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Volleyball team oozes confidence

By TAMARA BELL
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M Men's A Volleyball team returns a veteran squad from last season and is favored to advance to the semifinals in the Southwest Conference Play-off Tournament.

The tourney, held in April, pits the Aggies against competition from private as well as university sponsored clubs. Clubs who wish to participate in the tournament must be a member of the United States Volleyball Association.

"This division is challenging because not only do we play some Southwest Conference teams such as Rice and the University of Texas, Austin, but we play teams from every point in Texas, too," club vice president Paul DeVries said.

"Also, since a person of any age may play in this association, one day may find us battling a university team and the next day we could play a coalition of 35-year olds.

Last season, against heavy competition, we progressed to the semi-finals in the SWC tournament after a pre-season of three tournament wins. We hope to advance to finals this season," DeVries said.

Before reaching the SWC tourney, the Aggies will battle several division A opponents beginning September 15.

"A total of 10 to 12 tournaments will be played before entering the SWC games," DeVries said. "These are considered pre-games with the winners acquiring trophies. Even if a team performs badly at these competitions, it's possible that squad could advance to the finals at the SWC games."

DeVries predicts a strong performance by the '84 team based on the number of experienced players present on the roster.

"Since all (Aggie) starters are returning this season, the team should perform better because we've worked together for a whole year," DeVries said. "The freshmen are now sophomores, and combined with the junior and senior players,

we've reached a maturity (point) in our execution.

Some members played during the past summer. Teammates Mike Welch, Logan Amons, and Brian Dolby won second place in a sand volleyball competition in Corpus Christi," DeVries added.

The three volleyball positions of powerhitter, middle blocker, and setter have much added experience this season. Middle blocker Mike Shannon returns after a year's absence and will increase the overall strength of the squad. DeVries, Amons and Jim Kolling will add depth to the squad as powerhitters.

"This season we're more well-rounded than in past years," DeVries said. "Combining Shannon, Amons, Kolling, and myself with our three strong setters should equal a powerhouse team that not even our major competition, The Dragons from Houston, can beat."

Although the volleyball team has a steady membership, new players are welcomed.

"There are approximately 20 players on this team," DeVries said. "Between 8 and 12 members attend each tournament. Since the tournaments are scheduled for the weekends, it benefits us if there are more players to choose from, not only from the stand point that with more competition between ourselves, the better we are to compete against other teams, but also because if someone plays one weekend, they might need the next weekend off, or maybe he just needs time away from the game.

DeVries said he is always on the look out for new players. Although volleyball experience is recommended, it's not mandatory. As long as the person has a desire to learn the sport and displays a good attitude the team will train someone to play volleyball to their full potential.

Applications for players will be accepted on Monday, September 10 from 7-9 p.m. on the fourth floor of East Kyle. All playing positions are available, and even though some volleyball experience is appreciated, it's not necessary.

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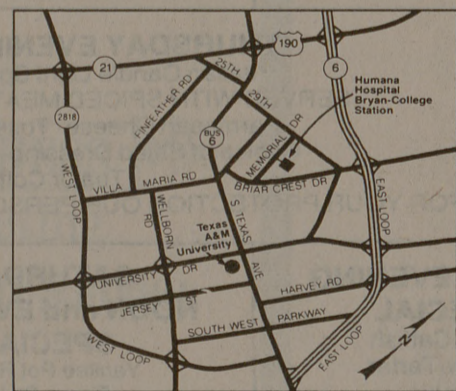
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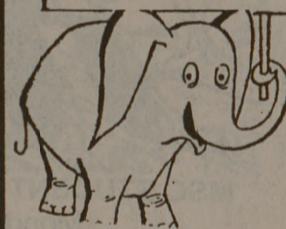
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