

Sherrill sees progress during Aggies' season

by Frank L. Christlieb
 Sports Editor

Jackie Sherrill says the 1982 season has been one of both physical and mental progress for the Texas Aggies.

Sherrill and his squad close the curtain on the season Thursday when the Texas Longhorns host Texas A&M at 1 p.m. in Memorial Stadium. Although many boo-birds will keep criticizing what they consider a poor season resulting from a lack of effort and overall ineffectiveness, Sherrill said he and his players have learned a great deal during the first 10 games.

"I think some of the younger players have really come through in terms of leadership ability," Sherrill said at Monday's weekly press conference in Cain Hall. "If you look at the offensive line... it wasn't playing as a group when the season started, and no one came through. But they do now, and they're together and playing well."

"The fact that our players have gotten stronger in maturity and confidence has probably been the biggest improvement. I think they've learned more about themselves. The three inside offensive linemen feel they can be as good as there is by the time they're seniors."

Sherrill said linebacker Bobby Strogon and defensive end Jon van Sant played an outstanding game in Saturday's 34-14 victory over the TCU Horned Frogs. Strogon, a senior, had 15 tackles (nine unassisted) and van Sant, also a senior, had 10 (eight unassisted).

Split end Jimmy Teal, who missed the TCU game with a muscle pull, will be ready for the Longhorns, Sherrill said. Senior defensive tackle Fred Caldwell, who suffered torn knee ligaments against the Horned Frogs, was operated on Monday morning. Junior Keith Guthrie will start in place of Caldwell.

Sherrill said the Longhorns, who at 7-2 are headed for the Sun Bowl against 6-4 North Carolina, have made great strides since their season opener.

"Last year at this time, I would

say Houston was the most improved team in the conference," he said, "but this year, I'd say Texas is. They've gotten stronger with each game. As for their personnel defensively, you'd have to start with Kiki (DeAyala, senior defensive end). He's really great... he's one of the best in the conference."

Sherrill said the Aggie offensive line, made up of center Matt Darwin, guards Ken Reeves and Greg Porter, and tackles Bryan Dausin and Tommy Robison, must protect quarterback Gary Kubiak.

"That's the question — whether we can keep Kiki (DeAyala) and Williams (Ed, defensive end) away from Gary," he said. "Texas has Darryl Clark back at tailback, and he's playing well. He's their big back, and (flanker) Herkie Walls is one of the fastest players in the conference. Their offensive line is very huge and strong and they've gotten better each week."

Kubiak has broken Aggie records for most touchdown passes and most passes completed in a season, upping his 1982 yardage total to 1,820 yards. Sherrill said Kubiak, who returned from hip and ankle injuries to pass for 288 yards against TCU, could have broken more records if not for the injuries sustained in the Aggies' 47-9 loss to SMU a month ago.

"If he hadn't gotten hurt," Sherrill said, "he probably would have about 2,400 yards right now. And any time you throw for 2,400 yards, you've had a good year. He's really only had one bad throw out of his 10 interceptions. He probably should have only about five. But he's completed almost 60 percent of his passes, which is excellent."

"I wish I had him back." Kubiak, who set state records while at St. Pius High School in Houston, will play in the Hula Bowl and Blue-Gray game, both all-star games for college football players. Sherrill said there's a chance Kubiak may play in another all-star game as well.

Sherrill said the never-say-die attitude of his players has been a positive factor this season.

"You'd rather be 12-0 right now, but I'm pleased with the way the players have been fighting back all year," he said. "In the things we were doing well before the start of the season, we got key people hurt... (and) it's very evident that the teams winning the national championships and the conference championships have a lot of depth."

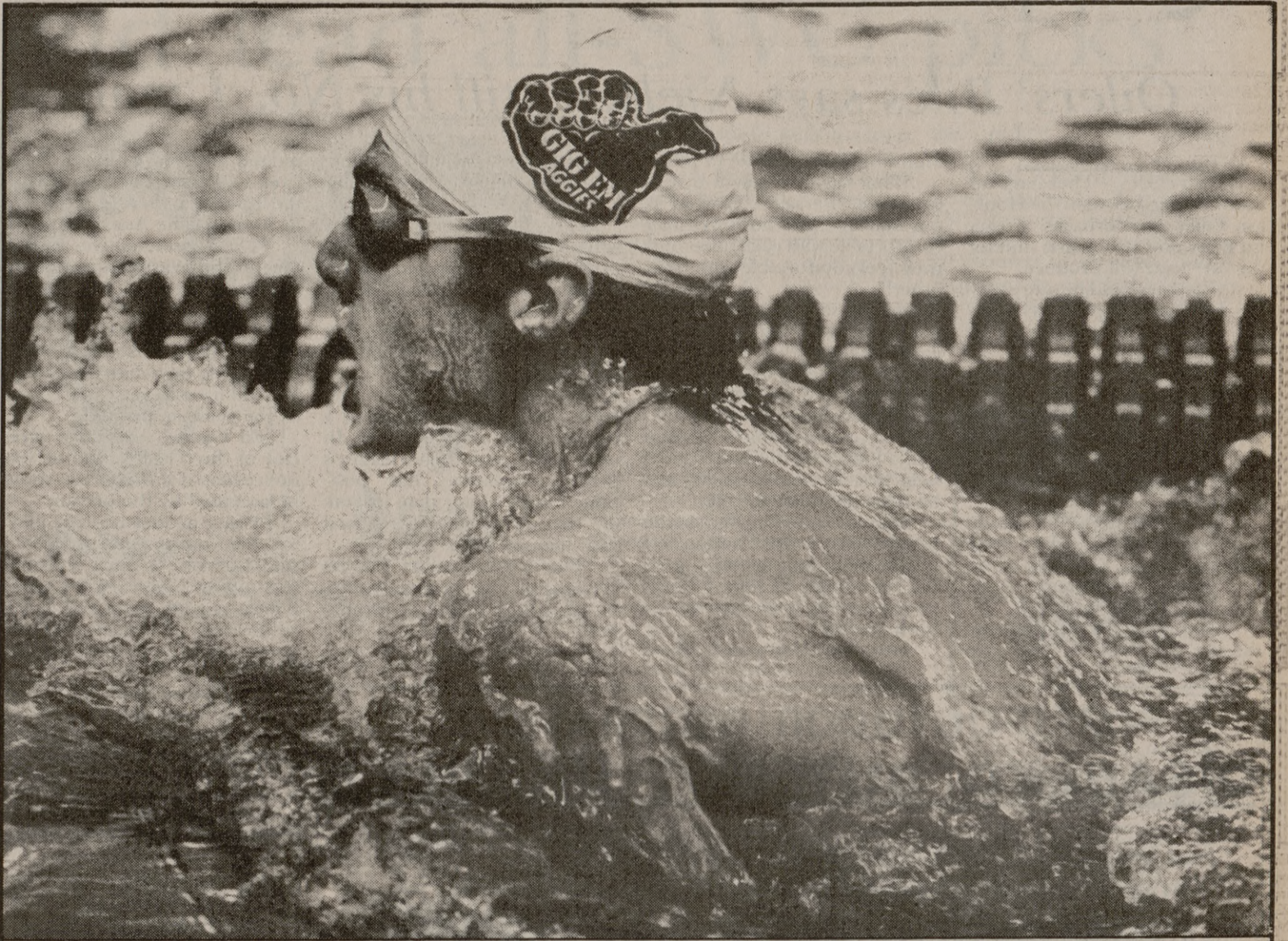
As for the UT-A&M football rivalry, which has spanned 88 games, Sherrill said he's used to such traditions. While Sherrill coached at Pittsburgh, his Panthers spent the final game of each season playing the Penn State Nittany Lions. Those two teams play at Penn State this weekend.

Sherrill said it'd be super if the stakes involved in the Aggie-Longhorn matchup were as great as those in the Pitt-Penn State game.

"It'd be awesome," he said. "That's something you really like, because Texas is an excellent institution. If you look at A&M and Texas, the competition has really been strong. A&M's second in number of Southwest Conference championships and the rivalry has been strong."

AGGIE FACTS: Texas A&M took an early 6-0 lead against UT in 1981, as David Hardy's two first-quarter field goals accounted for the early points. However, Kubiak reinjured a bruised shoulder in the second quarter, and second-stringer John Elkins replaced him. Elkins threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to Don Jones to cut the Texas lead to 21-13, but the score remained the same until the end of the game... Sherrill, who worked on the Aggie Bonfire until the wee hours of the morning last Thursday, says the experience was enjoyable, to say the least: "I wanted the experience and to see what it was like. It's something that, once you start, you can understand what they fight for and why they work so hard on it. I guess they didn't believe it at first... they wanted to see how tough I was, so they

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staff photo by Ronnie Emerson

In the heat of battle

Eric Humphrey, a freshman on the Aggie men's swim team, fights for a top-division finish in the 200-meter breast stroke in Saturday's home meet against highly ranked Indiana. Humphrey finished eighth in this

event, but placed sixth in the 200-meter freestyle and helped the Aggie 400-meter medley relay to fourth. However, the Hoosiers bounced Texas A&M 79-34 as the Aggies' record dropped to 1-2 on the season.

Aggie Ladies lose to Delta State

by Frank L. Christlieb
 Sports Editor

The Aggie women's basketball team, shooting only 32 percent from the field, lost to Delta State 84-64 in Cleveland, Miss., Monday night.

The Aggie Ladies' record stands at 2-2 for the season after victories over Southwestern and St. Mary's and losses to Tulane and Delta State.

Kelli Harned led Texas A&M with 14 points and sophomore

post Michell Tatum had 11. Harned led Aggie rebounders with 10, while Janet Duckham and freshman Lisa Langston had 7 rebounds apiece.

DSU, which led 39-28 at halftime, has a 2-1 record.

Texas A&M coach Cheri Rapp said she's still confident about this year's team, which is trying to improve on the 9-20 record of 1981-82.

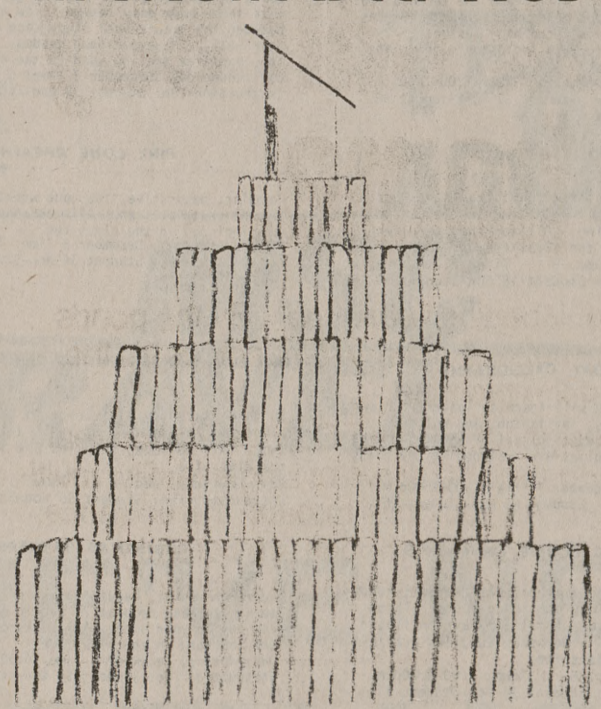
"I see a lot of positive things,"

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says


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