

Sports

Aggies climb to top in world of recruiting A&M signs top running back

By Homer Jacobs
Sports Editor

The Texas A&M football program won the battle and the war Wednesday — the national signing day for high school seniors — by signing bluechip and Parade All-American running back Randy Simmons of McKinney.

By winning the recruiting battle for Simmons, the Aggies also won the whole 1987 recruiting war as A&M signed four players off the Dallas Times Herald bluechip list.

The Aggies already had received commitments from the other three bluechippers — running back Darren Lewis of Dallas Carter and a pair of linemen, Matt McCall of Lufkin, who also was a Parade All-American, and Greg Lakin of Cypress-Fairbanks.

Simmons, who many experts consider the top running back in the nation, rushed for 2,557 yards and 44 touchdowns last year to set a Class 4A rushing record.

The running back did not, however, make the required 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Simmons scored a 670 but managed a 2.2 grade-point ratio in school. Therefore, he needs only a 680 on the next SAT try to be eligible to play with A&M in the fall because of his higher grade-point ratio.

A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill said he was very pleased with this year's crop of schoolboy talent that will join the Aggies next fall.

"All the credit really goes to our players on campus and certainly our assistant coaches," Sherrill said. "To tie it all together, I am very, very happy."

It was no secret that Sherrill was after running backs, and by landing the top two in the state, the Aggies' recruiting campaign should rate as one of the tops in the nation.

"We evaluated every running back in the country just about," Sherrill said. "The running backs in this state, we felt, as a whole and individually, were better than any place else in the country."

"I think we have the nucleus of players that will improve our football team. And when I say improve our football team, you're talking about going from 10-2 to 11-1 and 12-0. That's the quality of players we were able to bring in."

Besides the four bluechippers signed, the Aggies also landed five other players rated in Texas Football's Top 30 list.

Crane running back Gerald Mitchell, Alto running back-defensive back Steve Lofton, Cameron linebacker Seth Dockery, lineman Jeff Huff of Deer Park and lineman Keith Alex of Beaumont Central all have signed with the 1986 Southwest Conference champions.

In addition to the top Texas talent headed Sherrill's way, A&M also signed two top out-of-state players.

Quarterback Bucky Richardson from Broadmoor High School in Baton Rouge, La., and wide receiver Cornelius Patterson of Moss Point, Miss., decided to cross state lines to play their college football.

Richardson made the Times-Picayune Top 32 list, while Patterson is known nationwide for his 4.3 speed in the 40-yard dash.

The following are the other recruits A&M has signed as of Wednesday Feb. 11:

Karry Vincent, receiver, Port Arthur Jefferson; Alton Gillis, defensive lineman, Dallas Kimball; Ramsey Bradberry, defensive back, Richardson Berkner; Doug Carter, running back, Dallas Thomas Jefferson; Larry Horton, running back, Tatum High; Keith McAfee, running back, Sugarland Willowridge; Greg Waddle, tight end, Columbus High; James Webb, defensive lineman, Dallas Roosevelt; John Martin, offensive lineman, Hallsville High; William Thomas, quarterback, Amarillo Palo Duro; Chris Crooms, defensive back, Baytown Lee; and Shane Garrett, wide receiver, Crowley, La.

Athletic allowance draws skepticism

Editor's note: This is the second segment in a two-part series on the question of monthly allowances for scholarship athletes. This segment discusses the feasibility of implementing such a plan and its possible drawbacks.

By Doug Hall
Sports Writer

The idea of college athletes receiving a monthly living allowance — based on a need basis — has taken hold with many administrators and is being considered by the NCAA.

The reasons behind the plan are to cut down on infractions and provide an easier lifestyle for the athletes.

Despite the positive aspects of the monthly allotments supported by such credible sources as Texas A&M President Dr. Frank Vandiver, Texas Christian University Head Basketball Coach Jim Killingsworth and Dr. Steven Picou, professor of sports sociology at A&M, detractors to this proposed plan line up in force to present the other side of the argument.

Rick Baker, an assistant SWC commissioner, said he would be surprised to see the divisions allow such a payment simply due to the costs incurred.

"With all of the momentum these days towards fiscal managements and cutbacks, I'd be surprised for this to go through," Baker said. "It would be a shift of momentum to add an additional cost such as this."

"Where do you draw the line on such a payment? It almost seems like a no-win situation."

Baker, a former college athlete, readily admits he is personally against such a stipend.

"I guess you could call me old-fashioned," he said. "I believe it's a situation where schools provide for a free education, and that in itself should amount to something."

"As far as feasibility, however, I don't know. I know a lot of coaches would be in favor of it, and it might cut down on improprieties. But it would just seem contrary to what is already established."

"But I can definitely see where there is momentum both ways."

Merrill Green, the head football coach at Bryan High School, supports the plan, but with the same res-

ervations many administrators express.

"My attitude changes a lot on this subject," Green said. "The way I understand it, there are a lot of reasons for and against it."

"Like so many other coaches, I'm a proponent of the \$10-to-\$15-a-month idea. But I'm afraid that if you give them \$100 a month, they will want \$200. But I can't see anything wrong with it if it's kept to a minimum."

"And I guess the \$15 I received back in the '50s probably equates to \$100 today."

John David Crow, associate athletic director at Texas A&M and a

there's another group that says, "Hey, we'd like to be able to do this, but we're going to have to make cuts in other areas to do so."

"When you've got three factions like that going, it's going to be hard to get a majority."

Robinson also sees the dangers involved for non-revenue sports by implementing such a plan.

"Right now, it's difficult to determine how non-revenue sports will fare with something like this," Robinson said. "Times are tough right now, and there are a lot of schools already dropping sports. Unless you can increase your revenues to provide the cash, something has to gi-

he is definitely against this type of payment.

"I'm against it," Crawford said, "because this isn't professional athletics. Through the help of coaches you can get good summer jobs and make enough money to get by on. There is also meal money. I just think it would defeat the purpose of college athletics."

Mike Clifford, the Aggies' 6-8 forward, said he was originally against the idea but had changed his mind somewhat after examining the different aspects.

"I was against it at first," he said. "But there are a lot of guys around here who have to go to summer school every summer just to remain eligible."

"I can see where guys would need it, but somehow, eventually, it would get messed up."

Besides summer school, there are athletes who must work out all summer to stay in shape, swimmer Chris Emig said.

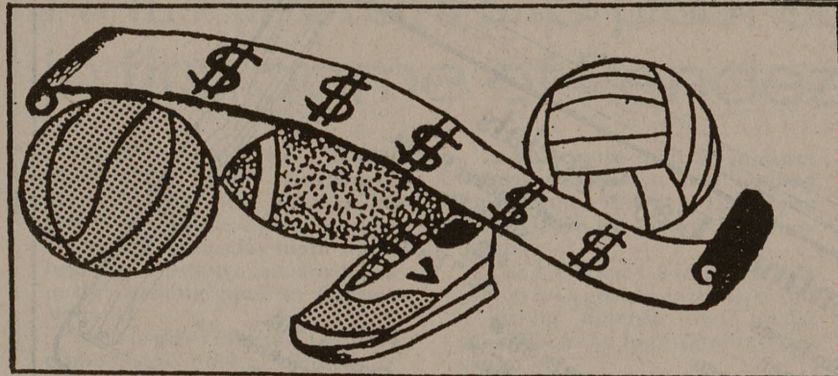
"We have to swim all summer just to be ready for the fall," he said.

All three athletes said they personally did not need the money, but, as Clifford said, "if you offered it to me, I'd certainly take it."

For the moment, however, no athlete will be receiving any type of legal monthly allotment. In all probability, with the inevitable legal battles and heated debates ahead, Picou's estimate of two to three years for such a bill's passage is probably a safe guess.

Would such a payment put a permanent drain on the majority of colleges? Would athletes be content with the figure allotted or would it lead to a full scale bidding war? Will non revenue sports survive this type of payment in today's financial crunch? Or is college athletics continuing to outgrow its importance.

At this point, everyone is still evaluating the pros and cons. But there is definitely momentum in both directions.



former Heisman Trophy winner, is also one who sees both sides of the fence.

"For me to say that I don't think they (athletes) should receive this type of money would almost seem un-American," Crow said. "But it all gets down to a situation of what you can afford. How can you fund it? How many universities can afford to pay this type of payment. Those are all questions that will have to be answered."

Crow, using the modest figure of \$100 a month, said for A&M to pay its 240 scholarship athletes over the course of the school year rings up a total approaching a quarter of a million dollars.

Crow also said that implementing such a plan would require exhaustive amounts of legislation and talk.

"On one side you have the schools that would not have any trouble funding such a payment," he said. "On the other side you have those who could never afford it, and then

ve."

But, Robinson argued, there are millions of ways to cut back on expenses. Travel expenses, equipment and facilities are all areas that can be cut, he said.

Or so could scholarships and non-revenue sports, which worries even proponents such as Picou.

"It will definitely be a financial strain," Picou said. "What we don't want to see is this payment reducing the total number of scholarships, especially in smaller schools. Many people are also afraid it would eliminate non-revenue sports."

The answer, Picou said, is to carefully research what each school can afford without damaging existing programs or turning the payment into a bidding war among the top colleges.

Paul Crawford, an integral member of A&M's basketball team, said

Senior Finals

President Vandiver has signed a proposal that will require graduating seniors at Texas A&M to take final exams. The plan would mean that "Dead Week", a time that students are supposed to be free of tests and other assignments to prepare for finals, would be reduced to four days for all students. This will eliminate weekend studying because the final exam schedule will begin on Friday. All students, according to President Vandiver's proposal, will now be given exams in a four day period: Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday. The current system allows students seven days for "Dead Week" with which to study and a less rigorous five day exam schedule.

Professors must have all graduating senior grade reports completed and sent to the Registrar's Office by 5:00 P.M. Tuesday, the last day of finals. Provided there is no computer down-time and all professors report senior grades by 5:00 P.M., seniors will receive their grades on Thursday. Registrar Robert Lacey stated that if the previous conditions are met, and if the degree audit system is in place, grades may possibly be available late Wednesday afternoon.

The Auto Degree Audit System is not in operation at this time and although it has been tested, it would need further testing and installation prior to the May 1988 enactment of senior finals. Seniors prior to May 1988 have two working days to clear any blocks to their graduation for parking violations, miscalculated grades, etc.. Under the new proposal, seniors will have from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. Thursday when they receive their grades to clear any blocks and to try to locate professors if a grade error has been made. Note that classes for all students end Tuesday and it is very likely that professors will leave for the semester after they submit their grades Tuesday afternoon.

Another casualty of the Senior Finals proposal is the Corps of Cadets Commissioning Ceremony. Beginning in May 1988, the Commissioning Ceremony as we know it will be eliminated. Also Final Review will be rescheduled, possibly to the weekend prior to graduation. Attendance to Final Review will be significantly reduced if parents must travel to A&M on separate weekends to attend both Commencement and Final Review. This inconvenience may result in the eventual elimination of Final Review according to some Corps officials.

Possibly the most dramatic changes caused by the Senior Finals proposal will be seen in the Commencement Ceremony. Administrators foresee that Commencement attendance will suffer. Before May 1988, families are able to witness campus life because all students that are not graduating are still attending classes. After the enactment of senior finals, families and friends will not only miss witnessing the friendliness that makes A&M unique, but they may also be burdened with the parking problems and confusion that accompanies students moving out of their dorms. Texas A&M's Commencement is unique because each graduate receives his or her diploma as he walks across the stage, unlike other universities which hand out hollow tubes and send the diploma in the mail. When the Senior Finals proposal is enacted, time constraints placed on faculty, possible computer failure, and other factors may mean A&M will have to resort to the same impersonal policies already used by other universities in the state. If graduates no longer receive their diplomas at Commencement, attendance will suffer even further.

This information is highly confidential and was not given to the student organizations who were working to save these traditions. If you have any questions, contact President, Dr. Frank E. Vandiver at 845-2217.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Traditions Council