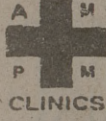




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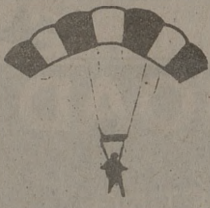
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Coming to America
 Cross Country's Meyer is ready to win as an Aggie

By Alan Lehmann
 Of The Battalion Staff

Ralph Meyer is happy to have a second chance at a collegiate track career.
 The Texas A&M junior distance runner from South Africa is happy to be healthy again after two years of nagging injuries.
 Three years ago he went to Washington State on a full scholarship. However, his health soon took a turn for the worse, and he became unhappy with the staff.
 He suffered calf muscle tears, shin splints and a serious flu virus, but those injuries are behind him now, he said.
 "I'm almost to the point now where I can say that I'm in as good a shape as I've ever been in," he said. "The last time I was in this sort of shape was before I left home, when I was in high school."
 "Right after I left home, I started having injury trouble. But, I'd say I'm running as well now as I ever have before."
 Meyer, who runs the 1,500 and 1,800 meter events during spring track season, left his country to run track and get an education in the United States.
 "When I was running back home, I always wanted to come (to the U.S.) to run and get an education at the same time," Meyer said. "So, I applied to a bunch of schools. I got a couple of scholarship offers, and I took one to Washington State."
 "I ran up there for a year and a half, but I had a bunch of injuries, and was sick for a while," he said. "I didn't fit in with the coaching system, either."

So, Meyer decided to move to a new university.
 "I wasn't happy, and decided to leave," he said. "I wanted to come some place where there was a good track team and also a very good side of education."
 Meyer said that he liked the atmosphere and people here.
 "There seems to be more of a commitment to excellence in everything about this school," he said. "The attitude around this school is very achievement-oriented."
 "I've always had that impression about this school, and I think that it's true. When I came down to look at the place and meet the coaches, I liked them, so I decided I'd come down."
 Although A&M has given him a small scholarship, it wasn't nearly as big as the full scholarship that he left at Washington State. Still, Meyer doesn't mind.
 "I've got a small scholarship here," he said. "The quality of athletics is very high here. I didn't deserve (a full scholarship) last year, really."
 "I'd been sick and injured for a while and it takes a while to get healthy again. I don't mind though, because it took a little bit of pressure off of me. Not having the pressure has allowed me to concentrate on my studies and my running at the same time without worrying about performing to a certain standard all the time."
 Still, Meyer knows that winning this Saturday's Southwest Conference Cross Country championship meet in Dallas won't be easy. Although he's finished in the top four runners in three of his four meets this season, Meyer hasn't been able to win, yet.

"I'd say I have an outside chance of winning, but I'm trying to low-key the whole thing," Meyer said.
 "Tim Gargiulo from SMU, is running really well. He's beaten me twice this year already, by almost a minute both times."
 However, Meyer has no trouble putting the match in perspective.
 "I'm not overly concerned," he said. "My attitude is to go in there and have a good run, and see what happens."
 Meyer hails from Durban, the third largest city in South Africa with a population of around 1.7 million. He said that although many Texans imagine Africa as being strictly desert, his home on the southeast coast is much like Florida.
 Being an international student gives him a different perspective on school and culture, he said.
 "It gives you a different perspective on life in general," Meyer said. "American society is distinct from anything else in the world. It gives you a different angle on campus life, because you don't know what to expect when you come in."
 Despite all the political turmoil in South Africa, Meyer hasn't been discriminated against by Americans because of his nationality.
 "When I left home, I was told that I was going to be given a hard time, but at the schools I've been at, I've never had any trouble at all," Meyer said. "People have always accepted me for who I am, not where I'm from."
 If Meyer keeps running well, Aggie cross country fans will be happier to have him here.

Lehmann
 (Continued from page 9)

that point. A&M is, without a doubt, stronger and faster on both sides of the football than Rice. The problem is that the Aggies haven't played very well on the road this year.
 They lost to Texas Tech, Washington and barely escaped with a victory over Baylor last week.
 "Well, the refs stole the game," he said.
 "Yeah, they blew some calls, but a Cotton Bowl team has to be able to dominate enough to overcome bad calls," I said.
 He burped and pondered that for a minute. I explained that Rice hasn't beaten the Aggies since 1980. Hey, the law of averages, you know.
 "But Rice doesn't have any running game," he said. "How are they gonna move the ball?"
 "Hollas is a great athlete, and if A&M doesn't move the ball better than they did last week, Rice won't have to score a lot."
 "True," he said, his eyes glowing with logic, "but the Baylor defense is a lot better than Rice's."
 Good point. "Yeah, but this is the Southwest Conference, and weird things happen here. Arkansas was ranked No. 6 last week, and Texas didn't have any running game either, but the Horns won."
 That stopped him cold. I took advantage of his silence to mention some of the more bizarre happenings in the SWC this season, like the Texas upset last week.
 How about Texas Christian beating Air Force last week? The previously 3-3 Frogs thrashed the formerly 18th-ranked Falcons 27-9.
 How about Houston? When they smell blood, they win big. Like the 95-21 slaughter of SMU.

San Antonio ready for Robinson

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — To San Antonio basketball fans, it was like being told they had shore leave coming — in two years.
 Now that 7-1 center David Robinson has finished his two-year stint in the Navy he can begin earning his \$26 million basketball keep. And San Antonio is abuzz over the prospect of Robinson's first regular-season NBA game and the new-look Spurs.
 "They know that there was just all this hype about me. I think especially the people here in San Antonio, and I guess the people around the country, are just curious about how I'm going to be," Robinson said after a recent team practice.
 A little pressure, would you say?
 Not really, contends the cool-headed 24-year-old.
 "I think because of the guys that we've brought in this year, they're taking a lot of the attention away from me," Robinson said. "It gives me a chance to really relax a little bit and play my own type of game."
 He's sharing the load with veterans like Maurice Cheeks and Terry Cummings — acquired in off-season trades with Philadelphia and Milwaukee — and rookie Sean Elliott.
 "I don't feel the pressure of having to shoot, having to score," Robinson said.
 It's a switch from the Naval Academy, where as a senior Robinson averaged 28.2 points, 11.8 rebounds and 4.5 blocks and said he "had to be great every night" for the team to win. Between Navy and the Spurs, Robinson was on the U.S. Olympic team, scoring 19 points and grabbing 12 rebounds against the Soviet Union in the gold medal game which America lost.

Though one of the Spurs' leading scorers in preseason contests, with 17 points against Milwaukee and 22 in one game against Boston, Robinson warns that too much shouldn't be read into that.
 "The way that I'm going to make this team win is defensively, on the boards. That's where I've got to dominate," he said. "I need to get 10 or 12 boards a game."
 Robinson isn't the only Spur adjusting to a new role. Only Willie Anderson, Frank Brickowski and Vernon Maxwell remain from last season, when the team finished 21-61, its worst season ever.
 Rookie Jens-Uwe Gordon, from Santa Clara, and Zarko Paspalj, playing his first NBA season after three years as a pro in his native Yugoslavia, are part of the team's new look. And the Spurs acquired David Wingate and Chris Welp in the Cheeks trade with the 76ers and signed free agent Caldwell Jones.
 Coach Larry Brown, in his second year with San Antonio, said last summer that he felt his team was too young.
 In exhibition games the Spurs have defeated the Dallas Mavericks 108-106 and the Milwaukee Bucks 105-96, but suffered two losses at the hands of the Boston Celtics, 111-99 and 115-97.
 Brown said he has looked to Boston and players such as Larry Bird, Kevin McHale and Robert Parish as examples and confidence-builders for his young players.
 "I told David (Robinson) after the game he ain't going to play against many guys better than McHale, Parish and Larry Bird," he said.
 Brown, who guided Kansas to a national championship before joining the Spurs, has been trying players at various positions. Elliott and Anderson, for instance, have been tested at guard and forward.

Cross country competes in SWC meet

The Texas A&M men's and women's cross country teams will participate in the Southwest Conference championships Saturday at Dallas' Crow Lake Park.
 The Aggie men finished seventh last season, while the Lady Aggies were fifth.
 The competition will be tougher again this year. The Razorbacks are ranked seventh nationally, and the Longhorns are ranked 11th.
 A&M Assistant Track Coach, Ted Nelson said that the men will be an educational meet for the young Aggie team, which will run five freshmen and only two upperclassmen.
 "We're trying to build for the future," Nelson said. "We have a very young team, and if they stay with it they'll improve a lot in the near future."
 The men's race will be run over a five mile course along the Trinity River bottom, and will begin at 10:40 a.m. The women's race will be 5,000 meters (3 miles), and will begin at 10:00 a.m.

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