

Sports

Sherrill was guilty, all right, but I can sympathize a little

Let me first state the obvious: I am hardly the biggest Jackie Sherrill supporter on campus. Reading the editorial on page 2 and seeing my name on the editorial board should be enough to realize that.



Hal L. Hammons

The man knows all too well how to be absolutely infuriating, and he has quite a track record of despising and/or ignoring *The Battalion*. He has angered me in the past, and no doubt he will continue to do so in the future. I'm sure he could say the same about me, and given the chance I'm sure he would.

I do think a committee should be formed by the Board of Regents to look into the possibility of University sanctions or a dismissal of the esteemed athletic director and head football coach — or at the very least an official reprimand from the school. I don't think any of the above will happen. This does distress me somewhat. If you want to use these admissions as proof of my hatred for the man, it is certainly your prerogative to be wrong.

But the fact of the matter is that I don't hate the man. Indeed, I have a high degree of respect for the way he has resurrected the A&M football program from Southwest Conference mediocrity. I admire his vision concerning the future of A&M athletics. If for no other reason, Aggies everywhere should feel indebted to the man.

And watching Sherrill sweat under the heat of television lights and the all-seeing eyes of millions, I felt a strange sympathy for him.

Not for his wrong-doings, of course. He has violated NCAA codes of ethics and conduct — by neglect if not by actual commission. And by violating these rules, he should be punished.

But I found myself mentally assenting to many of Sherrill's explanations as the ordeal was extended into Friday afternoon.

Yes, he was guilty, but yes, some of the rules are asinine.

Sherrill admitted to not reporting an illegal contact with an unnamed high school recruit who was supposedly considering attending A&M. What the illegal contact consisted of, Sherrill said, was accidentally bumping into him while visiting the recruit's high school.

No plug for the school. Just an accidental bumping that, Sherrill said, made him look arrogant and insensitive instead of further endearing him and A&M to the young man.

Agreed, that is Sherrill's statement of the facts.

And agreed, some concrete rules need to be drawn up and followed concerning the concourse between starry-eyed kids and win-crazed coaches.

But I think it's understandable, if not forgivable, that Sherrill could consider something like that incident unworthy of report.

Another violation concerned the serving of "refreshments" by an assistant coach to a prospect. As Sherrill said, "That refreshment was a Coke." As in singular.

What self-respecting host among you wouldn't feel like a heel if a recruit, or anyone else for that matter, came into his home asking for something to drink and then telling the recruit, "Sure, but it'll cost you 50 cents."

And, of course, there were the usual allegations about illicit contact between zealous fans and hot prospects.

If you haven't figured it out yet, this matter about alumni is just about out of hand. The story is one with which any fan — of Southwest Conference football, particularly — is all too aware.

Some big wheel who was unable to extend his support to good ol' State U in a participatory way decides he'll make up for it by attracting Joe Jock from City High to do it for him.

We saw it at Southern Methodist. We saw it at Clemson. We saw it at Florida. And no doubt we will see it again.

Sherrill publicly assumed blame for not patrolling the ranks of the Association of Former Students more carefully, but he knows that we know he can't do it. People will do what they want to do, and without trying to be too cynical about the matter, that's just about the way it is.

University President William Mobley has taken about the only step he or anyone else can by mailing out requests — make that *besechments* — to anyone who might fit in the above category to stifle that school spirit just a tad. At least enough to comply with NCAA standards.

That may or may not work. And of course, good ol' State U will be the one that suffers the most if it doesn't.

Whether or not this is a reasonable request to make of Sherrill and Mobley is almost a waste of energy to ask. The point is, the request is being made. And if Mobley is serious about putting the emphasis on playing the game on moral grounds, the request will have to be answered in some measure.

In the meantime, however, there's nothing wrong with researching the matter further to find some way to provide some flexibility to the system while maintaining its integrity.

Sherrill is going to look for a solution. You can count on that. If you have any suggestions, I'm sure he'd be more than anxious to listen.

Lady Ags battle for 3rd against Top 20 teams

By Jerry Bolz
Sports Writer

It cost the Texas A&M Lady Aggie volleyball team two losses in three matches, but now they're ready to take on the best.

The team took third place in the four-team Texas A&M Invitational tournament this weekend at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The Lady Aggies beat Ohio State 15-7, 15-11, 7-15, 15-10 but lost to Colorado State 15-8, 12-15, 15-8, 5-15, 15-13 and Arizona State 15-3, 11-15, 6-15, 15-10, 8-15.

Despite the losses, junior setter Yvonne Van Brandt was encouraged with A&M's performance.

"There are a lot of great things in store for us if we can just explode at the end of a match like we do at the beginning," she said. "We can compete with the Top 20. I think we're there."

The Lady Aggies jumped ahead in the first game of all three matches. Deeper into the matches with CSU and ASU, however, errors lost the team points and games.

Coach Al Givens said the team needed to work on these errors.

"We took ourselves out of some rallies by serving into the net," he said.

Against Arizona State, the undefeated tournament winner, A&M came out fired-up and opened with a 15-3 victory. The game was the first of only two ASU losses (both were to A&M) and was the greatest margin of victory in any match of the tournament.

However, the Sun Devils' outside hitter Christy Nore, the tournament's most valuable player, took control on the court and led ASU back. Givens said she was the difference in the match.

"We just weren't able to stop her," he said. "She carried the team."

A&M played ASU last year and also lost in a five-game match. But, like Van Brandt, Givens saw in the Lady Aggies' performance a lot of promise for this season.

"Playing this caliber of competition, the only thing we'll do is get better," he said.

The Lady Aggies faced some

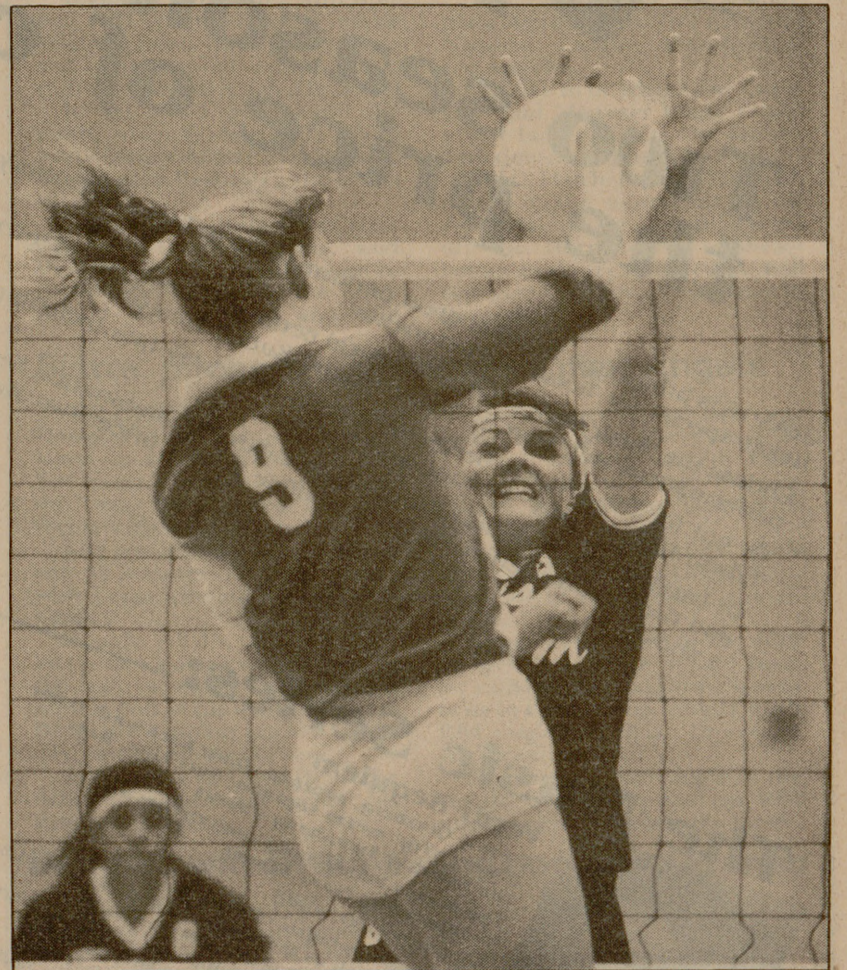


Photo by Dean Saito

Texas A&M outside attacker Amy Cumings attempts a block against Colorado State's Angie Miller during Friday's game in the Texas A&M Invitational. CSU won the match in five sets.

heavy-hitting attackers in CSU's Jill Johnson and Nore, but Givens said his defense was as prepared as possible.

"There's no defense that can cover 900 square feet of court, so you go with the percentages," he said. "They (ASU) just did a better job tonight."

Van Brandt led the defense with 55 digs in the tournament and also

had a team high 145 assists. On offense, senior Sheri Steensma had 52 kills and senior Vivian Viera had 41.

Van Brandt and Steensma were All-Tournament team selections for the Lady Aggies.

A&M now has a 4-3 record for the season. Their next match is Wednesday against Lamar at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

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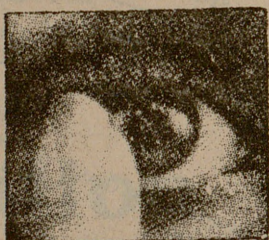
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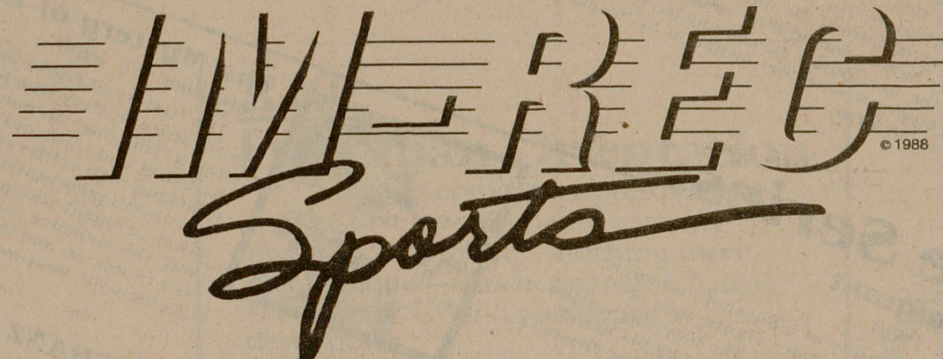
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