

Aggie swimmers to test the waters at SMU Saturday

By KEN SURY
Sports Writer

After last weekend's success, the Texas A&M swim teams now face Texas Christian today and Southern Methodist and Kansas Saturday in dual meets.

A&M Swim Coach Mel Nash said the TCU meet in Fort Worth will give the men a chance to swim their No. 2 and 3 events.

"We can find out where we stand as far as our flexibility goes," Nash said. "You to be a little flexible and find out where you might have some unknown strengths with your freshmen."

The women's meet, he said, will be much tighter competition.

Nash said the TCU women's team has good swimmers, but also a larger number of swimmers than the Aggies. The Aggies will field just seven swimmers since senior Edlyn Bell remains sidelined with an injury. The normal number of swimmers needed to field a solid team, Nash said, is about 12 to 14.

"They're (the A&M swimmers) all good, but it asks a lot of them (to swim three events as opposed to two)," Nash said.

The SMU-Kansas meet in Dallas should be a tougher match for the teams, Nash said.

The SMU women's team currently is ranked eighth in the NCAA Top 20 poll, while the Aggies are 15th.

"It's going to be a tough road to hoe," Nash said. "They (the SMU women) have the combination of numbers and quality. It's going to be real tough to knock them off."

The SMU men are just as tough as the women with a seventh place spot in the NCAA Top 20. The Aggies are ranked 16th.

"It's the same thing (as the situation with the women)," Nash said. "They're just a little bit better. If we beat them, it'll be an upset, if we don't beat them it won't be something to be ashamed of."

The Kansas women's team, ranked 13th in the nation, should also match up well with the A&M women, Nash said.

"Our top seven folks would match up (equally), maybe be a little stronger, than their top seven," he said. "But then, they have the next seven (swimmers), and our next seven are imaginary people."

Nash said the Kansas men's team is less experienced than their female counterparts.

A&M women netters to play in Rice tourney

By KEN SURY
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M women's tennis team plays its last tournament of the fall semester this weekend at the Rice Invitational in Houston.

"Our doubles teams are playing well," A&M Women's Tennis Coach Bobby Kleinecke said Thursday.

"We're really concentrating on singles for this tournament. If we rise to the occasion we'll do well."

The Rice Invitational is a flighted tourney, which means, for instance, that a school's No. 1 player plays other school's No. 1 player.

Here are the Aggies' first round drawings in singles competition:

•No. 1: Vanne Akagi vs. Hee Baek (No. 2 seed, Houston).

•No. 6: Kellie Dorman vs. Mary Lee Libera (No. 3 seed, Houston).

Kim Labuschagne, Gave Lynne Gensler, Karen Marshall, Helen Christiaanse and Laura Liang each earned byes in their respective flights.

The doubles teams first round drawings:

•No. 3: Christiaanse-Dorman (No. 1 seed) vs. Jean Carder-Katie McGrath (Baylor).

•No. 3: Liang paired with Ross (Tulane) vs. Michele Tabere (LSU)-Gigi Sacaris (Rice).

The No. 1 team of Akagi-Gensler and the No. 2 team of Marshall-Labuschagne earned first round byes.

A&M's record quiets critics

Sherrill no longer feeling heat from Aggie fans

DENNE H. FREEMAN
AP Sports Analysis

Jackie Sherrill hasn't exactly been the \$1 million football messiah that the free-spending Texas A&M University officials believed he'd be four years ago.

H.R. (Bum) Bright, who was then chairman of the Board of Regents, lured Coach Sherrill from the University of Pittsburgh for some \$250,000 year plus lucrative perks.

Sherrill's assignment: win the Southwest Conference title immediately, if not sooner, and get the Aggies in the Cotton Bowl for the first time since 1967.

Not only have the Aggies failed to come close to the SWC title under Sherrill (SWC finishes of 7-4-7) they haven't even been to any ole bowl, Cotton or otherwise.

It took closing victories over Texas Christian and Texas last year to prevent a major alumni uprising against Sherrill.

Although Sherrill has a five-year contract which is automatically renewable each season, some Aggie alumni were ready to fire the cocky coach just as quickly as he was hired.

Bright was openly critical of Sherrill, who had recruited well but failed to produce on the field.

The Aggies showed lack of discipline and coordination, beating themselves with mistakes instead of making an opponent earn its victory.

There also was the 'final period fatalism factor' in which the Aggies seldom rallied in the fourth quarter to win. The word was out: Get the Aggies down in three periods and you've got 'em.

On a rainy Saturday night against 20th ranked Southern Methodist, the Aggies shattered twin stigmas of choking against ranked teams and fading away in the fourth quarter.

The 19-17 victory over the Mustangs was simply the biggest in Sherrill's A&M coaching career.

It was the first time Sherrill's troops had defeated a ranked opponent. It was only the second time they had come from behind in the fourth quarter (Arkansas State was the other one) to do it.

Eric Franklin's 48-yard game-

winning field goal with less than two minutes to play could signal a turnaround in Sherrill's program. The Aggies, with a week of rest, are 6-2 overall and 4-1 in SWC play. The Bluebonnet Bowl has been the Aggies' constant shadow.

Arkansas, Texas Christian and Texas are the Aggies' final three opponents. A clean sweep and they have a chance at the Cotton Bowl. Victories in two out of three games make them a prime bowl candidate.

"The victory over SMU really pepped up the whole campus," said assistant sports information director Alan Cannon. "Everybody is talking about it."

About all the campus coffee shops had to talk about until the SMU victory was Sherrill's brilliant innovation to have a 12th Man kickoff team composed of members from the student body.

A portion of the Aggies' turnaround this year can be traced to Sherrill's decision to hire Lynn Amedee as offensive coordinator and quarterback coach and Joe Avezzano as offensive line coach.

A&M's offense shows imagination and the offensive line is blocking better than it has before in the Sherrill era. The Aggies are leading the SWC in offense with some 150 yards more per game than a year ago.

New linebacker Coach Bob Davie is helping defensive coordinator R.C. Slocum forge a hard-hitting, intelligent defense that ranks third in the SWC.

The Aggies are far from a polished team. They had 120 yards in penalties against SMU, including a quick 15 on Sherrill for unsportsmanlike conduct. Referee-baiting is still a bad Sherrill habit.

Asked if it was his biggest victory at A&M, Sherrill replied, "No question about it. SMU has the most talent of any team I've ever played or coached against."

Sherrill added "This is the kind of victory that gives your whole program confidence. It was much needed and it was deserved. Our coaches and kids have been working so hard."

He has posted seasons of 5-6, 5-5-1 and 6-5 since his move from Pittsburgh.



Jackie Sherrill has finally delivered to "win-hungry" A&M fans.

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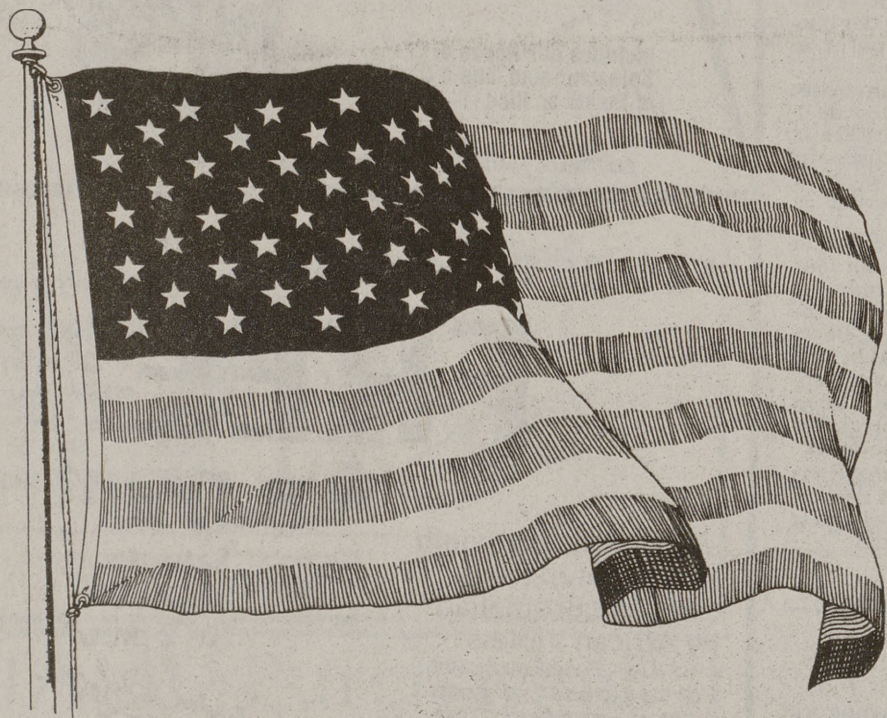
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