

# The Battalion Sports

August 30, 1982 Page 13A

## Seven hectic months

### Sherrill's day-to-day schedule hasn't featured free time

Editor's note: Jackie Sherrill, since resuming his posts as Texas A&M athletic director and head football coach in January, has spent long hours trying to upgrade the quality of the University's athletics. In the first of a two-part series, Sherrill says he realizes how much he and his staff have accomplished during the past seven months.

by Frank L. Christlieb  
Sports Editor

Jackie Sherrill didn't leave his heart in Pittsburgh, but he certainly has a great deal of Pittsburgh left in his heart.

However, he's managed to put memories of Pitt deep inside him, where they can't interfere with his duties at Texas A&M University.

With every reason to yearn for a return to the city and school where he zoomed to college football prominence, the new Aggie head football coach can honestly say he hasn't had much time to reminisce. His mind has been far from vacant, however, since he accepted the double-duty post of athletic director and head football coach at Texas A&M during January.

The major occupants of Sherrill's thoughts during the past seven and a half months haven't been recollections of his three 11-1 teams at Pitt, nor has he devoted much reflection to his teams' four bowl victories in five years. And Sherrill hasn't been contemplating the pair of No. 2 rankings he achieved during each of his last two years of coaching the Panthers.

Sherrill could spend his time recalling close relationships with players whom he recruited, disciplined and developed into prime examples of leadership and athletic ability. But after watching talents like Tony Dorsett, Hugh Green, Matt Cavanaugh and Dan Marino during his tenure at Pitt, Sherrill

has all but forgotten the old days.

The 38-year-old Aggie coach wants to concentrate on his present surroundings and the situation at hand rather than to wish he could have stayed at Pitt for just one more year. Sure, there's an excellent chance the Panthers will win the NCAA championship this season — a potentially masterful performance in which Sherrill could have played the title role.

Instead of staying at Pitt to bask in that possibility, however, the Aggie coach seized the opportunity presented to him by Texas A&M. He received not an instant opportunity to coach a national championship team, but a chance to repeat the construction job he completed while coaching the Panthers.

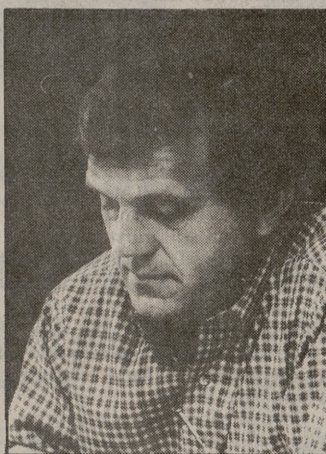
In his first year at Pitt, Sherrill assembled a sixth-ranked 9-2-1 team, and from there, he kept building until he designed three near-perfect 11-1 teams. With a track record like that, it's a good fourth-down gamble to say Sherrill would do well in the construction business.

Sherrill said it's satisfying to know he left the Pitt program in such ideal condition. For that reason, Sherrill said, it doesn't make sense to dwell on what he could have had if he hadn't left Pitt.

"It gets on your mind occasionally until you meet a student at A&M or until you meet one of the players and you understand the long-range effects of it," Sherrill said. "Then you know that you did the right thing."

"I don't think that you can (let it have an effect). People say, 'I left my heart in San Francisco.' Well, you'd better move back to San Francisco if that's the case. You've made a decision and you've got to force yourself to stick with it."

The candid, self-disciplined Sherrill uttered the understatement of the year in saying that his first few months at Texas



staff photos by David Fisher

**Texas A&M Athletic Director and Head Coach Jackie Sherrill has led a rather hectic life for the past seven months, but he's settled down enough to devote a great deal of his time to the Aggie football team and his staff. Sherrill will**

**open his first season at Texas A&M when the Aggies host Boston College Saturday in Kyle Field at 6:10 p.m. The Aggies, 7-5 with an Independence Bowl victory in 1981, start the year ranked No. 20 in the national polls.**

A&M have been "very busy."

And it would be an overstatement to say Sherrill paints a picture of energy after enduring a hectic recruiting season, numerous trips across the United States, speaking engagements throughout the South, three-day and two-a-day workouts and day after day of 8 a.m.-to- whenever schedules.

No, he hasn't aged 20 years since January. Yes, at times he wears a worn, exhausted look, and his blue eyes show a lack of adequate sleep and proper rest.

But as duty demands of him, Sherrill gives his all until that all-important work ethic is satisfied.

"You sit back and you finally realize that you've really accomplished a lot," Sherrill said. "You're trying to do a lot of things at one time and trying to make up for lost time, but that goes with the territory."

"I don't know that if I was 55 years of age, I would be able to

keep the pace. But it's something I really enjoy."

There's another standard toward which Sherrill dedicates a great deal of effort.

Success, Sherrill will stand for nothing but success in every endeavor.

And why shouldn't Sherrill crave success? During 13 years of playing football between his fourth-grade year and his final year at the University of Alabama under Coach Paul "Bear"

Bryant, Sherrill played on only one losing team.

Throughout his years as a head coach, only during one — at Washington State in 1976 — has he finished with a below-average record.

As an assistant at Alabama, Arkansas and at Pitt during 1973-75, Sherrill coached under others whose standards were high. So it's not just his own good fortune that has prompted a need for success.

"I've been exposed to winning coaches and been around the atmosphere of winning," Sherrill said, "and I've also been able to coach with some great coaches — Coach Bryant, Frank Broyles (former Arkansas coach) and John Majors (at Tennessee)."

Even with all the success he's experienced throughout his playing and coaching careers, Sherrill keeps intact his basic philosophy about such matters.

"I don't think you can ever experience success without experiencing failure," he said.

In a recent Biloxi High School class reunion, Sherrill found an old quote that he'd written in a classmate's yearbook, and its meaning echoes his ideas about success. The quote hit home with pinpoint accuracy:

"Success is failure turned inside out."

Not only does Sherrill demand success, but his strong desire for excellence compels him to strive for precision, and at times, perfection. His 50-9-1 record while at Pitt speaks for itself, and Sherrill's playing career as a starter under Bryant at Alabama lends more support to his history of success.

Of his career with the Crimson Tide, which included playing on national championship teams in 1964 and 1965, Sherrill said: "I was in between an average athlete and a great athlete — whatever that means."

With his prosperous playing career and his five years at Pitt a part of the past, Sherrill has for the last few months focused his efforts on "selling" Texas A&M. During that time, he and his family have also been trying to settle down to the ways of the Texas A&M-oriented Bryan-College Station area, a far cry from the "community" of nearly 500,000 in which Sherrill lived between December 1976 and January 1982.

Sherrill and his wife, Daryle, still in the process of building a house in College Station, haven't had it easy during their first months here. While her husband came to town in January to assume his duties, Mrs. Sherrill and their two children remained in Pittsburgh until she finished working late in May.

From his first marriage, Sherrill retained custody of his daughter, Elizabeth, who is 14 years old. Sherrill and his wife, who married in 1973, adopted a son, Justin, in July 1981. Justin is 13 months old.

The four have been living in a three-bedroom home in College Station temporarily, but Sherrill said he hopes that his family's new home will be finished by December or January.

Sherrill holds strong beliefs about his obligation to the University community and to the youth in the area. While in Pitt-

See SHERRILL page 16

## '82 Vikings among state's finest

by Joe Tindel Jr.  
Sports Staff

The Bryan Vikings may finally get that long-awaited chance to see if they're one of the best football teams in the state.

According to Dave Campbell's Texas Football magazine, the Vikings may be the best team in class 5A. But this year Head Coach Merrill Green has a second chance to find out — just in case the Temple Wildcats should yank another district title from his grasp.

If Bob McQueen's Wildcats take their ninth straight victory

over the Vikings, Green can still take his team to the state playoffs, provided Bryan is the second-place finisher in the district. Thanks to a new provision approved by the University Interscholastic League, every high school team that finishes second in its district can advance to the playoffs.

That means a lot of those really talented teams that finished 9-1, as Bryan did last year, will have a chance to prove they're as good as some of the district champs.

Green said the new rule will

help maintain interest in the football team further into the season. The only possible problem he sees would be if the provision "watered down" the playoff system with too many teams, making the season too long for high school players, he said.

But, he said, the potential benefits that may result from the provision outweigh the bad points.

McQueen, however, said he feels less enthused about the new provision, since it eliminates the open week that allows teams time to work out bruises

while giving coaches enough time to examine opponents in detail.

"We've always used our open date as an opportunity to heal our wounds," McQueen said.

Green said there are good and bad points about open dates also, which in his mind eliminate the loss of the open week as a major flaw in the provision.

He said there have been times when he didn't want an open date for fear it would slow down the team's momentum.

"I've been (here) now 17  
See SCHOOLBOY page 14

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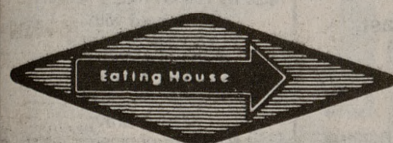
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