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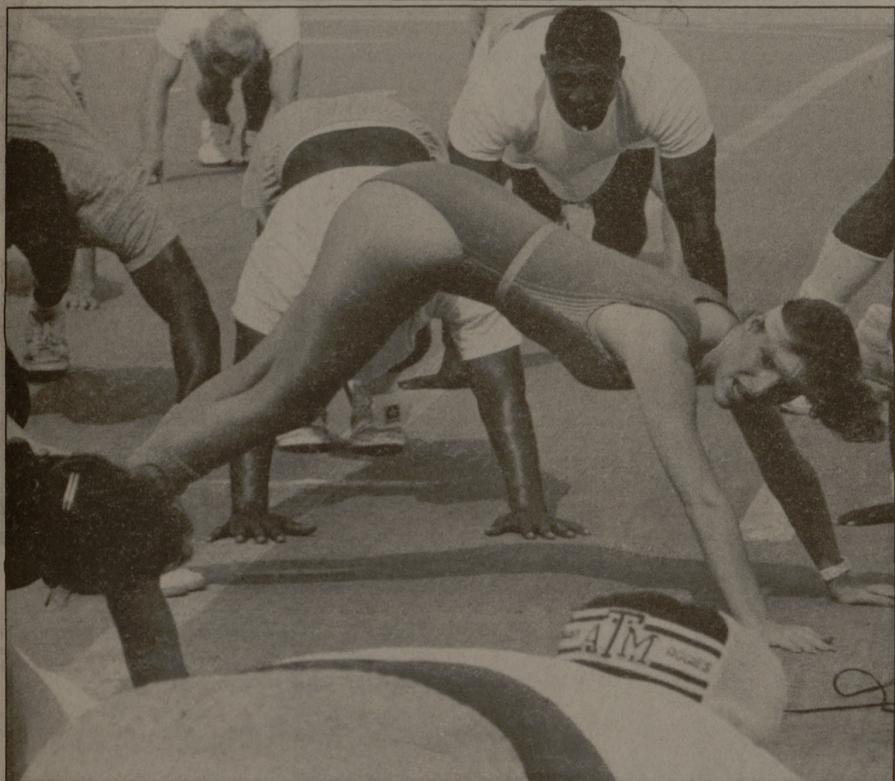


Photo by GREG BAILEY

Texas A&M football players learn aerobics at Kyle Field from one of the hired instructors. Aer-

obics exercise is the latest idea in football player conditioning — even the Dallas Cowboys use it.

Aggies take new 'steps' toward player workouts

By MARY EWING
Reporter

Win or lose, members of the Texas A&M football team will be out at Kyle Field working out on Sundays. But they're not practicing plays, they're practicing dance steps.

The Aggies have joined the ranks of other teams, such as the Dallas Cowboys, in using aerobics as a form of athletic conditioning.

"Players like it and the constant movement is good for rhythm and change of balance," said Bob Ward, the conditioning coach for the Cowboys. "I recommend dance exercise for everyone."

The aerobics program was brought to A&M two years ago by Bert Hill, the strength and conditioning coach for the Aggies.

The Waist Basket, a local aerobics studio, provides the instructors for the Sunday workouts.

Hill said, "The purpose of the aerobics is to warm up and stretch the soreness out of the players the day after the game."

A&M noseguard Sammy O'Brien said, "It's a little silly and we all joke around, but it's a good way to stretch after a hard game and get ready for Monday practice."

Holly Scifres, one of the aerobics instructors, said, "The players joked around because they

were embarrassed about not getting the steps right. Some players tried really hard and others just stood around in the back, but the high point was when a few of them broke out into disco steps when they couldn't follow."

Aggie offensive lineman Randy Dausin said he considers the exercises worthwhile — not feminine.

"It's a change of pace from the pressure of the coaches," Dausin said.

The A&M coaches said they changed the Sunday workout to aerobics because the original program of running and lifting weights was not benefiting the players because they were tired and sore after Saturday's game.

A&M Head Coach Jackie Sherrill said the players that play Saturday are put through the aerobics program to increase their flexibility and help the cardiovascular system.

Hill said, "Flexibility is a tool to help prevent injuries. You can be strong and move a house, but if you get injured on the field you are not going to help anybody."

Hecklers from the group brought some added humor to Sunday's workout as they tried to follow the sequence of steps given to them by the instructors.

Hill asked the instructors to train the players using the Waist

Basket's studio exercise program. The Sunday workout consisted of 20 minutes of running and 10 minutes of abdominal and upper body exercises. Scifres brought great moans and groans from the players as they were urged to count out loud during push-ups.

"We had a hard time getting them to follow us, but we had a good time and hope they will keep it up after football season," Scifres said.

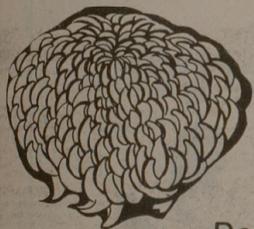
The coaches do not have any plans for an aerobics program after football season, but some players said they would like to continue it.

In Dallas, a few of the Cowboys work out at health clubs on their own time, the team conditioning coach said. Ward also said the Cowboys have a new facility to work in and hope to have an organized aerobics program next year.

O'Brien said he would not keep it up in the spring, but some of the other players probably would.

Despite the laughing and joking around, the players broke into a sweat and had a good workout.

Sherrill said, "It doesn't matter if the players think it's silly, it's part of our program and it's for the best interest of them."



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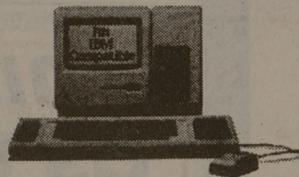
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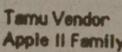
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