

# A&M teams enjoy success in '86-'87

## Most Aggie squads are familiar with post-season action

By Doug Hall  
Assistant Sports Editor

From fall to spring, football to baseball, the Texas A&M Athletic Department knew the 1986-87 school year was not going to be an easy one.

After all, it had been quite some time since a Southwest Conference school had gone to the Cotton Bowl in football, been part of a three-way tie for the basketball crown and tied with national powerhouse Texas for the baseball title.

If that wasn't enough, the Aggies had gone on to top the Auburn Tigers and Bo Jackson in Dallas on New Year's Day 1986 for a Top-10 national ranking, finish second in the SWC basketball tourney in Dallas before going to the National Invitational Tournament, and win the baseball tourney here in College Station before losing in the first round of the NCAA tourney.

For the most part, the old sports adage, "It's harder to stay on top than it is to get there," proved all too true for the Aggies — a fact that was not lost on Jackie Sherrill, Texas A&M's athletic director and head football coach.

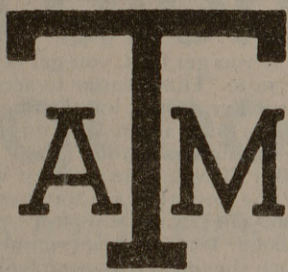
Sherrill quoted the proverb himself in this year's Cotton Bowl media guide.

Texas A&M did, however, make it back to Dallas for the second consecutive season.

In fact, their only two regular-season losses were very similar to those of the 1985 season. In the season opener, the Aggies suf-

fered a tough loss to LSU in Baton Rouge (much like the Alabama loss in Birmingham in '85), and then dropped a 14-10 cliffhanger to Arkansas in Fayetteville (like the Baylor loss in Waco in 1985).

The Cotton Bowl, unfortunately for Aggie fans, did not



turn out like the Auburn game. Ohio State, led by quarterback Jim Karsatos and All-Americans Cris Carter and Chris Spielman, thumped the Aggies.

As the year rolled into the spring semester, the ball was handed over to the A&M basketball team and Head Coach Shelby Metcalf.

After a so-so preseason performance, the Aggies won four of their first five SWC games with the only loss being to nationally-ranked Texas Christian. But the Aggies subsequently lost five straight and finished at 6-10 and the bottom seed in the SWC tourney.

In Dallas, however, the Aggies turned the tables on the conference and beat TCU, Texas Tech

and Baylor to earn an automatic NCAA bid. They lost to Duke in the first round.

Mark Johnson's A&M baseball team opened conference play with three consecutive losses to Arkansas — not the ideal way for a defending champion to get the conference season started.

But the Aggies, led by the hitting of Scott Livingstone, the all-around play of shortstop Ever Magallanes and the input of four key freshmen, bounced back to finish third in conference. The team will play second-place Arkansas this weekend at the SWC tourney in Austin.

The softball team, which was ranked second nationally prior to the season, wrapped up its 1987 season last week by finishing 49-7 and will host Louisiana Tech in a best-of-three series at Bee Creek Park this weekend in regional play.

Since 1983, the Aggies have one first-place national finish and two second-place finishes.

The volleyball team, under first-year Coach Al Givens, placed second to Texas and earned an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament, losing to Georgia in the first round.

The men's golf team won the SWC golf title last month, a feat they last accomplished in 1982.

That year, 1982, is one that's important to the A&M athletic department. Many have called it the beginning of an era because that's when Sherrill was lured away from Pittsburgh to run the athletic programs at A&M.

But Sherrill's leadership doesn't necessarily keep the numerous Aggie athletic programs running; money does. And in that area, the Texas A&M's athletic budget reflects its success on the playing fields.

The 1986-87 athletic budget is approximately \$7.8 million, placing A&M behind Texas' \$8.9 million and comparable to Arkansas' \$8 million budget, according to the figures made public to *The Battalion*. (Private institutions such as TCU, Rice and Southern Methodist do not divulge their records.)

But according to John David Crow, Texas A&M's associate athletic director, the Aggies rank second to no one in student participation — at least when it comes to football.

Crow said between 60 and 70 percent of A&M's 36,000 students buy tickets to A&M football games.

"That's a great deal of students," Crow said. "I'd say that is unique from most other universities. Other schools limit the number of tickets sold to the student body because they don't get near the turn out we do."

Crow went on to say that if there's one area the Athletic Department would like to improve upon, it's attendance at basketball games.

"When we can only draw 1,500 to 2,000 fans to games on campus, and we're playing 12 to 13 home games a season, then that's a concern."

# It's time for all athletes to stop complaining and submit to drug testing before more die

By Anthony Wilson  
Sports Writer

On May 2, Hernell "Jeep" Jackson, a basketball player at the University of Texas-El Paso, collapsed and died during a benefit basketball game. When he died, he became one of a group of illustrious athletes, including Len Bias and Don Rogers, who have recently died of drug-related causes. Cocaine killed them.

### Viewpoint

Yet even the tragic deaths of these men hasn't curtailed the flow of drugs in the sports world. Dwight Gooden, Tim Lincecum, Keith Hernandez, William Bedford, Gary McLain, John Drew, Chris Washburn, Chuck Lincecum — the list is actually much longer and reads like a Who's Who in Sports.

All have used drugs. Why would these athletes, who seem to have the world at their fingertips, risk everything for a few moments of instant gratification?

Because the agencies representing athletes allow them to.

Every time the NBA, NFL, NCAA or professional baseball devises a drug testing program, the players' association and its lawyers cry foul and complain about violations of the players' civil rights.

Violations of their civil rights? Bull corn.

Drug testing not only serves as a

method of detecting drug users, but it also is a deterrent from using drugs in the first place. Athletes have a responsibility to their employers or schools, to their teammates and to their fans.

A deterrent such as drug testing may be the only way to stop athletes from ever experimenting with and getting hooked on drugs. Drug testing may be the only way to save some of their lives and force them to live up to their responsibilities.

Professional and college athletics are big businesses with multi-million dollar budgets. Owners and universities invest huge amounts of money in athletes in the form of salaries or scholarships, and they expect a return.

Athletes on drugs don't perform well, just as lawyers, doctors and teachers on drugs don't work at full capacity.

Yet no law firm in the nation would allow one of its attorneys to get involved with drugs three times before firing him. An NBA team would for a star guard.

An athlete also has a responsibility to his teammates to perform up to his capability and stay away from drugs.

One has to wonder if the Houston Rockets would have beaten the Boston Celtics in last year's NBA championship finals if they had the services of point guard John Lucas, who was kicked off the team for using drugs.

The Rockets were dealt another

blow this year when two of their top three guards, Lewis Lloyd and Mitchell Wiggins, tested positive for cocaine. Because Lloyd and Wiggins did not come forward and ask for help, they were banned from the league for one year.

When Lloyd returned from drug rehabilitation, he appeared on television and said he really didn't feel drugs were a problem with him and he couldn't understand why he had been singled out.

What an embarrassment to himself, his family and his teammates. Has this man no shame?

Lastly, athletes are indebted to the fans.

Hey guys, remember the fans? The ones who buy the tickets and posters, creating a demand for your talents which now warrants millions of dollars per year.

Athletes owe these people. The least athletes can do is respect the fans enough to be good role models for their children.

The fans, along with everyone else, are tired of hearing the cop-outs players give for using drugs and not wanting mandatory drug testing.

Michael Ray Richardson, a former All-Star NBA guard who has been banned from the league for drug use, recently explained the reason he went back to drugs the last time. He said the New Jersey Nets, his former team, rushed him back into playing too fast and the pressure was too great.

But does anyone believe the Nets

forced Richardson to buy drugs from a dealer, roll up a \$100 bill and use it to snort cocaine?

Richardson doesn't know pressure. Joe Average Fan, who works 40 hours a week at the factory and part-time at the filling station to feed his children and make ends meet, knows pressure. He doesn't want to hear Richardson's version.

Players' associations refuse to allow mandatory drug testing because they say it's degrading.

Bullfeathers. What could be more degrading than scratching your groin and spitting a stream of tobacco juice while standing in the batter's box in front of 50,000 people? If President Reagan and his Cabinet aren't embarrassed by urinating into a test tube, why should a utility infielder for the Seattle Mariners be?

Many athletes such as Reggie Jackson, Mike Schmidt, Isiah Thomas and Magic Johnson have openly opposed drugs in recent advertisements. For this they should be commended and applauded.

Now if more athletes will join in their efforts and urge the agencies that represent them to agree to drug testing, drugs can be eliminated from athletics. It should be done and done now.

No one wants to see another young man with so much talent and ability die needlessly. These deaths can be prevented. Lives are at stake. The friends and family of Jeep Jackson will tell you.

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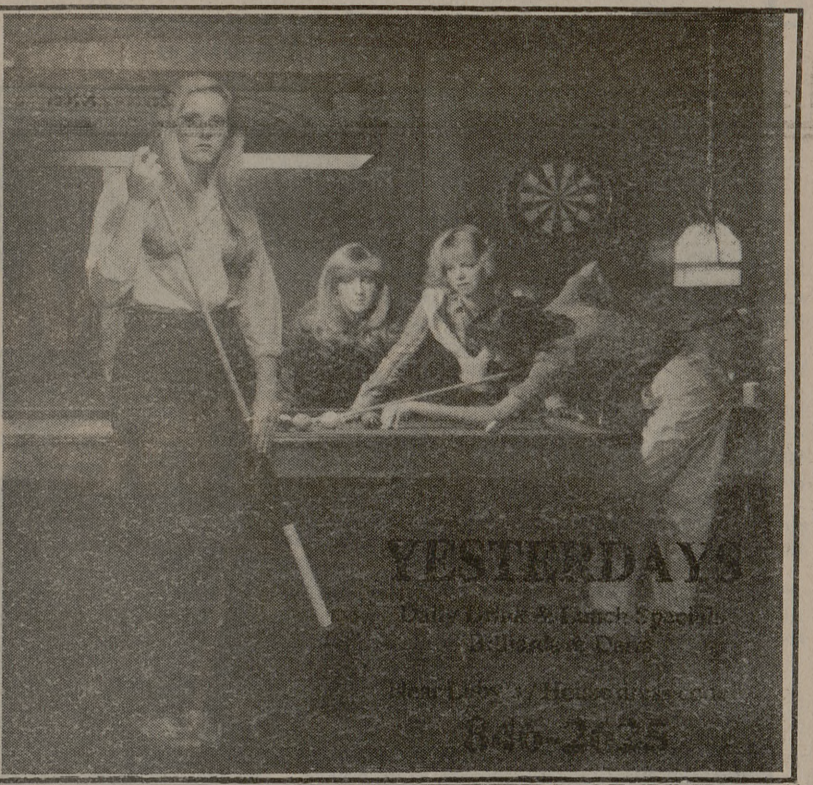
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