

Washington aims to keep No.1 crown

See page 11

## Home teamers are scarce commodity

By MARCY BASILE  
Sports Writer

The home field advantage often is an invisible factor at Texas A&M women's athletic events. That's not surprising if you look at the size of an average crowd.

"My first year here we averaged about 30 to 40 people per game," says Terry Condon, Texas A&M's head volleyball coach. "Now we average about 300 to 400. It's a lot better."

"The (home field) advantage is the atmosphere that you present to the other team," said Lynn Hickey, assistant athletic director and head coach of the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team. "If it's not an intimidating situation and the other team feels comfortable, you've lost some of that home court advantage."

"As a basketball coach, if you have a crowd that is on your side, it can be worth 10 points. It's the difference between being a winner and a loser."

"What I don't think people understand is that there is no advantage to playing here at Texas A&M. There's no home court advantage if there's no crowd there."

Women's sports at A&M have progressed beyond what Hickey terms "the initial baby stages." The public comes to watch, and the teams have acquired athletes, uniforms and are ready to play.

"We are now at the point where we have a good solid base for our programs," Hickey said. "The only progress that we can see is for people to come and be a part of the program."

"We are polished and at the stage where we are ready to perform. Now all we need is people to perform for."

Having a large home crowd spurs the team to play harder.

"Higher attendance psychs them (players) up," Condon said. "They'd go around, especially my first year here, with no self-worth when no one showed up. They felt no one cared and that they worked so hard

*"The (home field) advantage is the atmosphere that you present to the other team. If it's not an intimidating situation and the other team feels comfortable, you've lost some of that home court advantage."* — Texas A&M's Lynn Hickey

for nothing."

According to Condon, the biggest problem is spreading the word about upcoming games to students.

"The biggest comment we get from students is that they just didn't know," Condon said. "Word needs to get to the student body."

Coach Bob Brock of the Texas A&M Women's Softball team agrees with Condon.

"The students that do come out usually know the players," Brock said. "Most of the people who come out and watch us play aren't students."

Hickey describes the attendance problem as threefold.

"I think it's a combination of factors," Hickey said. "Number one, as a department we haven't promoted and really gone after the publicity to let people know where we're at. We are trying to improve things in that direction."

"Number two is that we are competing with so many other types of entertainment. The same night we're playing there are hundreds of people playing intramurals."

"There is also a study factor. Movies, shopping malls and watching TV, they all compete with us. You put these factors together and we just have to face the fact that we are competing for your entertainment

dollar.

"I think that, number three, people have no idea the caliber of athletes involved. I think that there is very much an unawareness of the level of athletic ability we are talking about."

According to Brock people are really impressed with the athletic ability of the women athletes when they first see a game.

Interest in women's sports seems to be increasing.

"I think the Olympics helped volleyball a lot," Condon said. "Everyone thought of volleyball as a little backyard game. They didn't realize the work and strategy that's involved."

Several tactics are being utilized by the teams to draw crowds. Game times and dates for the teams are posted on the MSC Informer Board. Condon has also suggested using banners to draw attention to games.

The goal of the advertising is to draw first-time spectators.

"I really believe that once people go to a game, they will come back," Hickey said. "We can't just say there's a game tonight. We've got to put fliers up. We've got to talk to people individually in order to get them involved."

In an attempt to draw first-time spectators to volleyball games, anyone with an Aggie football ticket stub was admitted free.

"Almost 2000 showed up for the afternoon game," Condon said. "Surprisingly, about 800 came back that evening. I figured they'd come from the football game, but I didn't expect them back that evening."

Hickey said, "With such a large university it is really frustrating to know that there are 37,000 people enrolled here and you're pulling only 200 or 300 a night."

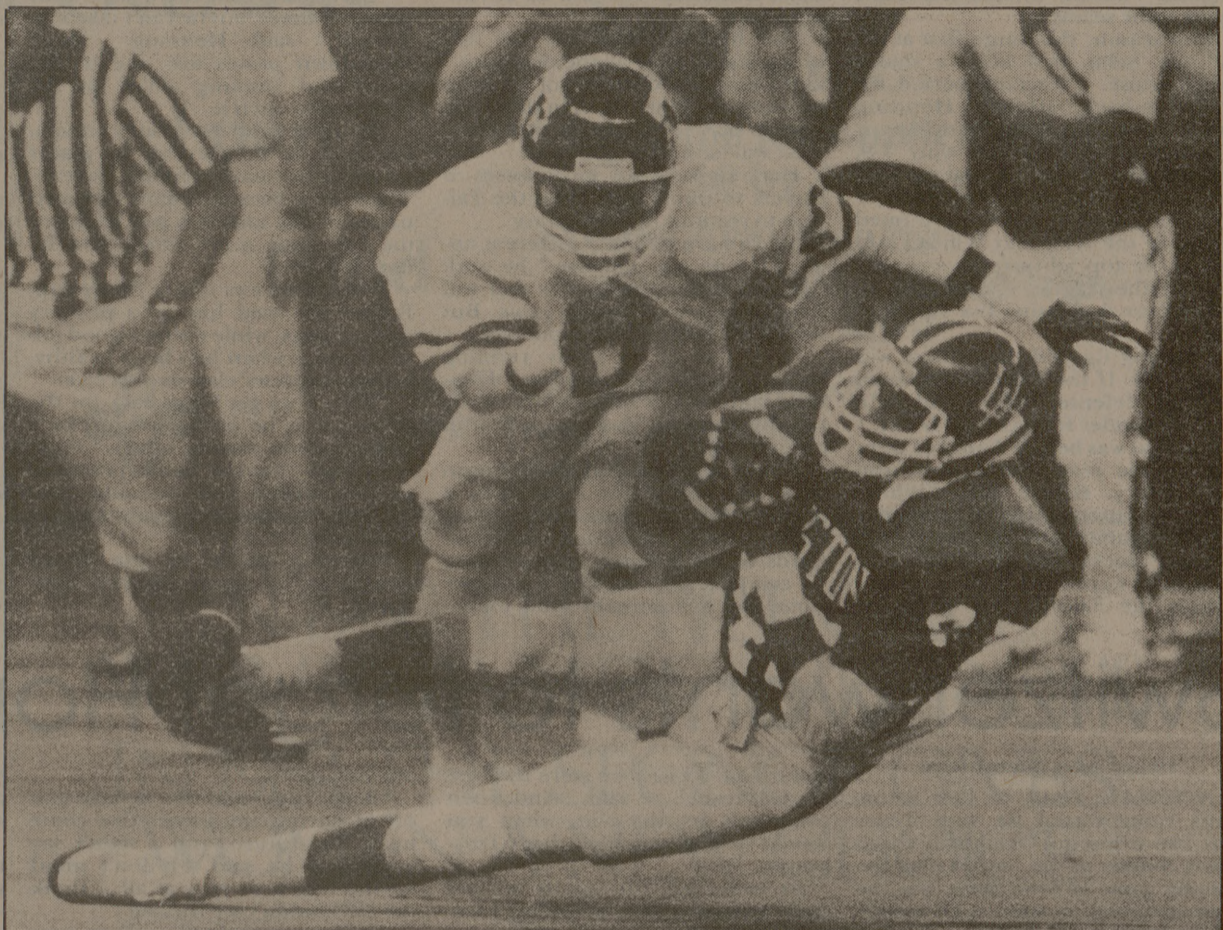


Photo by PETER ROCHA

### Who's Covering Who?

Houston's Isreal Martin picks off a pass intended for A&M split end Jeff Nelson (8).

## Sherrill says Ags need time

Texas A&M Head Football Coach Jackie Sherrill Tuesday asked for patience from restless alumni who are disappointed with the Aggies' 0-2 start in the Southwest Conference.

"Things would be different if A&M had been to the Cotton Bowl every year," Sherrill said at his weekly press conference. "You can't lose sight of the fact that the job

we're trying to do is get us to a point to get there."

"You're going to have to take the lumps to get there. It's not going to be easy. It wasn't easy on the day I came and it's not going to be easy tomorrow or the next day."

Although A&M is 3-2 for the season, the Aggies lost their opening two SWC games, including a 9-7 loss

to Houston Saturday.

"Did people expect miracles? Yes," Sherrill said. "Did people expect things to happen quicker? Yes. Somebody else being the coach? Fine. Would I be successful somewhere else? Yes. Will I be successful here? Yes."

Sherrill has compiled a 13-13-1 record in his 2 1/2 years at A&M.

### Attention General Studies Freshmen

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