

The Battalion Sports

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Sherrill ready for start of spring football drills

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

Jackie Sherrill has his team's spring workouts planned to perfection. Every aspect of the Texas Aggies' spring training drills, which begin Tuesday afternoon, has been mapped out as if part of the elaborate scheme of a masterful strategist.

But 20 days of spring training for the Texas A&M football team will be work and nothing else for Sherrill, his new assistants and the football squad. The Texas A&M coach and athletic director says he can't wait to get a first glimpse of his new team.

"I'm really anxious to get started," he said. "I'm kind of excited about seeing the players perform in pads to see if they are enough to adapt to what we're going to try to do with them."

"They've been in an off-season program consisting of the weight training and the running program, which was open to all students. It was like an endurance (program)."

"There are four phases," Sherrill said. "One is that you want your off-season program to be tougher than the spring and the spring tougher than the fall practice and your fall practice tougher than the season."

"I think an asset I have is to be able to relate to players and get to know them and to get their confidence. They're here for a lot of reasons other than to play football, and if everything else around them is in order, and it's supportive and they're ... doing the things that a college student is supposed to enjoy and do, then playing football is just an added plus to them." — Sherrill.

Just like Tuesday's practice had better be tougher than a game or you're in trouble." Starting Tuesday, the Aggies will practice in full gear for four days a week during the next five weeks. An alumni game May 1 at 7 p.m., featuring several former Texas A&M football players and professional football personali-



Jackie Sherrill

ties, will end the 20-drill period.

Among those scheduled to attend the game are New Orleans Saints coach O.A. "Bum" Phillips and Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, as well as former Texas A&M athletes Charlie Krueger, Ed Hargett, Pat Thomas, Curtis Dickey, Lester Hayes, Mike Mosley and Ed Simonini.

Sherrill describes his team's spring training as a time find out how much the team can progress and adapt to the new system he and his assistants have brought to Texas A&M.

"We'll start (each workout) with punting for 10 minutes," he said, "then we'll go through flex and stretch. We'll go through approximately 40 minutes of technique, then 30 minutes of what we call 'outside,' which is the offensive backs and receivers throwing the ball against the defensive linebackers and backs."

"We'll go into team (drills) for 20 or 30 minutes, and then we'll go into goal-line (defense) for 10 minutes. That'll be a standard

practice every day. We'll spend a lot of time on techniques and a lot of time on the offensive line and pass protection.

"Probably the biggest part of spring training will be how much the players can adapt and how much the offensive line can adapt and progress ... how much they can understand and master their techniques," Sherrill said. Sherrill said that after watching films of the 1981 Aggies, he's been most impressed with quarterback Gary Kubiak, as well as receivers Don Jones, Mark Lewis, Jimmy Teal and Jimmie Williams.

Texas A&M returns a solid base upon which to build the 1982 team, including nine offensive starters, eight defensive starters and 50 lettermen. However, Sherrill says, he won't rely on returning experience to win a Southwest Conference championship next season.

"If it's a young team and you're 11-1, then that's one thing," he said. "If it's a young team and you're 6-5, then that's something else."

"Having the returning starters is good if they were 12-0, but they were 6-5. That's like saying you've got a great house, but it doesn't have any air conditioning, it doesn't have a shower and it doesn't have water."

Sherrill says that, in the midst of the hectic schedule during his first 10 weeks here, he's had plenty of time to get to know his players.

"I think an asset I have is to be able to relate to players and get to know them ... and to get their confidence," he said. "They're here for a lot of reasons other than to play football, and if everything else around them is in order, and it's supportive and they're ... doing the things that a college student is supposed to enjoy and do, then playing foot-

ball is just an added plus to them.

"Football is tough, and if all the other things are falling on them, football's a lot tougher. You try not to let that happen. That's why you try to get to know each one of them. If you

"Probably the biggest part of spring training will be how much the players can adapt and how much the offensive line can adapt and progress ... how much they can understand and master their techniques." — Texas A&M football coach and athletic director Jackie Sherrill.

get to know them and relate to them, then it helps you understand them.

"I'm really impressed with the attitudes of the players," Sherrill said. "We asked them to come back early off their semester break, and we did it for two reasons. One is that I wanted to make sure that they were back going to class at 8 that (Monday) morning. The other reason was that I wanted to see how much self-discipline they have. It's really just testing them more than anything else."

Sherrill said he hopes to effectively use the talents of Kubiak and running backs Johnny Hector and Earnest Jackson.

"We'll run the ball and add the throwing to it," he said. "That's what we're kind of excited about."

"I'm increasingly impressed with the skill people. We don't have an overabundance of them, but I'm impressed with the defensive people. Our offensive linemen have great attitudes, but we need more size. "The spring will be a time to

see if we can adapt to the changes we'd like to make and if the players have the ability to make them," Sherrill said.

And who wouldn't understand Sherrill's straight and simple coaching philosophy?

"When you're on the field, you're there to work," he said. "You enjoy yourself, but it's full speed, you don't hold back and you get after it."

"The only time you raise your voice is when you have to. Hopefully, you don't have to raise your voice very much. I think it's important that you, as a head coach, do your job before you get on the field, which means that everybody knows what they're doing and they're aware of it."

"You turn your coaches loose," Sherrill said, "and you let them coach. If things need to be corrected, you correct them and go about your business."

Football, however, hasn't been Sherrill's only concern during the past two and a half months. The former Pittsburgh coach has been tending to his duties as athletic director by looking into the Athletic Department's immediate needs and possible improvements.

"You want to sit back and analyze the situation and help everybody that you can," Sherrill said. "You want to give them

all the support you can. I think if you do that and sit back and see what their needs are, then you See SHERRILL page 12

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