

# The Battalion Sports

February 11, 1983 Page 11

## Making the grade

### Academic policies paying off for A&M athletes

by Frank L. Christlieb  
Battalion Staff



Don Hunt says academics being stressed for athletes

During the past few years, graduation rates of Texas A&M student-athletes have been higher than those of other Southwest conference schools. Figures released annually by the University and the SWC show that approximately half of the athletes who enter Texas A&M receive their degrees, whereas about 30 percent of those who enter the eight other conference schools wind up finishing their degree work.

Dr. Don Hunt, the athletes' academic counselor, says efforts are being made by the Texas A&M Athletic Department to improve those statistics — and the academic achievement of all Aggie student-athletes.

Under the guidance of Athletic Director and Head Football Coach Jackie Sherrill and Hunt, academics have taken a position of increased importance at Texas A&M. With the enforcement of study halls, monitoring of class attendance and improvement of the athletic tutorial program, positive results have been the norm.

For example, of the 10 football players who finished their athletic eligibility during the 1981 season, six graduated in the spring of 1982 and one graduated in December. And more recently, the Aggie freshman football class of 26 players supported in a fall performance that included an overall 2.6 Naey grade point ratio. The GPRs ranged from just one below 2.0 and the highest — a 3.69.

Hunt said the strong grades were unexpected, since the 1982-83 freshman class of football players entered Texas A&M reporting an average high school GPR of 2.93 and an average Scholastic Aptitude Test score of 743.

"It was a combination of factors, but it really comes down from the top," he said. "Coach Sherrill expects them to do well, and they responded to what we asked them to do."

In addition to working with student-athletes currently enrolled, the Athletic Department has encouraged former Texas A&M athletes who haven't finished their degree work to do so. Among those who have re-

turned to the University to continue pursuing their degrees are former Texas A&M football players Curtis Dickey, Jacob Green and James Zachery and former basketball player David Britton.

Zachery, who's been playing for the Montreal Concordes (formerly the Alouettes) in the Canadian Football League since his Texas A&M athletic eligibility expired after the 1979 season, said he expects to get his physical education degree next spring.

"Football isn't something you can depend on your whole life, because you can only play so long before you have to quit," Zachery said. "It's always wise to have something to turn to when you're through playing, and a degree can really help you become a regular citizen again."

Zachery said he needs 10 more hours to become eligible for his degree.

"It's a completion of a goal, because that's what I set out to do when I entered college," he said. "That's really the most important thing, because when people set goals, they like to meet them."

Hunt said Athletic Department officials would like to see all former Texas A&M athletes who are involved in professional sports return to finish their degree work.

"We're making a conscientious effort through personal contact to invite the kids to come back to school, and to provide them with whatever services they may need," Hunt said. "We're just letting them know that it's available and that we would be willing to help them."

Hunt said, however, that more important is the academic performance of current Texas A&M student-athletes.

"We're letting everyone know that just because their eligibility is up doesn't mean we're casting them aside," he said. "We're still interested in what they're doing and in their graduation. We want them to graduate from Texas A&M."

"But in all of our dealings with prospects, the first thing our coaches stress is academics. We've had 94 (football) prospects visit this year, and the first thing our coaches tell them is that we're going to have a winning football team, but it's going to be built from the bottom and built correctly."

"We're not in the football business at Texas A&M. That's part of it, but we're in the business of educating people. If we don't build our program with that in mind, then we won't have solid program both in athletics

and academics."

Hunt said if student-athletes aren't provided with a strong academic atmosphere, it could have a harmful effect on recruiting of potential athletes.

"In a preview of what (prospects) stay at Texas A&M will be like," he said, "we want to emphasize the academic aspect of it. If we break someone in here and they play for four years and then we just send them off into the sunset, they're not going to have anything good to say about Texas A&M."

"You just don't pluck someone out of a particular area of the country, bring them here and see them forget about where they're from... and those people involved in their recruiting, whether it be high school counselors, principals or coaches. It's all meshed together. If an institution takes advantage of a young man's athletic ability and he doesn't reach a certain level of academic success, then the school will have a hard time going back into his neighborhood again (to recruit)."

Of the Aggie football players whose athletic eligibility expired See **ACADEMICS** page 13

## Sampson destined for NBA stardom

Ralph Sampson will be the greatest basketball player who ever lived. Ralph will be the flagship of the National Basketball Association. But it won't happen overnight — it'll be five or six years down the road.

The reason for this is that he comes from a very small town in Harrisonburg, Va., and has been relatively cloistered at the University of Virginia. He's never had the opportunity of a

time is because his upper body strength is only now coming through weight training and age. When you're 7-feet-4-inches, all the vitamins go vertically rather than horizontally.

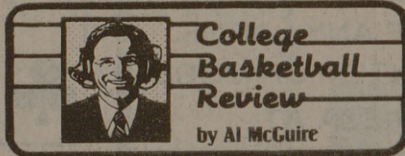
But Sampson is awesome. There is no glaring albatross in his arsenal. He's mobile, quick off his feet. He intimidates. He can one-man zone the paint (free-throw lane), and on the offensive end he can bottom it out from 18 feet. He can play facing or with his back to the basket. And, he can put the ball on the floor.

Personally, as a friend, I think Sampson was wrong in not going pro last year, because he lost one of his chess tools, which was his final year in college. Now he has to go pro. He will not get one of the media cities, the glamour cities, like New York or Los Angeles.

But give the kid credit. He's living in the age he's at, enjoying the moment he's in. Not enough people do that.

For years, people went to see Thomas Jefferson's university, Monticello and all that goes with it. Well, Sampson has pushed Jefferson off the lawn. For four years, it has become Ralph Sampson's — not Thomas Jefferson's — university.

After he leaves, Virginia goes back to a nice, comfortable, academic environment again. They've had their run, they've won the NIT and been to the Final Four of the NCAA. And I believe they'll be taking their last heavyweight trip to Albuquerque, N.M., for the Final Four in late March.



Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in the Big Apple, a Wilt Chamberlain in the City of Brotherly Love, or a Bill Walton in Tinsel Town, where they played against college and pro players on local playgrounds while still in their teens.

That kind of competitive edge matured them to reach their potentials early in life. But once Ralph gets his competitive edge through pro ball, he'll be the greatest big man that ever played hoops. Great basketball players are made from April through October, not November through March. That's when they get the edge on the competition.

That's why it's called "The City Game." Another reason Ralph is going to need some



If you are a man or woman who has or is about to receive a degree in **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING** why not put that degree to work in the Air National Guard? Upon completion of the Academy of Military Science, you'll be commissioned as an Air National Guard Officer. Consider the Air National Guard as you think about your future. We're a modern service with an interest in the future. Contact your Air Guard Recruiter by calling collect (713) 727-2336. **THE AIR GUARD — THE MOST IMPORTANT PART TIME JOB IN AMERICA.**

9 days 'till THE BIG EVENT Feb. 20th, 1983

### Wholesale Gems

Authenticity Guaranteed Proceeds go to Company S-2 2604493 for personal showing booth in MSC Feb. 14 & 15. Quantity Discount.

## E-Systems continues the tradition of the world's great problem solvers.

Developing the analytical theory known by his name, Joseph Fourier gave the world a basic tool for engineering analysis and system design.

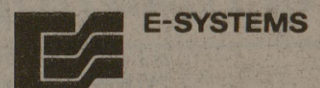
Today, E-Systems engineers are carrying on his tradition. They're using Fourier's mathematical accomplishments to solve some of the world's toughest electronics problems

via computer-designed circuitry.

E-Systems designs and produces communications systems, data systems, antenna systems, intelligence and reconnaissance systems that are often the first-of-a-kind in the world.

For a reprint of the Fourier illustration and information on career opportunities with E-Systems in Texas, Florida, Indiana, Utah or Virginia, write: Lloyd K. Lauderdale, V.P. Research and Engineering, E-Systems, Corporate Headquarters, P.O. Box 226030, Dallas, TX 75266.

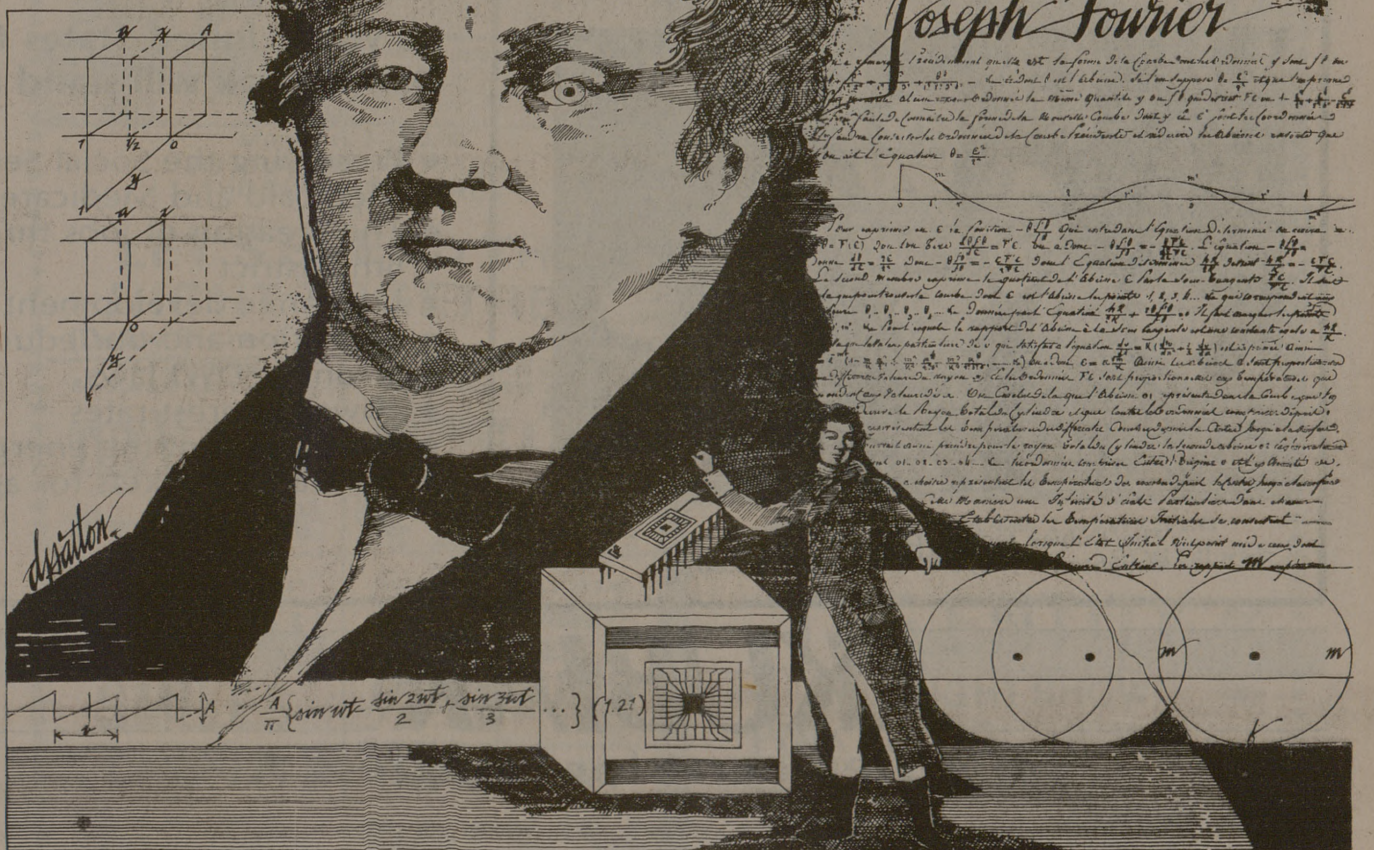
opportunities with E-Systems in Texas, Florida, Indiana, Utah or Virginia, write: Lloyd K. Lauderdale, V.P. Research and Engineering, E-Systems, Corporate Headquarters, P.O. Box 226030, Dallas, TX 75266.



The problem solvers.

An equal opportunity employer M.F. H.V.

Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier 1768 - 1830



Our Greenville Division will be on campus interviewing February 14, 1983.

## You gotta love McDonald's special Valentine.

Regular Hamburger 30¢ Plus Tax

February 12, 13, 14 Saturday, Sunday, Monday Serving hours: 30 minutes after Breakfast til close

Limit 5 Per Customer

You deserve a break today.