

# Sports

## Ags don't back 'other' sports

Ever been to an Aggie basketball game at Jollie Rollie? How about a baseball game at Olsen Field? If you're like the majority of A&M students, you probably haven't.

A scarcity of A&M fans is often a constant at two of the big three sports in Aggieland.

G. Rollie White Coliseum has a capacity of 7,500. Yet unless the Aggies are on a winning streak, only a few hundred students bother to show up.

Even against archrival Texas, a mere 4,442 fans attended Sunday's game.

C.E. "Pat" Olsen Field can hold 5,053, but room for a couple of hundred is usually all that's needed.

The attendance records for women's athletic events are even worse. Saturday night's game against Texas drew 2,993 — a Coliseum record for a women's contest. Yet the majority of those fans were UT students and boosters. Some home court advantage for the Lady Aggies.

To put it bluntly, these figures are pathetic for a school with an enrollment of more than 39,000.

Obviously A&M students don't realize the entertainment value of baseball and basketball. Personally, basketball is my favorite sport at A&M.

Unlike football, where spectators are often perched in the upper reaches of the third deck of Kyle Field next to some daredevil pigeons, basketball fans are close to the action.

The confines of G. Rollie have allowed me to see Winston Crite's power, Don Marbury's cockiness, Darryl McDonald's smoothness, Mike Clifford's bricklaying and Shelby Metcalf's striptease from an excellent vantage point.

Basketball is also the fastest moving and highest scor-

ing of the major sports. Lulls in the action are few and far between. Even if a pause in the action occurs, A&M students can sit down without the worry of being told how many directions Highway 6 runs.

And unlike the pros, college basketball has a special atmosphere and attractiveness all its own.

At places such as North Carolina, UCLA and Indiana, students flock to the games with their faces painted in an array of their school's colors. Small musical groups play Dixieland jazz. Students try to sink half-court shots for spring break trips to Acapulco.

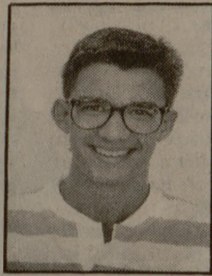
At Kentucky, the whole university shows up at the stroke of midnight on the day practices are allowed to begin. The roar rises to a crescendo when the team's star player officially starts practice with a crowd-pleasing power slam.

What baseball lacks in kinetics and scoring, it more than makes up for in relaxation and nostalgia. What could be nicer than sitting in the bleachers of Olsen Field on a spring afternoon, smelling the freshly mowed outfield and munching on a chili dog while soaking up rays to the sound of cracking bats? Now that's true Americana.

But let's not forget that A&M has a great team this year, too. The Aggies missed advancing to the College World Series by one game last season and are returning several key players. Their hitting ought to be their strong point, which should make for some interesting games.

A&M games always feature promotions and giveaways, including the popular lucky numbers. And public address announcer Derrick "D.D." Grubbs is a riot between innings.

Texas A&M has always been a great supporter of its football teams, even in the pre-Jackie, pre-Cotton years. Why can't we give our other teams as much respect and support? Non-football athletes work just as hard to be competitive at their respective sports. If the student body got behind them, who knows what they could do?



Anthony Wilson  
Sports Writer

## A&M basketball teams try to bounce back

Both Texas A&M basketball teams will be trying to break three-game losing streaks Wednesday against Texas Christian at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The women start at 5 p.m., and the men follow at 7.

The Lady Aggies are coming off an 89-61 loss to the 5th-ranked and Southwest Conference-leading Texas Lady Longhorns Saturday night.

They will be playing without senior forward Evelyn Sanders. Sanders, ranked 10th in the SWC in scoring and rebounding, injured her knee against the Lady Longhorns. Although the injury does not appear to be serious, she could be out for as long as three weeks.

The men lost 52-49 to UT Sunday. It was the third straight loss for the Aggies after four wins that gave

them an early lead in the SWC.

The game is crucial to the Aggies' hopes to get back in the SWC race. The second half of the season includes five road games and home action against Houston, Texas Tech and Baylor.

The men's team is two games behind 6-1 Arkansas. SMU is 6-2 and Baylor is tied with A&M at 4-3.

The women are 3-4 in conference.

## Pro Football Hall of Fame gives Ditka membership

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — Mike Ditka said it really wasn't fair to have had as much fun as he did playing football and still be elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The Chicago Bears coach was elected Tuesday along with Fred Biletnikoff, Jack Ham and Alan Page.

"It's mind boggling," said Ditka, who played 12 years in the NFL as a tight end.

Biletnikoff, a flanker with the Oakland Raiders famed for his timing and exacting pass routes, said, "I can't tell you how excited I am. It's a big, big thrill for me."

Ham, a key performer in the Pittsburgh Steelers' "Steel Curtain" during four Super Bowl victories in the 1970s, said, "I'm ecstatic. I'm going in with some pretty good company."

Page, a cornerstone at defensive tackle on the Minnesota Vikings' famed "Purple People Eaters" defense, said, "(My) whole career was a highlight."

Ditka, 48, out of the University of Pittsburgh, was named NFL rookie of the year in 1961 after catching 56 passes for 1,076 yards and 12 touchdowns. Three years later, he had 75 catches, a record for tight ends that stood for 16 years.

The 6-foot-3, 225-pound native of Carnegie, Pa., did not miss

a start in 84 games with the Bears and earned All-Pro honors his first four seasons. He had 427 receptions for 5,812 yards and 43 touchdowns in his career.

After being traded to Philadelphia in 1967, Ditka finished his career with four seasons at Dallas. In 1971 he had 30 receptions and scored the clinching touchdown in the Cowboys' 24-3 victory over the Miami Dolphins in the 1972 Super Bowl.

Biletnikoff, who will turn 45 later this month, spent 14 years with the Raiders. The 6-1, 190-pound flanker caught 589 passes — seventh best all-time — for 8,974 yards and 76 touchdowns.

The native of Erie, Pa., caught 40 or more passes for 10 straight seasons, and his 70 catches for 1,167 yards and 10 touchdowns in 19 postseason games were records at his retirement.

Biletnikoff, now an assistant coach with Calgary of the Canadian Football League, caught four passes for 79 yards to set up three Oakland scores in a 32-14 victory over Minnesota in the 1977 Super Bowl and was named the game's most valuable player.

Ham, 39, missed only four games in his first 10 seasons in the NFL. The outside linebacker from Penn State finished a 12-

year career with 25½ sacks, 21 fumble recoveries and 32 interceptions.

Ham, who is a salesman for a coal company and also a radio analyst on NFL games, traced his success to Joe Paterno, his college coach.

"I was a young kid who didn't have a lot of confidence until I went to Penn State," he said. "Paterno... he's the kind of guy who put me on first team defense in my first year. It kind of made me a little more confident."

Page, a 42-year-old native of Canton, home of the Hall of Fame, became the first defensive player to be named NFL most valuable player in 1971. He was the NFC's defensive player of the year four times and was an all-league choice nine years in a row.

Page, now a staff lawyer for the Minnesota attorney general's office, said of his selection, "I don't know if it's about time, but it's certainly a nice time."

A graduate of Notre Dame, Page was the Vikings' second pick in the first round of the first combined AFL-NFL draft in 1967. A defensive end in college, he was moved to defensive tackle by the Vikings.

An affirmative vote of approximately 80 percent is needed for election.

## A&M women's tennis opens against Lamar

The Texas A&M women's tennis team will face Lamar today at 1:30 to begin its 1988 season at the Omar Smith Center.

The Lady Aggies will also face Southwest Texas State on Saturday and North Texas State Feb. 9. Both matches are at the Tennis Center.

A&M will be trying to improve on last year's 8-20 record.

Gaye Lynne Gensler, A&M's top player, is back after missing last season because of a knee injury. The only experienced players back are sophomores Lisa Keller, Jennifer Jones and Cindy Crawford. Cindy

Churchwell saw limited action in the fall season, and freshman Susan Williams sat out the fall with a knee injury.

Newcomers to the team are Sandy Klein, a junior transfer from Georgia Tech, and freshmen Trae Nix and Derryn Haygarth.

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