

The Battalion Sports

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Decision time

Top football recruits making choices

by John P. Lopez

Battalion Staff
In his inaugural season, Jackie Sherrill didn't lead the Texas Aggies to a bowl game, he didn't coach them to a championship and he didn't even have a winning record.

But Sherrill and his staff may be leading Texas A&M to the surprise recruiting haul of the year.

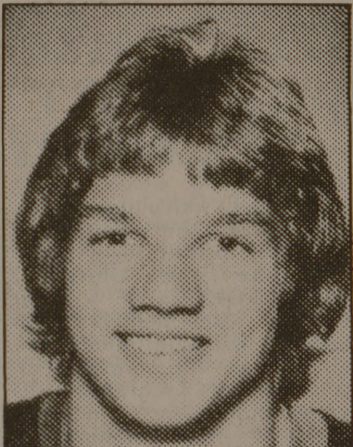
The Aggies have already landed several blue-chippers and all indications are that several others will soon join the Texas A&M fold.

High school all-America quarterback Craig Stump probably is the most sought-after recruit to verbally commit to Texas A&M. But another highly recruited quarterback indicated Wednesday night in a telephone interview that he is within an eyelash of also committing to the Aggies.

Jay Hess, a 6-foot-1-inch, 185-pounder from Eastland, said Jackie Sherrill's recruiting talents have just about made up his mind.

"I've narrowed my choices down to Baylor and A&M," Hess said, "but I'm leaning towards A&M right now because I think they'll win a lot more in the future. If the signing day was today, I'd sign with A&M — no doubt."

"I think he (Sherrill) can really recruit. He just recruits so much better than any other



Eastland QB Jay Hess says he's leaning toward A&M



Jeff star Craig Stump has decided to play for Aggies

coach I've been associated with. To me it seems he's always going to tell you the truth and tell it the way it is."

Hess said he will formally announce his selection Monday, but he indicated that Texas A&M's pass-oriented offense is definitely a plus for the Aggies. Another factor in Hess' decision may be his sister, who is enrolled at Texas A&M as a junior.

With Stump leading the flock of three quarterbacks already committed to Texas A&M (A&M Consolidated's Kip Corrington and Houston Lamar's Paul Gasper have also said they will attend Texas A&M), and Hess near a commitment to the

Aggies, one would think Texas A&M already has its share of quarterbacks. But Sherrill and his staff are heavily recruiting another all-stater.

Dick Stafford, father and head coach of Belton's star quarterback Bret Stafford, said Wednesday that his son has narrowed his choices to Texas, Texas Tech and Texas A&M, but added that Bret was impressed during his paid visit to Texas A&M. The quarterback was in Lubbock Wednesday on a recruiting trip to Tech and was unavailable for comment.

"I can tell you that he had a very good visit to A&M," Stafford said. "He left (A&M) with a great taste in his mouth. He was very impressed with the coaching staff and with Coach Sherrill in particular."

Stafford said he's letting his son make the decision on what school to attend, but added that he does have some biases.

"Naturally there are some things we like and don't like, but I think Bret could fit in on a lot of campuses. I just want him to be happy. I haven't tried to influence his decision in any way. All I've told him is that if he ever has a question, I'll be there."

"I think his greatest asset is that he's a real competitor. He's played in 51 varsity games in high school and has been in some real tight ones. He knows how to win ballgames. He's a great runner-thrower combination and I just hope that wherever he goes, that team utilizes his speed."

Another prize recruit Sherrill and Co. are trying to land is all-America tight end Albert Reese from Temple. Reese said he's narrowed his choice to Texas, SMU and Texas A&M, but he said his trip to the Texas A&M campus was a good experience.

"It was a real good visit," Reese said Wednesday. "I don't have anything negative to say about A&M. Everyone I met was very friendly and the facilities were impressive."

"I enjoy lifting weights (bench press of 320 pounds) and I thought the weight facilities there were really fine. And I liked their dorm, too. I thought those two facilities were better than the ones at Texas."

Should Reese decide to play for the Aggies, it won't be the first time he plays on Kyle Field.

"I've played games there the last three years and it has impressed me a lot, too," he said. "The locker rooms and training facilities are great."

In Reese, Sherrill and his staff are recruiting the services of one of the most sought-after players in the country. Reese has all the characteristics of a great tight end.

He's 6-foot-4-inches, weighs 230 pounds and can cover 40 yards in 4.6 seconds.

Another plus for Reese is that

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Big Four have locks on college dynasties

College basketball has seen only four modern dynasties — by modern, I mean in the last 25 years — and they would be UCLA, Kentucky, Indiana and North Carolina.

The dynasty is the school that does not recruit, but selects. When they call the Blue Chip High School Athlete, the phone is always answered. They are usually THE school in the state as far as tradition and prestige, the school that is habitually on national television.

Most obvious, of course, is the world created by John Wooden, The Wizard of Westwood, at UCLA. Nobody won more than John Wooden. Starting in 1964, he won 10 NCAA titles in 12 years, a record that will never be matched, which makes him the Caesar of college basketball, and Larry Farmer, his disciple, his Marc Anthony, is carrying on today at UCLA.

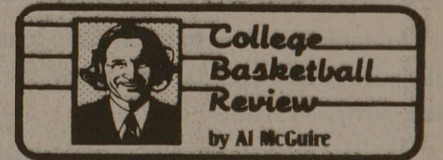
The Bruins normally go nine deep, with every player being an all-stater and potential first-round draft choice. They usually win more than half their games during warmups, and their cheerleaders are better-known than the winning teams of some major conferences.

Second is the University of Kentucky, which started with "The Baron," Adolph Rupp, who won 880 games in 41 seasons, and is being continued today by Joe B. Hall. The Wildcats seat 23,000 for every home ballgame at Rupp Arena, and have done more damage to the Southeastern Conference than Sherman did when he went through Atlanta.

The Wildcats are true thoroughbreds. They have won the NCAA championship five times, and they run probably the best college basketball program in the nation today. Basketball in Lexington is a way of life, socially oriented, the Park Avenue sport for the in-crowd, and Joe B. Hall is just one of hundreds of thousands who bleed blue in the commonwealth.

At Indiana, again the baton has been passed, this time from Branch McCracken, who won the national title in 1953, to Bobby Knight, who has won it twice since he took over for McCracken in 1972. Basketball in Indiana is a Hoosier Hysteria that makes football take a rumble seat and lights up the moonlight on the Wabasha.

Bobby Knight's dictatorial style of yesterday is also the envy of every coach that has a fear of administration, parents or ballplayers. Knight is his own man, the master chef of his own restaurant, who tells you what to order, cooks the food his way. And it's so good, the customers keep coming back for more!



College Basketball Review
by Al McGuire

Rounding out the magic four are the Tar Heels from Chapel Hill, who have won everything in sight, with the dynasty starting with Frank McGuire in the 1950s when North Carolina was the NCAA champion in 1957. Now they have broken through the sound barrier under Dean Smith, who made it to the Final Four six times and finally grabbed the brass ring last year.

Now just what makes a dynasty? As I said, the school has to be THE school in the state, it has to govern its conference, and it's always the team the other seven or eight schools vote against. It has to come from a basketball state, which all these four do and it has to be THE sport in the school. It also has to get network exposure.

The coach of a dynasty is a power broker inside his own school, and many times in his home state. He's a guy everybody wants to see run for governor. If he has a basketball camp in the summer, it's always SRO (Standing Room Only) and without any bid advertising campaign. He has his own TV and radio shows, and is a key clinic speaker — a guy his fellow coaches want to hear.

The last, and maybe more important criterion of a dynasty is that it has to repeat over and over. The four teams I mentioned — UCLA, Kentucky, Indiana and North Carolina — have won the NCAA championship 20 times between them: UCLA 10 times, Kentucky five, Indiana three and North Carolina two. The NCAA is 26 years old, which means these four have won it more than half the time.

There is one school, in my opinion, that's knocking on the door to join the dynasty club and that's Louisville. All the ingredients are there: Denny Crum has brought the Cardinals out of the shadow of Kentucky. They're almost there, they've come close. But they still don't have the key to the Executive Washroom yet, because of the Wildcats of Kentucky, who are in the process of building their own Ming dynasty.

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