

Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

January 18, 1983 Page 9

Out of the blocks

UTSA's young athletic department sprinting to the front of pack

Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series on the development of the University of Texas at San Antonio's athletic department and the men who are helping to shape the future of SA athletics.

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff
SAN ANTONIO — Don Eddy, head basketball coach at the University of Texas at San Antonio, doesn't know much. He knows all about X's and O's on the basketball court — his consecutive trips to the national tournament while head coach at Eastern Illinois proves it. But Eddy doesn't know much about the rest of the world. He also doesn't know that his team shouldn't be able to beat Stanford by only three points. And he doesn't know that his team's record in the "Big Ten" conference isn't as good as Baylor, the University of Texas at El Paso and Houston Baptist. Eddy's Roadrunners have done just that — in only their second year of existence, they have become even more competitive if financial and recruiting limitations are taken into consideration. But when talking to Eddy, you get the impression that nothing in the world can keep the Roadrunners from winning a national championship within a few years. Tight budgets, sleepless nights, long practice sessions and countless recruiting trips don't seem to bother the Roadrunners head man as he bubbles with excitement and anticipation about his team like the proud father of a newborn infant. Eddy, however, isn't living in a fantasy world. He knows that

most of his players were not heavily recruited by Division I schools and he knows that there isn't a lot of depth on his roster, but the Roadrunners are getting better every time they step onto the hardwood. And that's exactly what he wants. "I think we're right on schedule," Eddy said, in an interview that took place on the UTSA campus. "You always dream and hope for miracles, but you'd just astound the athletic world if you beat a big school. "I think realistically we're in pretty good shape because we're able to play just about any team in the country right down to the wire. That's a great accomplishment for a team barely two years old." Eddy said the foundation for a winning team has already been laid. "We are already a big-league defensive team," he said. "Right now we can play defense as well as anybody in the country — whether it be Kentucky or UCLA — we can horse 'em defensively. But our offense is not like that. It's not as developed. "I don't put a lot of stock in numbers, but I think that if we're anywhere close to .500 this year we'll be right on schedule, because we're playing a lot of good opponents." Eddy said next year just might be the Roadrunners time to come of age, even though it will only be their third season. "I honestly feel that next year we'll be truly competitive. I don't know what we'll yield record-wise, but we'll be able to walk out on the court and have a chance against just about any team. "And we'll still have a tough schedule. It might even be tougher than what we have this year. We'll play just about every team we're going to play this year (Arkansas, Baylor, Texas Tech, TCU and UTEP, among others) and also play USC and Cal-Fullerton. And the year after that we're going to play in the Great Alaska Shootout, which is



staff photo by John P. Lopez

Don Eddy, head coach of the UTSA Roadrunners, talks to his team during a timeout in a game against the University of Texas at El Paso. Eddy

and athletic director Rudy Davalos have built UTSA's program from the ground up, and both are pleased and excited about UTSA's athletic progress.

always a tough tournament." Whether or not Eddy's confidence does yield better results for UTSA in the future, the Roadrunner head coach gave up a lot in leaving Eastern Illinois. Eddy was 22-7 in his last season at Eastern Illinois, and he came to a school that didn't have a mascot, a school song, a fight song or a cheerleader — much less anybody over 6-5 that could play basketball. "I think everyone needs a constant challenge professional-

ly," he said, "and the challenge was gradually eluding me up at Eastern Illinois because we were doing well and we were an established program. "And also it (coming to UTSA) gave me the opportunity to do something that very few people have had the chance to do. We're building from absolute scratch. And of course I wanted to move my family into a

nice climate in a metropolitan area. I never dreamed I would live in Texas but it so happens that I got to come to the nicest part. I've been all over the country and to me this is it. San Antonio is the best." Eddy has other reasons for liking San Antonio. "When I first came down here to visit," Eddy said, "the road around the gym here was a dirt road. You look around at first and say, 'I don't know if I can sell this or not (to a recruit).' But when you examine the situation you find a lot of good things. "One is that San Antonio is the 10th largest city in the country and it did not have any major college athletics until the time we started playing. The (NBA San Antonio) Spurs were the only major-league team in the city. It was a major market that had not been saturated athletically. "Also, it is a beautiful city to live in. The economics are great, the weather is great and potentially a recruit has a situation where he can have immediate career opportunities after he finishes playing basketball. San Antonio is a major metropolitan area with a lot of career opportunities available for someone just out of college. At some places where you go to school, the community is a lot smaller which makes it difficult to stay there after you're through." But before UTSA's players hit the real world, Eddy is concerned with his team's performance on the court. Recruiting an athlete that can perform both in class and under the hoop, however, can be difficult. And it becomes especially difficult when there are many other

established schools a prospective player can attend. "The quality of your talent is the most important aspect and problem when trying to build a program," Eddy said. "It's difficult to recruit at the level of some of the better teams in the country. Our first year, the players we recruited were considered to be Division II-type players. We really didn't have anybody on the team that was recruited heavily by Division I schools. But this year we improved significantly in the competitive market for recruits. "What we do is try to recruit athletes that have a lot of improvement potential. There are some players that come out of high school that are pretty close to their peak. So we've spent a lot of time trying to get the athletes that are good to start with, but at the same time are going to get better. I like coachable, physically talented athletes that might have their basketball talent partially latent." One of the better players that Eddy and his staff have landed in the Roadrunner fold is Derrick Gervin, a 6-8 forward from Detroit, Mich. Gervin was recruited by such teams as DePaul, Michigan and Texas and is the younger brother of four-time NBA scoring champion George Gervin. "Derrick Gervin has done well and is going to be a fine player," Eddy said, "but he is still not anywhere near his brother. But from the time we recruited him to now there has been a tremendous progression on his part. He's a lot like all of us. He's not where he wants to be yet, but he's a lot further than he used to be."

1 FREE INTRODUCTORY CLASS OFFERED
JAN 21 - JAN 27 OF
AEROBIC EXERCISE



- Morning Classes - 9:00 & 10:30 AM
- Evening Classes - 2:00, 3:00, 4:15, 5:30, 6:30, 7:45 (except on Fri.)
- Open 7 Days A Week
- Short Term Monthly Memberships - No Contracts
- Saturday Classes - 10:00, 11:00, 12:15
- Beginner Classes Available
- Sunday Classes - 3:00, 4:00

Return this Ad before our opening date January 28 and receive \$10.00 OFF on One Regular Month of Classes or 3 Month Membership.



846-1013
 402 Tarrow
 College Station, Tx.

For acute perception of the current state of affairs, state of the art and state of the mind...

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

For optimal satisfaction: Read at least once daily.

Ingredients include: Worldwide News/International Business, Finance and Energy Reports/Fashion/Travel/Entertainment.

—Guaranteed to satisfy your special interests—

Subscription prescribed for:

SPECIAL SAVINGS
 To
 Texas A & M Students, Faculty & Staff



1/2 Price

Jan. 17-May 13—\$13.50
 (excluding spring break)

To start your Chronicle subscription for the spring semester CALL 693-2323 or 693-7815.

Houston Chronicle