiver said. "The other perquisites that have been mentioned, including a car, help in buying a house and an insurance policy, will be funded through gifts."

"The commitment concerning income from a television program will hopefully be self-

sustaining as it has been in recent years with other coaches, and should produce additional income for the Athletic Department."

"Coach Sherrill's compensation does not, in any way, impact on University faculty and staff salaries."

Sherrill said he was first contacted about the Texas A&M offer over the weekend, and that he considered sending his wife, Daryle, to College Station Sunday to investigate the prospective job. However, Sherrill said, he decided to come Monday, when he met with Texas A&M officials for a lengthy discussion of contract terms.

Sherrill, who described him-

self as an energetic, abrasive disciplinarian, said that he regretted the firing of former head coach Tom Wilson. That action preceded Sherrill's hiring.

"I've known Tom for a long time ... hopefully, all I can do is work to rectify it (the situation surrounding Wilson's firing) ... and bring some credibility to our program."

Sherrill played down reports that the Texas A&M post is only a stopover on the way to becoming head coach at the University of Alabama when Paul "Bear" Bryant retires.

Adding that he had talked to Bryant about the situation while attending the East-West Shrine game two weeks ago, Sherrill concluded: "Coach Bryant is

going to be at Alabama for many years."

Sherrill stressed that he's not alarmed by reports of intense alumni pressure placed on Texas A&M coaches.

"I've been told that it's great, great job, but (that) you can't control the alumni," Sherrill said. "I don't believe that. I'm not owned, I can't be bought, and I never will be. I'd rather have the alumni up front pulling everybody forward than ... pulling you back."

Sherrill suggested guidance, rather than control of alumni, can make them the "greatest group of people you can have in college athletics."

See SHERRILL page 17

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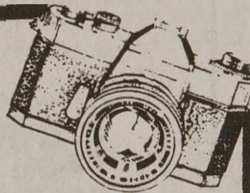
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