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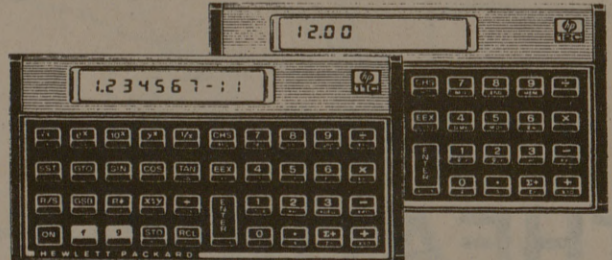
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Texas A&M lacrosse players Kevin Peter (40) and Robert Pfannenstiel (25) converge on a loose ball as do four other A&M and

Rice players. The Ags, hoping to improve on last year's 11-4 record, began their 1986 season Saturday with a 13-3 win over the Owls.

Winning familiar to Ag lacrosse

A&M team intends to build on successful past

By **DANNY MYERS**
Reporter

Winning has become a tradition at Texas A&M this year.

Of course, you know by now that the A&M football team won the outright Southwest Conference title for the first time since 1968, and the Aggie basketball team has a chance to win its first SWC crown since 1980.

But did you know about the A&M lacrosse team?

For this Aggie team, winning is nothing new. Last year the A&M lacrosse team finished with an 11-4 record, won its division, but lost the championship game to Texas Tech, 15-13.

This year the Aggies have all but three players returning from last year's team and are expecting even bigger things.

This past Saturday, in the Aggies' first division game of '86, they defeated the Rice Owls, 13-3.

A&M scored two points in the first two minutes of the game and added four more unanswered points to take a 6-0 halftime lead.

The team is led on offense by Bob Pfannenstiel, Kevin Peter and Chris Patton, while the defense is anchored by Chris Men-

zel, Scott Pajeski and Rick Burrell.

Menzel, a fourth-year player, said that he thinks most people are unaware that A&M even has a lacrosse team.

"Lacrosse hasn't had enough publicity around A&M," Menzel said. "We've had Southwest Lacrosse Association (SLA) championship teams and nobody knows about it."

Burrell, an experienced defenseman, said, "A&M usually dominates the East division (of the SLA) and Texas Tech usually dominates the West."

The league is divided into two divisions and the winners of these divisions play each other in a championship game.

"We want people to know we are a winning team because people like to come out and see winners," Burrell said.

Being an extramural sport, he said, somebody who knows nothing about the game can join the team, learn the basics and get in on the action.

"We let everybody play — even the rookies," Burrell said. "I don't think any other sport, of lacrosse's nature, can say that."

Some players have started in only their second season.

"A lot of athletic people get out

of high school and enjoy playing a contact sport, but aren't able to make the football team," Burrell said. "Lacrosse offers them an alternative. It's an incredible release of aggression."

The team supplies the players with helmets and shoulder pads. The helmet is made of leather with a metal face guard and the pads are foam rubber. Players must purchase their own sticks and gloves.

The stick has a leather or braided nylon net attached to a shaft made of hickory, aluminum or fiberglass. Depending on the player's position, the stick is 4-6 feet long and costs from \$35-\$45.

The heavy gloves, similar to those used in hockey, cost about the same as the stick.

"There are two philosophies for wearing pads," Burrell said. "Some players pad up so much that if they get hit, they're not going to get hurt. Others think if they shed enough pads, they can move fast enough not to get hit."

The hard rubber ball can be no smaller than 7 3/4 inches in circumference and must weigh between 5 and 5 1/4 ounces. When flung from the end of the stick, it can travel in excess of 90 mph.

Lacrosse is played in the United States, Canada, England,

Ireland and Australia and is probably America's oldest game.

Early French explorers along the St. Lawrence River saw the Iroquois Indians of the Six Nations engaging in this bloody sport they called "baggataway."

The Indians passed an animal-hide ball down a playing field with goals marked by each tribe's medicine man.

To pass the ball, the Indians used a crooked stick which the French thought looked like the bishop's cross, thus naming the game lacrosse.

At times, teams played with 400 to 500 players, as opposed to the 10 used today. Games sometimes lasted for several days and broken arms and legs were common. Some Indians even died playing lacrosse.

Today, lacrosse is less violent, but sprains, pulled muscles, and bruises are still a part of the game.

Anyone interested in joining the team can call Jon Turton at 846-9494 or Rick Burrell at 693-3888.

The Aggies' next game is Saturday at 1 p.m. on the Main Drill Field against the San Antonio Lacrosse Club.

Everyone eyeing Texas football crop

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Ask anyone — recruiting analysts, head coaches, Southwest Conference recruiting coordinators, anyone — how strong the current crop of Texas schoolboy football players is. The answer never varies.

The answer is very. As in very strong.

"I think it's an exceptional year," says recruiting guru Max Emfinger of Houston. "For overall talent, it's about like last year. The last two years have been exceptional."

Ray Sewalt, in his fifth year as TCU's recruiting coordinator, calls

the current Texas class "the best class I've seen from top to bottom." A&M's Tim Cassidy simply says, "The talent is as good as every year."

All of which explains why suitcases riding around Texas' airport baggage carousels are stamped with logos from Iowa, Arizona State, Nebraska and UCLA.

Oklahoma's stamp always can be found in Texas from El Paso to El Campo. And Oklahoma State, which has lured Thurman Thomas and Hart Lee Dykes across the border to Stillwater the last two years, continues to be a formidable presence in the state.

And why not? Never will there be a more perfect year for the intrusion of "foreign" teams on Texas soil than 1986.

SMU is banned from doling out a single scholarship when signing date comes Feb. 12. TCU is in the throes of an NCAA investigation on the heels of self-disclosures that star running back Kenneth Davis and others were paid money by alumni and later booted off Jim Wacker's team last fall.

SWC champion Texas A&M has been rocked by allegations that alumni and coaches were paying players, Texas Tech and Rice have

undergone coaching changes, and Fred Akers hardly knows who'll be standing next to him on the sidelines next fall after the firing of four assistants and departure of, at least, two others.

USA Today includes three Texans on its High School All-USA Football Team and another three on the second team. The only state with more first-team representatives is California with five.

Because of all the upheaval within the state, Emfinger, for one, thinks that many top prospects will leave the state. He estimates as many as 125 players will leave the state.

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