

Aggie works as volunteer coach

By LAURIE MATUSEK
Reporter

A Texas A&M physical education major coached a local junior high football team to its second winning season and the players' parents say they couldn't be happier.

"There are no hotshots on the team and everybody works together," says Carol Morris, a player's mother. "Coach Ferguson is great and we want him to stay."

Gregg Ferguson, 23, a fifth-year senior at A&M, is in his fourth year of coaching seventh grade football and basketball at A&M Consolidated Junior High School.

Ferguson, who also is working toward a teaching certificate in English, says the time he spends coaching does not fulfill the teaching requirements that count toward his degree plan. He says he coaches just for fun.

"I played sports in junior high and high school, and my freshman year at Wharton County Junior College I played football on scholarship," Ferguson says. "The next year I transferred to Texas A&M and found it hard to give it all up so I decided to take up coaching on a part-time basis."

Ferguson says he has always been interested in sports.

"My dad was a coach at A&M Consolidated High School, so he had a major influence on me," he says.

In 1981, Ferguson applied for and was accepted as volunteer coach of Consolidated's newly formed seventh grade B-team in football and basketball.

"I did it for my own satisfaction, and, after the two seasons were over, the junior high paid me \$700," Ferguson says.

The team's abilities have progressed and so has his salary, Ferguson says. He now is paid \$750 a season.

Football mom Stephanie Ryan says parents agree that Ferguson isn't looking to gain personal status, but instead is working to make the players become better individuals.

"He encourages the players to be Christians by starting out each game with a prayer," Ryan says. "He teaches the kids values, telling them that it takes team effort to win games."

"It's just his way of talking to the kids that makes him special. He makes all the players feel that they are equal."

Ferguson says each individual is important.

"Win or lose, it's my job to give every player a chance to play," Ferguson says. "I didn't stress winning. I only stressed that they should try and learn how to become good athletes."

"I told them that the only way they would lose, however, was if they beat themselves. In any case, I try to maintain a relaxed but disciplined atmosphere for the players."

Ferguson stresses the importance of having discipline in practice and in the game.

"There has to be discipline or the kids would end up getting hurt," he says. "When it's time for business, it's time for business."

Ferguson says he's not too tough on the kids all of the time.

"It was pouring down rain during our last practice of the season, so I decided to let the kids have a little fun," he says. "I put the blocking dummy directly in front of a huge mud puddle and let the kids plow on through."

"They had a great time and so did I."

The following day Consolidated's seventh grade B-team defeated Waller Junior High 36-0.



"Coach" Greg Ferguson helps a youth with his basketball skills.

After football season, several parents joined together to throw a pizza party for the team, Ferguson says. The parents bought trophies for their children and the players purchased a plaque for their coach that read: "To Coach Gregg Ferguson, with care and appreciation, for leading our boys in the direction of becoming young men."

Upon graduation, Ferguson says he hopes to get a job at a 5-A school that has a solid program and winning tradition.

"I'd like to coach at junior varsity level and eventually move to varsity level," he says. "My ultimate goal is to become head football coach at 5-A school."

Accused killer born again, baptized in jail

Associated Press

EL PASO — Henry Lee Lucas, the one-eyed drifter who boasted of hundreds of murders only to recant his grisly confessions, was baptized Sunday in the chapel of the El Paso County Jail.

Lucas, clad in an orange jail uniform, was completely immersed in water in a baptismal font at the jail chapel. The dripping inmate was then given communion by the Rev. Russell Bone, who conducts an interdenominational jail ministry here.

As Lucas and a handful of guests sat in the bare little room with pale blue walls, Bone read from the Bible.

The half-hour ceremony was attended by three jail guards, a reporter from the El Paso Times, members of the Lucas defense team, including flamboyant El Paso private investigator Jay J. Armes and sister Clemmie Schroeder of Georgetown.

Lucas has credited Schroeder, who conducts a jail ministry, with leading him to his new-found Christianity

while he was incarcerated in Georgetown.

When the ceremony ended, guards hustled Lucas out of the chapel and back to the eighth floor of the jail, where he is being kept in solitary confinement. Schroeder was allowed to visit him there after the ceremony.

Lucas is awaiting trial on murder charges in El Paso.

For a while, Lucas was considered one of the deadliest serial killers in

U.S. history. But after recanting hundreds of confessions, Lucas is now widely regarded as the perpetrator of a massive hoax.

Authorities now say that nearly half the murder cases attributed to him by Texas Rangers are being reopened or were never closed.

Lucas was convicted of killing his mother in 1960. Since 1983, he has been convicted of five murders, including one capital murder that put him under the death sentence in Texas.

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