

# David Kennard

## Aggie shortstop looks for exciting season

by Frank L. Christlieb  
 Sports Editor



David Kennard

David Kennard knows exactly where he stands in his baseball career. The 5-9, 165-pound shortstop for the Texas A&M baseball team has no doubts about what he wants to do with his baseball talents. Kennard has set high goals for himself, and he says he's going to do his best to attain them.

"I knew after my junior year in high school that I wanted to play baseball and try to make it the professional level," Kennard said Wednesday. "I've talked to a bunch of scouts, and I think that if I have a pretty good year, I'll have a good chance of being drafted."

That chance may arise due to the fact that college baseball players become eligible to enter the professional ranks after their junior years. However, Kennard has an advantage over any college baseball players who can only wait for the summer draft and hope for the best.

Last summer Kennard and Aggie teammate Billy Cannon agreed in the college-sponsored central Illinois Collegiate League in Peoria, and the connections he made there may tip his chances of being picked in this June's draft.

"Some of the scouts up there had talked to me and told me that others were interested in me," Kennard said. "You kind of get a feel from things that these guys are interested in you."

The main thing in baseball is consistency. If you're consistent, they (the professional scouts) are going to give you a look. The thing I've got to do is work on

cord in the league ... and averaged about nine runs a game.

"Some of the coaches and scouts were saying that of the 22 players on the team, about 12 will probably get drafted this June."

Kennard, whose baseball career began during his fifth-grade year, played football, baseball and basketball for Klein High School, north of Houston, before graduating in 1979. However, he quit playing football and basketball when he discovered that baseball was his number one interest.

"The first couple of years after I quit playing football, it was hard for me to realize that I'd never play football again," Kennard said. "I'd go back and watch my high school team play and it really hurt not to be playing."

"I knew I didn't have the size to play football and go very far. My dad had a lot to do with my deciding to play baseball. He played his college baseball at LSU and was drafted by the (St. Louis) Cardinals. He was a great influence on me."

Kennard also gained valuable experience during his high school baseball career, when he played three years for Klein's varsity. After his junior year, he played for the Little Pirates, a team made up mostly of all-star high school players in the greater Pittsburgh area.

Since Kennard and his parents knew Milt Graff, the assistant general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, they were able to get Kennard a spot on the Little Pirates squad. Kennard said the greatest memories for him while playing for that team were the

games played at Three Rivers Stadium, the Pirates' home field.

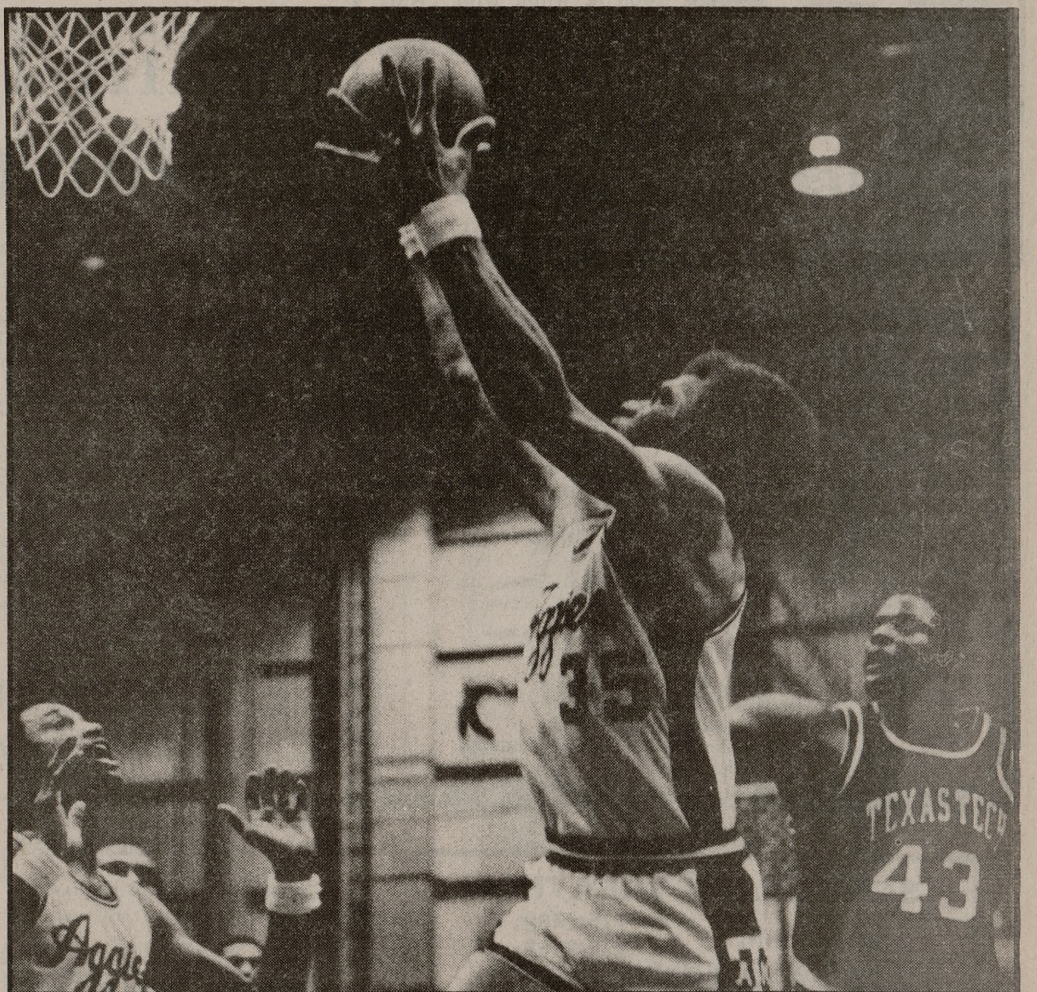
In 1981, when the Aggies finished 35-16-1 and 10-10-1 in the Southwest Conference, Kennard started the season at second base. He and Clint Heard shared the duties at that position, but after 20 games, Coach Tom Chandler moved Kennard to shortstop to replace Cannon. Kennard batted .331, scored 40 runs, stole seven bases and had 32 RBI.

Kennard, whom Chandler says he'll be counting on to become one of the team leaders for the Aggies this season, said he feels he will be able to help in providing guidance to the team.

"I'm just going to go out there and play my best and hardest every game and try not to feel any pressure," Kennard said. "There really shouldn't be any pressure on anybody, because we're returning a lot of experience, and that's one reason we've got an advantage. We're a lot closer than last year's team."

The Aggies, ranked 14th in the nation in pre-season picks, begin the season Tuesday when they host St. Mary's University in a double-header at 1 p.m. Kennard says that Texas A&M, which will receive its major competition this season from Houston, Texas and Arkansas, may have the right combination needed to win the SWC championship.

"As it stands now, we've got an excellent chance at winning the conference, provided we don't have any major injuries or a major letdown," Kennard said. "The attitude is the best I've seen from everybody since I've been here."



Up and in

photo by C. Michel Chang

Lonnie Bluntson of the Texas A&M basketball team puts in a layup against the Texas Tech Red Raiders while teammate Claude Riley prepares to rebound a possi-

ble miss. Defending for Texas Tech is center Clarence Swannegan. The Aggies host the University of Texas Saturday at 2 p.m. in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

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