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\$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100 \$100
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Unsung heroes get big job, no acclaim

By Jerry Bolz
Sports Writer

Name an Aggie that gets free books, all meals at Cain Hall, all the mementos that come with a Southwest Conference championship, and no glory.

The most likely guess is probably a reserve offensive lineman on the football team. That's close — only missed by 100 pounds or so, not including equipment weight.

The true unsung heroes of the Kyle Field sidelines are the student trainers and managers. David Weir is co-head student trainer. As a senior in the seniority-bound system, Weir oversees the younger trainers on top of taping and treating injuries, but that's just part of the job.

B.R. Adams, the other head student trainer, said they do everything from setting up headphones to ball-boying.

"During practice, you'll see guys standing in at quarterback and running back or spotting the ball," Adams said.

About the seniors assignments, Weir said that each class has certain assignments to do, and they just make sure it all gets done.

On top of all the benefits, like receiving championship rings and watches, the trainers and managers are paid every two weeks. Weir said he believes they earn their keep.

"We spent 28 hours on the bus for the Arkansas game," he said. "It takes a person who is pretty dedicated to the job.

We're not in it for the publicity — we just want to win. They can keep the rings as far as I'm concerned."

Billy Pickard, assistant athletic director for training, equipment and facilities, said Adams is special in that he has a grade-point ratio over 3.9 in 14 semesters. Adams, who said he and Weir spend 40-50 hours a week on the job, has had to make sacrifices for the job.

"It's been tough," he said. "It's a choice you make between athletics, academics and social life — something's going to get cut."

Karl Kapchinski, the head athletic trainer who has been at A&M for six years, appreciates the hard work trainers and managers put in.

"There's no question our job would be worse than impossible without the students," he said. "I couldn't do it all myself."

Adams said it is challenging and unique to work with Pickard, who starts his 24th year at A&M in January. Pickard noted the changes that have come about in equipment since he was a student in the mid 1950s.

"Years ago we had separate sets of game and practice helmets," he said. "But they only costed \$15 then and now they are \$120."

There is around 20-30 pieces of equipment for every player, Adams said, and they have to make sure every piece is in good condition.

Taping injuries, one of the most common jobs, is an art most trainers learned in high school. Weir said there are no

certain styles, just which ever gets the job done.

Even though the use of tape has been reduced by the use of braces, which can last a whole season, Weir said the team probably uses around 600 cases a season, at 32 rolls per case.

Football balls are used almost as fast. Adams said up to 25 balls can be used in a rainy-day game. After the game, they become practice balls. About 60-70 are used and retired in a year.

In his duties as a ballboy, Adams has to check each football for any defects.

"If a ball is too slick, wobbly or has the wrong pressure, it could cause a fumble or an interception," he said. "You don't get recognized until something bad happens."

Adams said the experience is more than just a job.

"It teaches us how to win and lose, and what to do when the chips are down," he said. "We learn a lot of things we couldn't learn in the classroom. This is the other education."

Pickard, the teacher of much of this education, has the final word on the trainers' performance.

"I thanked them yesterday for doing a good job," he said. "I told them there are three ways to do things: the right way; the Army way; and my way — and they have no choice."

"They represent the University in the highest standards. They are a credit to the university and the football team."



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