

Ag tracksters hope to raise mast higher

By CINDY GAY
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M men's track team will pay homage to history as they set sail for the Drake Relays this weekend.

Like the daring Sir Francis Drake of 16th century England fame, the Aggies hope to strike swiftly, but silently, on the high seas or high stakes of one of the nation's most prestigious annual track meets, which is 65 schools strong this year.

After a knightly performance at the Baylor Invitational that earned the 400-meter relay team a spot in the NCAA championships, Lawrence Mitchell, Tony Grier, Darrell Austin and Rod Richardson hope to raise the mast even higher this weekend. The 800-meter relay team of Tommy Alsbrooks, Austin, Maurice Holt and Dean Stone and the 1600-meter relay team of Grier, Holt, Kyle Hargett, and Alsbrooks will

lead the second attacks.

Sir Richardson will run the 100-meters Invitational, followed by Grier in the 400 Invitational. The 10,000-meters will be challenged by Huey Treat and Arturo Barrios.

For freshman long jumper Chris Walker, who qualified for the NCAA indoors earlier this year, the trip to Iowa is a trip back home.

"I'm sure he's going to be pumped up," said Assistant Coach Ted Nelson.

The shuttle-hurdle relay team of Harry Johnson, Todd Howard, Lorenzo Welborn and Rickey Alexander, will run for the second time this season since their win at the Texas Southern Relays.

But the call from the women's track arena is for A&M's best distance runners to 'Go West, young women.'

When tracksters Esther Dedrick and Debby Noel asked Coach Bill

Nix for this weekend's agenda, he said their claim for gold was made in Walnut, California at the Mt. SAC Relays.

Dedrick and Noel have both won several seconds off their 3,000-meter time, and Nix has prospects in this meet's competition will see them on to their fastest showing. Dedrick is two seconds off the Texas A&M record.

"(Dedrick's) excited about her running," Nix said, "and the thing that brings success to any athlete is being excited about what they're doing."

The women runners have stayed away from the short speed interest these past few weeks, and put a longer road mileage. Nix said he had Dedrick and Noel reduced their body weight this season, just to boost they needed gain that extra

A&M pitchers overcome injuries, slumps

By CHERYL CLARK
Reporter

"The Cobra," "The Bull," and "The Tree."

These are the nicknames of the starting pitching rotation for the Texas A&M baseball team — Phillip Taylor, Tom Arrington and Kelly Keahey.

These three seniors all share the same goals for this season — to help the Aggies win the '85 Southwest Conference title and to sweep their three-game home series against the No. 10 Texas Longhorns this weekend.

The same Horns who swept the conference crown away from the Ags last year in Austin.

Even though the pitchers don't like to talk about the crucial series, fearing the publicity could motivate Texas, all three radiate an air of confidence about the rest of the season.

"I don't have any worries at all because we have The Cobra, The Bull and The Tree — one, two, three," said Arrington, a right-hander from Mill Valley, Calif. "And we got people like (shortstop Rob) Swain, (first

'Cobra', 'Bull', 'Tree' make up Ags' starting rotation

baseman Fred) Gegan, (left fielder Buddy) Haney, (centerfielder Mike) Scanlin and guys like that who are hitting the heck out of the ball.

"There's no way to look at a loss."

Such an air of confidence in one another is welcomed by the Aggies since both Arrington and Keahey have had a rough early season, Arrington with an injury and Keahey with a "big time slump."

Arrington is still recovering from a back injury he suffered at the beginning of the season.

"I came out on the mound, pitched a few innings and during one pitch just strained a muscle in my back," Arrington said.

"For a pitcher not to throw, it's like going hunting without a gun. Mentally, I've had to work a lot harder, but now I'm coming back to where I want to be pitching-wise. Now that I'm back all that I want to do is to help the team, because I know that they've backed me."

For Keahey, one of the Aggies' co-captains, a pitching slump has been the albatross around his neck all season long.

"I just got into a big-time slump," Keahey said. "I lost some pop off my fast ball and was having a little control problem. I was off, I just didn't have my rhythm on the mound, but everyday the coaches would help me work with it. I just had to pitch through it."

Taylor (8-2 overall, 4-1 in the conference) has been the most consistent pitcher this season for the Aggies. But last season was a different story for Taylor. He suffered a rotator cuff injury to his shoulder.

"As much time as I have put into waiting last year, rehabilitation and having to take medicine, it's good to see it pay off," Taylor said.

Despite all the talk of injuries and slumps, all three pitchers would rather put aside the Texas pre-series jitters and early season problems to

discuss less stressful things — like where and how they got their nicknames.

Taylor, from DeSoto, said his nickname came from the Scandal's male dancer commercial on the radio. The pitchers were sitting around listening to the radio in the clubhouse when a commercial came on advertising a dancer called "The Cobra." For some reason, that nickname stuck with Taylor.

Keahey got his nickname because of his consistent play for the Ags.

"A year ago, I had a good fall and summer, striking people out, while the year before that I wasn't even a starter," Keahey said. "Then, all of a sudden, I was starter, playing above my head I guess," Keahey said.

"The other players said I was playing in a tree (way above my head)."

Arrington got his handle because

as he puts it, "I produce."

"I'm the bull," he said. "I'm pretty steady out there. I go out and win my games, always staying away from the tense innings. The team is really confident in me that every time I go out there I'm going to win the game."

All kidding aside about the nicknames, all three pitchers, Taylor, Arrington and Keahey, are serious about A&M's series this weekend against Texas.

"We'd like the win because we're Aggies," Arrington said, "but it's more than that, the conference ring is at stake."

Keahey added, "The way we look at Texas is that they are trying to take something away from us and we want it."

Taylor made a prediction for A&M's SWC finishing kick.

"Five wins out of the last six games will get (the SWC title) for us," Taylor said.

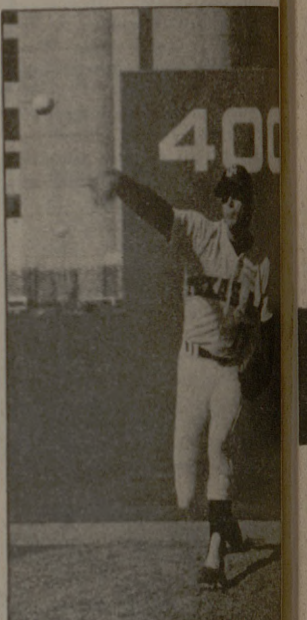
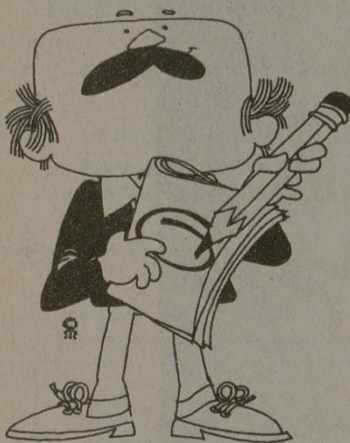


Photo by FRANK IRVING

A&M pitcher Phillip Taylor (above) should get a start in one of the three games against Texas this weekend.

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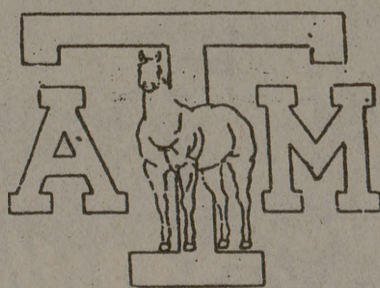
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