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Lady Aggies face Rice in Houston

The Texas A&M volleyball team opens its 1987 Southwest Conference tonight with a match against Rice at Autry Court in Houston.

The Lady Aggies bring a 5-11 record coming into tonight's match. They are coming off a 1-2 performance in the Texas A&M Invitational, losing to New Mexico State and Louisiana State while defeating the University of North Carolina.

The Owls are 13-2 coming into the match after getting off to an 11-0 start. Their only losses have come against Notre Dame and Florida.

"This is our main season," Coach Al Givens said of the conference race. "Hopefully, our pre-season matches have gotten us to a point where we can compete in the conference."

"I think you'll see a different team take the court tonight. We're 5-11 right now, but we could just as easily have been 12-4. The potential is there."

Pavlas will start against Raiders, Richardson to see more action

By Hal L. Hammons
Assistant Sports Editor

The starting quarterback for Texas A&M in Saturday's game against Texas Tech will be Lance Pavlas, A&M Head Coach Jackie Sherrill said at his weekly press conference at Cain Hall Dining Hall Tuesday.

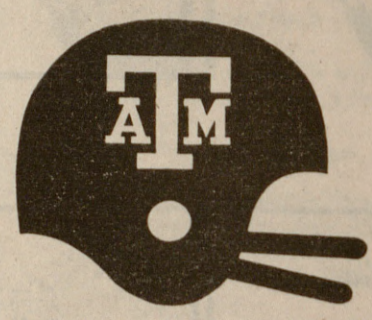
However, he said a change in starting quarterbacks will not fix A&M's continuing problems on offense. Sherrill said they need to hold onto the ball for more sustained drives if the team is to duplicate last year's success.

"We've got to do whatever it takes to move the chains," he said.

That may involve playing three quarterbacks instead of two. True freshman Bucky Richardson impressed Sherrill enough in last Saturday's win over Southern Mississippi to cancel plans to red-shirt the quarterback.

"We can't (red-shirt him) now," Sherrill said. "We'll play him."

He said Southern Mississippi had taken away their sweeps, and no team had had much success all year running the ball up the middle against the Eagles. The option game was his next choice, and he said he



had decided before the game that in such a situation Richardson would get the call.

"Bucky's our best option quarterback," Sherrill said.

Sherrill expressed concern about the number of young players in the A&M lineup. He made frequent reference to a saying of his old coach, former A&M Head Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, who said, "For every sophomore you start you lose a ballgame."

Sherrill said the adage probably applied even more to starting freshmen. There are 22 freshmen and sophomores on the A&M two-deep depth chart, including six starters.

"We're expecting freshmen to come in and play like seniors," Sherrill said. "They are going to make mistakes."

Travelling to Lubbock to play Texas Tech usually spells trouble for A&M, and Sherrill said he is not taking the Red Raiders lightly.

"Texas Tech is a very good team with a lot of speed," Sherrill said. "They are going to make mistakes."

Sherrill said he was more impressed with Tech quarterback Ed Joe Tolliver than ever. He said Tolliver and Baylor's Brad Gooch were good evidence to contradict the many outspoken critics of Southern Conference quarterbacks.

"Those two kids can really throw the football," Sherrill said.

A&M's fall in UPI poll unexplainable

By Doug Hall
Assistant Sports Editor

Don't ask me to explain how the UPI board of coaches voted to drop the Texas A&M football team from the No. 17 spot to the No. 19 spot after Saturday's victory over Southern Mississippi.

And don't ask me to explain how the same poll could put the Washington Huskies — yes, the same team that the Aggies literally sacked by 17 points only a week ago — not one, not two, but three places ahead of A&M.

But do ask me to give my own opinion on the matter.

Thank you. Don't mind if I do.

Following each weekend of collegiate football, the UPI poll asks selected coaches across the country which teams they feel are the 20 best

in the nation. Similarly, the Associated Press asks sportswriters across the country the same question.

Usually, the polls are very similar. Maybe a one-rank difference this week or a two-spot difference another week. Very seldom do the polls vary considerably.

But this week they did. The AP poll moved the Aggies up a spot, from No. 16 to No. 15, while the Huskies moved in to the No. 16 spot.

Sometimes it's plausible for a team to drop in the rankings. If A&M had been forced to come from behind in the final minute for a win against USM, or if A&M scored all its points on USM miscues, or if the score had been 3-0, then dropping the Aggies a spot or two would be understandable.

But such wasn't the case on Saturday. True, A&M was held in check

for three quarters by the Golden Eagles and used three long plays for 21 of its 27 points, but the result was a still a victory.

And much like in the Washington game, the Aggies did what was needed — when it was needed — to win the ballgame.

Furthermore, it's not as if Washington beat any incredible foe by an ungodly score (31-3 over the University of the Pacific?) in order to regain their ranking.

After only a month of college football, it's definitely too early to be poll-watching. And without a doubt, Jackie Sherrill isn't losing any sleep over the United Press International poll.

But this week's poll, and undoubtedly others to come, magnifies a weakness in the system.

Last week's 10th-best team in the nation, Arkansas, was thoroughly trounced by a solid Miami team. This week, the Razorbacks are no longer on the Top 20 horizon. Miami jumped from No. 6 to No. 10 for beating a team that now, according to the polls, should be considered a weak-sister outfit.

You figure it out.

My pick for No. 1 so far this season is Notre Dame.

The Irish have one of the toughest, if not the toughest, schedules in the country. Because they aren't restricted to playing conference teams for most of the year, Notre Dame has five games against Top 20 teams. Currently they are 3-0 with a tie in a game against Pittsburgh this week end.

But oh well, I'm not a pollster. And I'm not sure some of the people they ask should be either.

Rice's McClay, Baylor's Blackmon get AP defensive honors

Rice's William McClay got a lecture from his dad, and Baylor's Robert Blackmon had memories of two touchdowns getting past him two weeks ago.

But they put the worst behind them and took it out on the opposition last week to earn The Associated Press' Southwest Conference Co-defensive Player of the Week honors.

McClay intercepted three passes, recovered a fumble, had two pass deflections and made five tackles in Rice's 38-28 victory Saturday over Southwest Texas State.

Blackmon intercepted two passes, had five unassisted tackles and broke up four passes in Baylor's 36-22 victory over Texas Tech.

The offensive honor goes to Houston freshman quarterback Andre Ware, who started his first collegiate game last week.

Ware completed a school-record 25 passes on 35 attempts for 255 yards, getting the Cougars' run-and-shoot offense rolling in a 38-34 victory over Sam Houston State. He had touchdown passes of 53 and 8 yards and ran 3 yards for another score.

McClay said he responded with his outstanding game after talking with his father prior to the game.

"I was played a lot better at the end of last season than I have this year," McClay said. "My Dad told me I had always done my job and a little bit extra. But this season, I'd just been doing my job. Against Southwest Texas, I just felt that I had to step forward and make the plays."

It was the most attention McClay has received from an opposing quarterback this season.

"They just kept coming to my

side, but it turned out all right," McClay said. "I want it to be known you come to my side, you'll pay for it."

Blackmon made the Red Raiders pay for his off-performance the previous week against Nevada-Las Vegas, when he had two touchdowns scored against him.

"I think my pass defense showed up Saturday," Blackmon said. "I didn't worry about the UNLV game but I did want to play better. It was a big game for us."

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The 1987-88 Aggieland Video Yearbook

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