

Northerners rule Ag hockey

By AMY BOWMAN
Reporter

As a rule, you won't find ice hockey at most colleges in the South, but Texas A&M is an exception to the rule. The A&M hockey team is out to prove it.

Two northerners, Steve Mathiason and Tom Dobrez, started the team four years ago. Mathiason and Dobrez both played hockey and figured that maybe some of the 36,000 students at A&M might be interested too. So the two put up flyers and advertisements in an effort to recruit players.

Gordi Anderson, a member of 1985 squad, said the team's first year was mainly used to organize and that actual games weren't played until its second year.

The team gets most of its money from the University. Ice time, in either the Dallas or Houston rinks, is \$150 per game. The University also pays for the team's gas expenses in driving to, and from games. Players pay \$50 to cover the cost of jerseys and team equipment.

Almost all the team's games are

played in either Houston or Dallas and usually on the weekends. The team uses the facilities at Sharpstown Ice Arena in Houston during the season for a few practice sessions. But because ice time is so expensive, the team also practices in DeWare Field House, incorporating "dry land" drills.

All but one of the team's 17 players doesn't hail from either the North or Canada.

Anderson, a native of Ottawa, Canada, said only one player is a native Texan and five are from Canada. Because of the lack of hockey's popularity in Texas, Anderson said the team relies heavily on the experience of the northern players to keep the team on track.

A&M Hockey Team Coach Mike Silvaggio is from Las Vegas, Nev. and has played a lot of hockey in Cleveland, Ohio. Anderson said Silvaggio is a better coach than the one the team had last year.

"(Silvaggio) is much better," Anderson said. "He is very organized and that has helped the team out a

lot. He lives in College Station and that's a lot easier than going to Houston. We're really in for a good year, I think."

A&M plays other hockey teams from the University of Texas, Southern Methodist University, Tulane University and an All-Star out of Houston.

A&M (2-2) has lost to Texas twice already this season, but has defeated the Houston team twice. The team plans to enter a tournament after spring break with Texas, SMU and Tulane all entered in the tournament.

Crowds average about 200 people, Anderson said. The team publicizes the games by putting up flyers in the athletic buildings on campus and by word of mouth. Posters in the ice arena in Houston also give a schedule of games.

"We play (the) Houston (All-Stars) tonight in Houston," Anderson said. "I'm pretty sure we'll win. We really have had a great year and we're fairly confident of a victory tonight."

SWC indoor track meet becoming Hog heaven

From staff and wire reports

Arkansas is highly favored to earn its fifth consecutive Southwest Conference Men's Indoor Track and Field title Friday night at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Fort Worth.

The Razorbacks are the defending national indoor track kings and they haven't been away from the SWC throne since 1980, when Texas A&M claimed the crown.

"No one will come close to chasing Arkansas for the team title," said A&M Assistant Coach Ted Nelson.

Sprinters Rod Richardson and Tony Grier will spearhead the Aggies' fourth indoor meet effort of the season.

Richardson will be seeking his third consecutive SWC indoor sprint title in the 60-yard dash. He was scheduled to run in the Los Angeles Times Invitational last week, but a hamstring injury kept him out of competition. Nelson said he expects Richardson to be 100 percent for tonight's meet.

Grier is coming off a second-place 500-meter finish behind world-class sprinter Walter McCoy during the L.A. Times meet. Grier is out to repeat as the SWC 400-meter champ in Fort Worth.

The long jump is where the Ags will face their stiffest competition from the defending champion Razorbacks.

The Hogs are led by Mike Conley, a three-time All-American and L.A. Olympic silver medalist, and Joey Wells. A&M counters with senior Kurt Thome and Chris Walker.

Nelson said that Tony Tolson,

who is trying to recapture the 600-meter title he earned two years ago at the SWC Indoor meet, and high jumper Ethan Glass need to have solid performances for A&M to expect to place in the top three.

"Ethan has a tendency to peak at this meet," Nelson said. "He's fourth in the conference going in and can go as high as 7-foot-3 or 7-4."

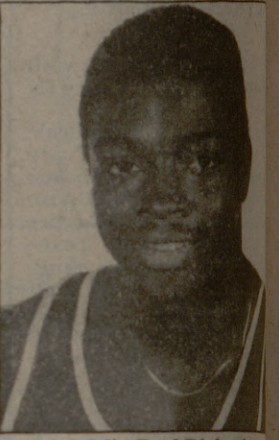
A&M triple jumper Francisco Oliveras, a junior college transfer, is one of the top three jumpers in the SWC going into the meet and Nelson expects him to place high. Oliveras has had a successful season from its outset, qualifying for the NCAA indoor meet with a leap of 52-8½ during the Oklahoma City Invitational just two weeks ago.

Mark Rutledge, Desmond Kidd, Mark Bruce and Britu Gilbreath make up the Aggies' pole vaulting contingent. Rutledge has posted a seasonal best of 15-6 and Bruce has topped 15 feet. Again, Nelson said the Ags must get strong showings from the pole vaulters to place well in the team standings.

A&M's Todd Howard will compete in both the shot put and the high hurdles. Howard, a 230 pound sophomore from Bryan, placed sixth in the shot in last year's SWC outdoor meet.

The mile and two-mile runs may be the only events the Ags steal from the Hogs at this year's SWC Indoor.

A&M's Arturo Barrios owns the SWC's fastest time in the two-mile run and is the favorite tonight. Barrios finished ahead of Arkansas' Paul Donovan and Henry Marsh at



A&M's Rod Richardson



A&M's Tony Grier

the Dallas Times Herald's two weeks ago.

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hill

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