

Surprising year in Aggie sports reaches final page

Think for a moment about what a difference a school year makes.

Nine months ago, what names were most often thought of upon mention of Texas A&M athletics?

Tom Wilson. Johnny Hector. Gary Kubiak. Marvin Tate. Shelby Metcalf. Jude Rieck. Reggie Roberts. Tom Chandler. Rick Luecken. Billy Cannon. Now consider the figures whose names are brought up during nearly every discussion of Texas A&M athletics.

Jackie Sherrill. Gary Kubiak. Jackie Sherrill. Johnny Hector. Jackie Sherrill. Ernest Jackson. Jackie Sherrill. R.C. Moom. Jackie Sherrill. Curley Hallman. And last, but certainly not least, Jackie Sherrill.

At the same time, contemplate the events that have taken place on the Texas A&M sports scene since the fall semester began Aug. 31.

Now squeeze them all into a capsule — the medicated kind that combines all the ingredients necessary to relieve symptoms resulting from stress.

To be sure, Texas A&M athletics has endured its share of stress during the school term that ends with this week's final exams. But it seems that Texas A&M's athletic accomplishments since that first week of classes have done a great deal to ease what might be referred to as "growing pains."

The most stressful situation encountered during the past nine months began with the resignation of former athletic director Marvin Tate, and then developed into the torturingly slow removal of Tom Wilson as head coach of the Aggie football team. The tense conditions culminated with the search for and hiring of Pittsburgh's Sherrill as athletic director and head football coach.

In his third full season as the Aggie football coach, Tom Wilson started 1981 with a seemingly safe job, two years left on his contract and the confidence that his team had no real weaknesses. Pre-season forecasters, picking Texas A&M to finish sixth in the Southwest Confer-



Frank I. Christlieb

ence, didn't give Wilson and the Aggies the slightest chance for a bowl bid.

Although the Aggies lost important SWC games to league champion SMU, Texas and Arkansas, it's obvious that a key mid-season 7-6 victory over the Houston Cougars vaulted them into the Independence Bowl against Oklahoma State.

And other Texas A&M squads shared success during the course of the year:

— The Aggie women's softball team won the state title during the fall with a 36-3 record, then won the spring regional title this weekend in Oklahoma City, Okla. Texas A&M, which will compete in next week's AIAW national tournament, has a 77-8 combined record for the season.

— The basketball team finished third in the SWC regular-season race, then played into the third round of the National Invitation Tournament before losing to Purdue. Although picked fifth or sixth before the start of the season, Coach Shelby Metcalf's squad won important games over Texas, Houston, TCU and Rice to end the year with a 20-11 record. At the same time, Metcalf surpassed the 300-victory mark for his career, and tied Arkansas' Glen Rose for the most SWC victories at 176.

— The Aggie baseball team, picked as a strong contender for the SWC crown, shook off early league losses to win five of its last six games. By virtue of three victories over Texas Tech and two over Baylor, Texas A&M slid safely into the SWC tournament, which starts Friday in

Olsen Field.

— The men's golf team, after not winning any of its previous tournaments, won the conference title during April. The Aggies' Danny Briggs won the individual title, qualifying him to participate in the professional Colonial tournament this weekend in Fort Worth.

— The No. 4-ranked women's golf team, sparked by the men's title, won the state title during April, with senior Shirley Furlong copping the individual medal. Texas A&M came from behind to win the tournament over TCU, ranked No. 1 in the nation.

— Freshmen Mike Pazourek and Kimmo Alkio of the tennis team won the SWC No. 3 doubles title three weeks ago, while the 19th-ranked Aggies finished in a fourth-place tie with Texas in the conference. The doubles team of Brian Joelsson-Tom Judson will compete in the NCAA championships Monday, while Joelsson will participate in the singles portion of the tourney.

— Sprinter Rod Richardson of the track team upset Houston's Stanley Floyd to win the NCAA indoor 60-yard dash title during March. Richardson, a sophomore, must still decide whether to accept Sherrill's offer to play football for the Aggies in the fall.

But these strong finishes weren't the only memorable events during the year in Aggie sports. Since the emergence of Sherrill and his new coaching staff, Texas A&M followers have had high expectations for the 1982 football season.

Texas A&M didn't break the attendance record of 30,000 in its first annual alumni football game, but Sherrill received high commendation from everyone involved. After witnessing the Aggie football team during spring workouts, most people consider Sherrill's staff to be among the finest in the nation.

To say the least, it's been a noteworthy year in Texas A&M sports. And one thing's for sure — the 1982-83 school year will have a difficult time topping the excitement of the past nine months.

Dream

(continued from page 17)

base, Texas A&M

— Kris Bergstrom, outfield, OSU

— Mary Lou Youngblood, outfield, Texas A&M

— Karen Guerrero, outfield, Texas A&M

— Gay McNutt, Texas A&M

and Kim Fabian, OSU, tie at catcher

Twelve teams will play in the national tournament, where Texas A&M placed fourth in 1981 and third in 1980. But Brock says this year's team doesn't want to finish below the top spot.

"I think everyone knows what they have to do," he said. "Our five seniors have really come to the front and shown that they know what to do. They want to win it — they've been close, and they want it this year."

"I hope we keep up that intensity. I think we showed it this

weekend. We probably should intensity gave us the win. That have lost that 1-0 game, but our was one we really earned."

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