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& during open bar



Athletes

(continued from page 7)

ment, to make sure they progress toward an academic degree.

Since Sherrill has taken over as athletic director, more emphasis has been placed on academics by the athletic administration as well as the academic administration, Hunt says. Some of the policies enforced by the athletic department are mandatory class attendance and study hall for freshmen and other athletes below a 2.0 grade-point average. These individuals, as well as any other student-athlete that needs help, are assigned tutors.

"Another thing Coach Sherrill has tried to emphasize is what we call continued aid past eligibility," Hunt says. "As long as a young man or woman is making a conscientious effort to get a degree, and making progress toward this degree, we provide them with financial assistance, but after five calendar years they have to provide some type of work service for us."

Hunt rates the graduation rate of athletes at Texas A&M as high compared to other schools.

"Of the 17 young men in football who will be completing their eligibility, we feel 14 will graduate in the next calendar year," he says.

Hunt estimates the number of football players graduating is up about 50 percent, from two or three years ago. The graduation rate across the United States is between 55 percent and 60 percent.

Comments of athletes at A&M:

Gary Lewis — basketball:
For myself, and people who are serious about academics, it's pretty rough. I spend a lot of time preparing for practice. I think basketball all the time. The coach says you have to think about this, this and this, on and off the court. I find myself thinking about this paper I have to write, while I'm on the court practicing. People like myself, who are serious about academics, have to have a lot of discipline to survive. When you first come to school the coaches and counselors tell you academics come first, but the bottom line is you're here to represent your school in athletics. Don Hunt (academic counselor for the Athletic Department) and the other counselors are always available for help, but it depends upon the individual athlete if he wants help or not.

Kelly Keahey — baseball:
To be a student-athlete, you have to budget your time. I come in from working out and sometimes I'm too tired to study. It's tough. Lack of time can be considered a problem, but, if you get your priorities straight, you can do it. Separating athletics and school can sometimes

be a problem. You can't take academics on to the field while you're competing, or vice versa. Keeping athletics and academics separate keeps problems from arising. The Athletic Department is helpful to incoming freshmen and transfers to keep problems like this from arising. They give them tutors to get them started off, until they can demonstrate they have adjusted to the change.

Lisa Langston — basketball:
Being a woman student-athlete is different from being a man student-athlete. The men have more problems with emphasizing academics because they have the chance of becoming a professional athlete. I am here primarily to get an education, but also to play basketball. Basketball gives me the chance to take some of the pressure off my academics. It also helps me budget my time accordingly. If I know I have to practice at a certain time, it means I have to study at a certain time. When spring comes around, I find it harder to budget my time for academics because of all the free time I have.

Sherri Brinkman — volleyball:
Being a student-athlete is sometimes hard, but in ways it helps me with my academics. When I'm not busy with volleyball I find it hard to budget my time, but, when things are busy, I tend to budget my time better. When I'm on the court, I don't think about school and when I'm in the classroom I don't think about volleyball. The traveling and time it takes to be a student-athlete sometimes leaves time for little else, but that's what it takes.

Rod Richardson — track:
Being a student-athlete is very demanding. Demanding in the sense that you make a choice that you want to split your time into being an athlete and a student. You have to know when to cut some slack in one or the other. You can't be a total student or a total athlete. You have to combine them very carefully. I have been able to maintain a very healthy medium between the two because of my personality. I have the opportunity to continue in track after college, but right now I am more concerned with getting my degree in journalism. I am not just limiting myself to athletics. The one big problem within the system comes from coaches not really stressing the academic side of college life the way they did when they were recruiting. When they get you here, they seem to stress athletics first, then academics. I don't really think my track coaches can tell what my major is or what my plans are for the future. If the coaches would show a little more concern for an athlete's academics, it would probably improve relations.

Weightlifting club trims Aggie flab

By MARCY BASILE
Reporter

Once upon a wimpy time, Texas A&M had no muscles. Oh, it had a football team, true, but it had flab in the non-athletic sports area.

No more though. For the last five years A&M has been developing a weightlifting club which now boasts over 650 members.

"Membership is down a little bit because of (local gyms)," Skip Gjolberg said, president of the Texas A&M Weightlifting Club and a member of the powerlifting team. "I'm sure that membership will be down a little bit in the spring. Maybe down to 620 or 610."

This siphoning of members doesn't faze the club officers. They know their club offers something most weightclubs don't — atmosphere.

"You make a lot of friends in here — good friends," Gjolberg said during a workout in the club's weightroom. "There's an atmosphere in here. It's more competitive."

"If you go to other gyms, they don't have that... it's like you go in there and it's real blah. It's more electric in here."

Mike Breslin, treasurer of the club and Gjolberg's spotter during this particular workout, pointed out another aspect of club membership.

"There are parties every semester, which are free to club members, where you meet a lot of other people," Breslin said. "We also have a ski trip every year that costs the members \$300 for a week in Winter Park."

The A&M Weightlifting Club has no need for membership drives, although they do gather club dues in an unusual fashion.

"The first 300 members that sign-up pay \$30 and the next 200 pay \$60," Gjolberg said. "After that, the rest all pay \$90. The reason we do this is that we can only have so many members because of limited space. This way, we give people who want to join bad enough a chance and it deters enough people to keep the membership down."

Convenient location, good hours and low membership dues appeal to even the most fickle of lifters.

"Some others (gyms) are good," Breslin said. "We just have more equipment. Besides that, they're more expensive than us."

"For the serious weightlifter," Gjolberg said, "our gym is the best. We are a lot more convenient and we are definitely a lot cheaper."

As if to prove his point, Gjolberg sauntered over to the squat rack and did 6 squat repetitions with an incredible amount of dead weight; so much that the bar bobbed with each squat-lift.

High membership allows the club to purchase new equipment.

"Almost everything in here is new as of last year," Gjolberg said. "There are only two or three pieces of equipment that were in here, say, three years ago. Everything else is new."

Although the club boasts a well-equipped weightroom the club also maintains a library of weightlifting and powerlifting books and magazines. Members are allowed to check out articles from the library as a way of learning more about their sport. Unfortunately, the library is not as large as it once was.

"People checked-out stuff near the end of the summer and never brought them back," Breslin said. "Now we need to think of a new system for checking out the books."

As Gjolberg proceeded to go through another set of squats, the strain on his face emphasized the physical challenge weightlifting offers.

"There is a weightlifting attitude," Breslin said. "If you lose your concentration, you can hurt yourself really bad. At the powerlifting level, you have to be very within yourself and totally concentrating when you are lifting something very, very heavy."

Mirrors surround the weightroom, giving the lifters a way of measuring their progress. The mirrors also allow the lifters to check their lifting form, which maximizes the benefits from each exercise.

"People think that people who lift weights always like to see themselves in mirrors because they're vain," Gjolberg said. "They don't realize it's the same as if you were a track runner who is measured with a stop watch."

"If you lift weights, the only way you can measure yourself is by looking in a mirror. Otherwise, you'd never know. You can look at the scale and see you have gained five pounds, but you never know if it was muscle or gut."

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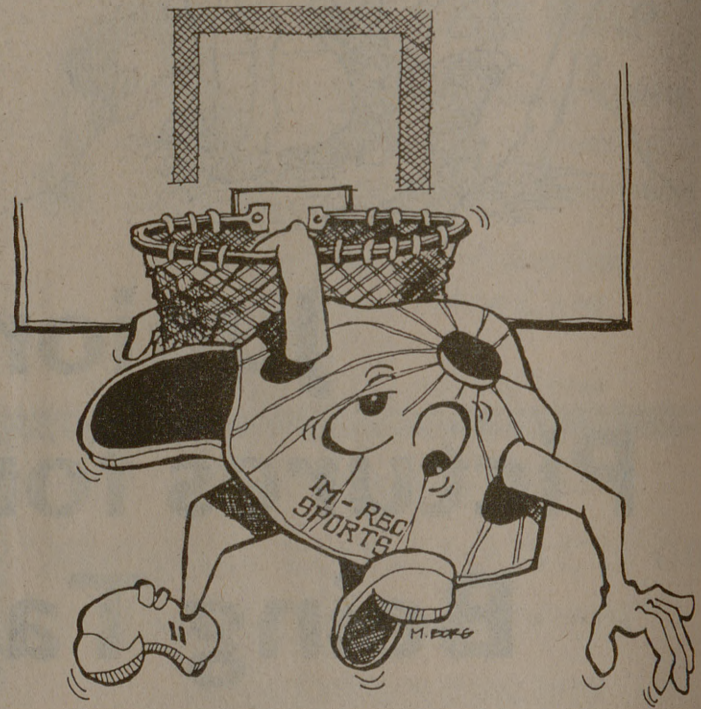
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