

Texas A&M

# The Battalion Sports

August 11, 1982 Page 11

## Frosh football players ready for challenge

by Frank L. Christlieb  
Sports Editor

Todd Tschantz comes to Texas A&M University with two ingredients that he'll try to mix to earn a first-team position with the Aggie football team: confidence and credentials.

And rather coincidentally, another important point will come into play during Tschantz's quest for a job either punting or place-kicking for the 1982 Texas Aggies.

His chances of taking on one of those two chores aren't bad, considering the situation he's entering.

While 27 fellow freshmen and several walk-ons held their first workout of the year in Kyle Field Tuesday afternoon, the 18-year-old from Richardson Lake Highlands High School spent two hours working with teammates who share a common goal: earning a key spot on Coach Jackie Sherrill's squad.

Tschantz, whose 1981 Lake Highlands squad defeated Houston Yates in the state 5A championship game, has an above-average chance to become the Aggies' punter. His prospects at place-kicker aren't quite as strong, but Tschantz believes he may have stumbled onto the chance of a lifetime at Texas A&M.

During the 1981 season, Kyle Stuard, now a junior, began as the Aggies' starting punter. However, he dislocated his shoulder during Texas A&M's 76 victory over the Houston Cougars in the fifth game of the season.

From that point on, freshman Buzzy Sawyer took over the punting duties, but averaged only 35 yards a kick. Sherrill knows a football team can't win consistently with such a low

punting average, so he enters workouts hoping to find several capable candidates to choose from.

To add to Tschantz's chances, Sawyer's name no longer appears on the Aggie roster. According to Sherrill, Sawyer decided to transfer to another school.

Enter Todd Tschantz — or so he hopes. Besides Stuard, Tschantz's main competition for the punting job will come from Dodge Carter, a freshman walk-on from Dallas Highland Park.

The 6-1, 212-pound Tschantz brings to Texas A&M excellent credentials and loads of confidence, but when it comes to winning a job on Sherrill's team, past achievements are as notable as kicking an 18-yard field goal with a 40-mph wind.

"I've got the opportunity to do really well," Tschantz said Tuesday. "I'm going to go for it (the starting position). They've got some good kickers, with Stuard, (place-kickers) David Hardy and Alan Smith, but I'm just going in saying I'm as good as they are. That's the attitude I'm taking."

Tschantz, who averaged about 42 yards a punt during his senior year, has already been instructed by defensive end coach Bobby Roper to reduce his punting approach from three steps to two steps. Tschantz said it'll take some getting used to, but he thinks he can make the change successfully.

Tschantz, clocked at 4.8 in the 40-yard dash, has found the spirit among Aggie team members to be strong — even before the start of varsity workouts.

"We've got a real good chance to win it," Tschantz said. "There

See FRESHMEN page 12



photo by Sabrina McCormick

### Saturday skiing at Somerville

Texas A&M student Ben Sample finds out the true meaning of the term "laid back" as he slaloms his way across the area's most popular source of water, Lake Somerville, over the weekend.

Sample seems on his way to a painful spill at this stage of the ride, but as to whether he made it out of this semi-horizontal position, well ... it's up to you to decide the situation's outcome.

## Firing

### Astros' Virdon gets axe; Lillis manager

United Press International  
SAN DIEGO — Bill Virdon led Houston from the cellar to a division title in 1980, but with the Astros now mired in fifth place, owner John McMullen has gone to his bench for a new manager.

McMullen fired Virdon Tuesday and named first base coach Bob Lillis interim manager. A team spokesman said: "That will in all probability go through the end of the season."

At a brief team meeting before the Astros defeated San Diego, 4-1, Virdon thanked the players.

"The only thing I wanted them to know is that I appreciated their efforts," Virdon said. "I was sorry things didn't work out. I know they did the best they could for me and I'll be behind them all the way."

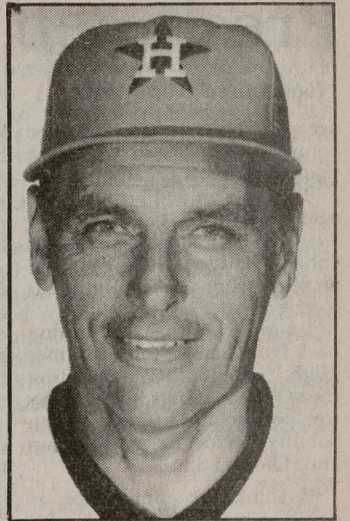
Lillis then conducted what he said would be the first of several meetings with the team.

"There won't be any wholesale changes," Lillis told reporters. "We'll give what we've got and hope we can make a run at it."

"We've played better ball the last couple of months and I feel that we'll continue to improve as we go along. It really hurts when you lose two quality people from your bullpen," he said, referring to lengthy injuries to Joe Sambito and Dave Smith. "We've lost 21 games in the late innings. There'll be some minor changes, but I want to consult with my staff and the players first."

Sambito praised Virdon, saying the Astros' recent string of five losses in San Francisco wasn't his fault.

"He'll be all right, he's a good baseball man and if he wants a job, he'll get it," Sambito said. "He was so level-headed about everything. That's the way you



Bob Lillis

have to be in this game." McMullen said his decision was in the best interest of the team.

"We made the decision that the Houston Astros were going to need a new manager next year and in the interest of both the ballclub and Bill Virdon, this seemed to be the appropriate time to make the change," he said.

"This will now give us the next six weeks to go through a list of possible candidates and begin making our plans for next season."

Virdon, 51, of Springfield, Mo., was a former all-star with the Pittsburgh Pirates and former manager of Pittsburgh and the New York Yankees. He has been the Astros' manager since late in the 1975 season — one in which the team finished 42½ games out of first place.

See VIRDON page 12

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