

SWC Coaches' Predictions

Aggies

United Press International

The summer of 1984 will be rather short for the players and coaches at Texas A&M. Our season opener against Texas-El Paso in Kyle Field is Sept. 1.

But we are looking forward to the season and the excitement it always brings.

The question I received most often this summer as I visited Texas A&M clubs throughout the state of Texas concerned the status of quarterback Kevin Murray, who was injured in our spring game.

We are expecting Kevin's knee to be completely recovered and we expect him to exhibit the same kind of ability that made him such an outstanding player last year.

Texas Aggies around the state were also anxious to hear about our fine defensive end Ray Childress. Ray has already made some pre-season All-America squads and we are expecting him to be a strong candidate for the Lombardi and Outland awards this fall. He has the ability to dominate a game with his 6-6, 266-pound frame and football savvy.

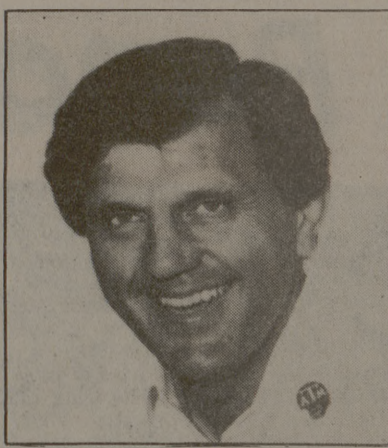
Several other key performers will help make up the nucleus of our team this fall. They include offensive guard Matt Darwin, tight end Rich Siler, kicker Alan Smith, offensive guard Ken Reeves, offensive tackle Doug Williams, running back Roger Vick and defensive end Rod Saddler.

We were very pleased with the spring performance of Anthony Toney, a 6-0, 220-pound red-shirt running back from California. He was injured in two-a-days in 1983 and did not play last year. He could give us some excellent help this season.

Tailback Rod Bernstine, 6-3, 215-pounds, from Bryan, will also see lots of action. We are also counting on the return of tight end Mark Lewis who has been out for the past two seasons with a knee injury.

Our secondary, which perhaps made the most dramatic turnaround on our team last fall, returns starters Wayne Asberry and Darryl Austin. We have moved strong safety Ken Ford to linebacker to help replace the four starters we lost there, including the Cowboys' first-round draft choice, Billy Cannon.

Our punting game will miss Kyle



Jackie Sherrill

Stuard's fine 41.9 average. It looks like Craig Stump of Port Arthur and Todd Tschantz of Richardson will continue to battle for the No. 1 job.

Speaking of kicking, we will continue our 12th Man kickoff team this year as it proved to be a big hit last fall. The team has really caught on with our students and fans and we have been overwhelmed by the reception they have received. Let me hasten to say that they have certainly earned the recognition they have gained by performing extremely well for us.

We had more than 250 volunteers come out for the kickoff team again this spring and the interest is running high.

We feel that we have another excellent freshman class coming in to Texas A&M. We have 60 freshmen and sophomores on the squad, so we are still a young team. We are anxious to get a closer look at our new crop of freshmen.

We are also extremely pleased with the academic progress our program is making. We know that our students have to be athletes, but they're students first. Our first year we had 26 players enrolled in summer school to stay eligible. We had only four this summer and the most hours needed was three.

I am expecting an extremely interesting conference race this fall. I think it will be a dog fight right down to the wire. You have to go with Texas and SMU. Even though they both lost a lot of good players, you don't get to that level without having a lot of depth.

It looks to me like SWC football fans will be the big winners this season.

Horns

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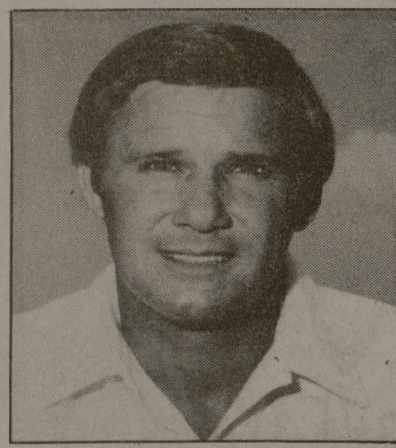
AUSTIN, Texas — Folks have said for years "I don't know whether to laugh or cry," and that's the way I feel when I look at the senior class that left our university last fall. We are very proud of their accomplishments, and proud that more than 20 of them have a chance to play professional football.

But we have a lot of people to replace.

In many ways, that is exciting. I have often said the most veterans to give the leadership and hold on until the young players take hold.

If our kicking game continues to improve, and I have every reason to believe it will, this could be the stringest part of our team early. I thought John Telschik was as good a punter as there was in the country last year, and Jeff Ward, if he continues to get better, will set lots of records in this league as a kicker.

We feel good about our recruiting class, and they will have to be good. We were fortunate to be able to red-shirt some of our freshmen last year, and I think that will really help them. They were able to get a year of



Fred Akers

maturity without wasting a year of eligibility.

It will be another tough, tough race in the Southwest Conference. There is no way to pick a champion, except to say that there will be a lot of us in there fighting for it. I feel confident in our team, and I am excited to get started.

If our spring training was any indication, we should have some tough battles for positions this fall, and by the time we play Auburn, I hope we've settled into one of those years where folks will say we're young, but we're talented.

Ponies

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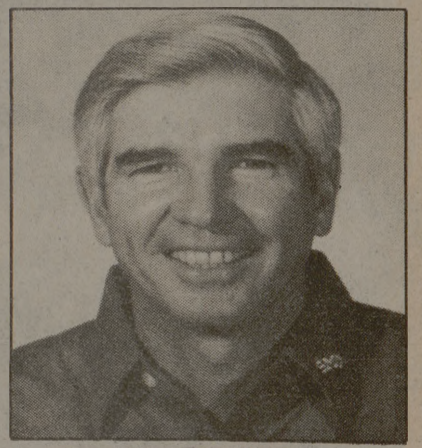
DALLAS — We were very pleased with the strides we made in the spring. Losing two such outstanding senior classes back-to-back meant the responsibility for filling the roles left open by graduation must fall upon our younger players.

We were concerned with how they would accept those roles.

We were pleased with the way these players responded to the challenge. We have a lot together as a unit.

Don King is our starting quarterback. He had an excellent spring and is going to be one of our team leaders this year. Everything we had hoped for and asked of him has come true. He's an accurate passer and a dangerous runner. We're very, very pleased at this position.

From the first day of spring drills our tailbacks Reggie Dupard and Jeff Atkins have performed tremendously. Both look like they are ready for another outstanding season. Gary Hashaway has emerged as the starting fullback and his quickness



Bobby Collins

up the middle gives us another offensive weapon. Andrew Campbell, Chris Jackson and Hellestrae lead an offensive line that again will be a strong point of our team. We were also pleased with how our receivers performed during the spring.05212

There's no doubt we've lost some outstanding talent. But we have gifted young athletes to take their places. With two straight successful recruiting years we believe we have the athletes who can meet this challenge.

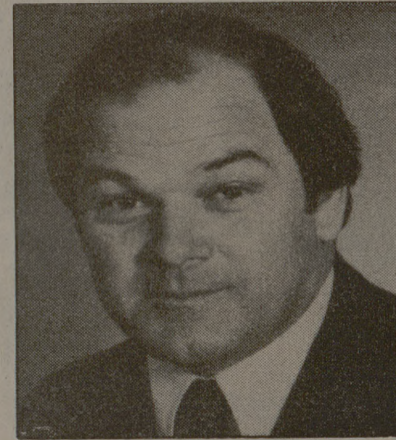
Raiders

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LUBBOCK, Texas — This is a great time of year for football coaches in the Southwest Conference because we are all undefeated and optimistic.

I'm looking forward to the fall for a number of reasons. The addition of five new assistant coaches, including offensive coordinator Tom Wilson and defensive coordinator Spike Dykes, seemed to give our team a shot in the arm in the spring.

and Brad White returning to start for the third year. I believe both are all-SWC caliber players. There is good quality and depth at defensive end and our linebacker trio of senior Dwayne Jiles, junior Mike Kinsey and sophomore Brad Hastings could be among the most physical in our league. Carlos Mainord did a good job of restructuring the secondary in



Jerry Moore

the spring. Look for speedy junior Carl Carter to be one of the tops back there for us.

On paper, the offense should be improved over a year ago. We return six two-year starters but a lot

depends on what kind of play we get from the quarterback position.

Senior Perry Morren heads into the fall at No. 1. He had a consistent spring, but his main attribute may be his leadership qualities. Sophomore Monte McGuire and junior Bryan Brock are not being ruled out, though.

I-back is an interesting position. Senior Robert Lewis had some great games for us last year and normally would be a cinch starter. But sophomore Timmy Smith and junior Ansel Cole will push him hard in the fall so things are somewhat unsettled there.

I'm looking for big things from senior guard Danny Buzzard and senior tackle Joe Walter in the offensive line. Senior Buzz Tatam gives us good versatility at the tight end position.

One of the big keys for our football team is the kicking game in general and senior Ricky Gann in particular. Our kicking game was erratic last year and it must improve. Ricky was a top placekicker in 1982 so it is obvious the talent is there. If he can build some confidence early it can make a lot of difference in our football team.

Another area of concern is depth in the offensive line, at fullback and at wide receiver. We are going to rely on a half dozen redshirt freshmen for depth in the offensive line and some of the other backup people are untested on the varsity level. Their emergence would be a big plus for us.

I don't know how many games we are going to win in 1984, but I do know we will be more exciting to watch. The conference should be more balanced, which makes it better for the fans. Every weekend will be an entertaining one.

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