

**SPORTS**

**Ags, Sherrill ready to 'Bowl'**

By **PETE HERNDON**  
*Sports Writer*

For a man that is supposed to have a multi-million dollar job riding on the performance of his football team, Texas A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill seemed relaxed talking to the Southwest Conference Media Tour Tuesday.

It's easier to feel at ease when your optimistic and Sherrill's mood was just that.

"I think we're capable of having a winning season and going to a bowl game," Sherrill said.

Most A&M fans will notice the word "Cotton" missing from that statement.

Well, when you're a game over .500 during a three-year stretch, it might be wise not to promise too much, too soon.

Besides, Aggie supporters should welcome a chance to go some place warm, like maybe El Paso, around Christmas time.

What's the reason for Sherrill's optimistic outlook?

Simple. All of his quarterbacks seem to be coming along better than expected.

"(Craig) Stump is very consistent," Sherrill said. "He's very aware of what's going on on the field. He'll also be punting in certain situations."

To make things even better Sherrill, 1983's SWC Newcomer of the Year Kevin Murray is back to compete with Stump for his old job. Murray season was cut short, when he suffered a broken ankle in the third game of '84.

"He will definitely be ready to play against Alabama," Sherrill said. "He's improving every day, but we're not trying to rush him."

Sherrill added that the third-string quarterback, Mark Motley, has been a "big surprise" during two-a-day workouts thus far.

However, since the Aggies haven't worked out their entire game plan, Sherrill will not announce a starter until early next week.

But nobody needs to wait long to find out who the Aggies' running backs are.

Even though Anthony Toney and Roger Vick have gotten some bad preseason press for not having outside speed, Sherrill said Toney may help silence the critics early in the season.

"Toney is a major league back,"



Texas A&M Head Football Coach Jackie Sherrill (above) told sports writers at the Southwest Conference Press Tour Tuesday that he has the Aggies pointed in the right direction for 1985.

Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Sherrill said. "He can play either fullback or tailback for just about anybody. You can't take anything away from (SMU's Reggie) Dupard or (TCU's Kenneth) Davis, but for what we use him for, Toney is as good as anyone in the conference."

The depth position on offense belongs to the tight ends.

1983 All-SWC selection Rich Siler has worked his way back into a starting role, after being plagued with foot injuries most of last year. Rod Bernstein and Sylvester Morgan should also see plenty of action as backups.

"We'll be using two tight ends quite a bit and utilize a four-receiver offense," Sherrill said.

The Ags also plan to use several other offensive variations this year.

"We're not going to have to be near as conservative as we were last year," said Sherrill, referring to the injuries that crippled the Aggie offense last season.

Defensively, the Aggies are at least two-deep at every position.

"We can put a fresh defensive unit on the field every five minutes," Sherrill said. "We'll be able to use a four-man line when we need to and a five-man line on goal line situations, which is something we haven't been able to do in the past."

Rod Saddler will anchor the group at left defensive end, replac-

ing All-American Ray Childress. "He's better right now (at this point in his career) than Childress was," Sherrill said. "I wasn't extremely pleased with his performance Saturday, but, every time he steps on the field, I expect him to dominate it."

At linebacker, Sherrill is expecting "big things" from Johnny Heland. "You won't find a better line backer in the conference," he said.

Closing the press conference, Sherrill picked SMU to finish first in the SWC, followed by Houston and Arkansas.

"Then it's a jumble when you get down to fourth," he said.

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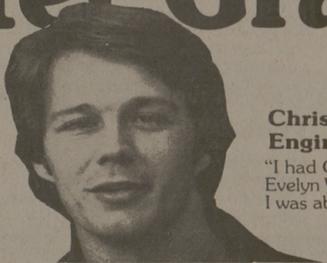
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