

Youth should compensate for lost talent

With the loss of several key players, the future of Aggie football might seem gloomy.

A&M tailback Darren Lewis, the most prolific running back in the history of the Southwest Conference, is headed toward the ranks of the National Football League along with All-American candidates Mike Arthur (center) and Larry Horton (free safety).

Senior linebacker William Thomas and four starting offensive linemen have exhausted their eligibility. To make matters worse, fullback Robert Wilson and cornerback Kevin Smith will contemplate leaving school a year early to test the fruits of the NFL draft.

But it's not as bad as it seems. With the depth of their roster, the Aggies won't be crippled by these losses.

Despite losing the recruiting war to the University of Texas the last two seasons, A&M still has more depth than any other team in the SWC. Several Aggie backups could be starters almost anywhere else in the country.

For example, one of Lewis' backups is junior tailback Randy Simmons.

Simmons, who rushed for 2,557 yards his senior year in high school, was rated the best schoolboy running back in the country by a number of sports writers.

This season Simmons has carried the ball 53 times for 391 yards, giving him an average of 7.4 yards per carry.

And if Robert Wilson — who was described by CBS commentator James Brown as needing a license to run the way he does — decides to leave, his backup, junior Doug Carter, will step in.

Carter, who gained 1,086 yards his senior year in high school and was named to the list of high school blue chippers, saw little action this season. But Carter was one of the few bright spots against LSU as he scored A&M's lone touch-

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Astros not Miami bound

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Astros could have been headed for Miami but the owners of the team, who have it up for sale, rejected a \$135 million offer for the club from a group headed by a retired Florida banker, The Houston Post reported Tuesday.

The Post, in a report from the winter baseball meetings continuing near Chicago, said the Houston Sports Association rejected the offer in September from a group headed by Lou Poller, 83.

Poller told the newspaper he began talking with the Astros two years ago, when rumors of a possible sale first surfaced.

According to the report, the talks were serious enough for HSA President Bob Harter to make a trip to Miami for a meeting with Poller in mid-September before discussions were cut off by HSA.

Poller has tried to buy other teams and recently offered to buy the Montreal Expos for \$135 million. He believes his effort to buy a baseball team have been scuttled because of his longtime friendship with missing and presumed slain Teamsters Union president Jimmy Hoffa.

But Poller is threatening to take the Houston Sports Association to court for not dealing with him in good faith.

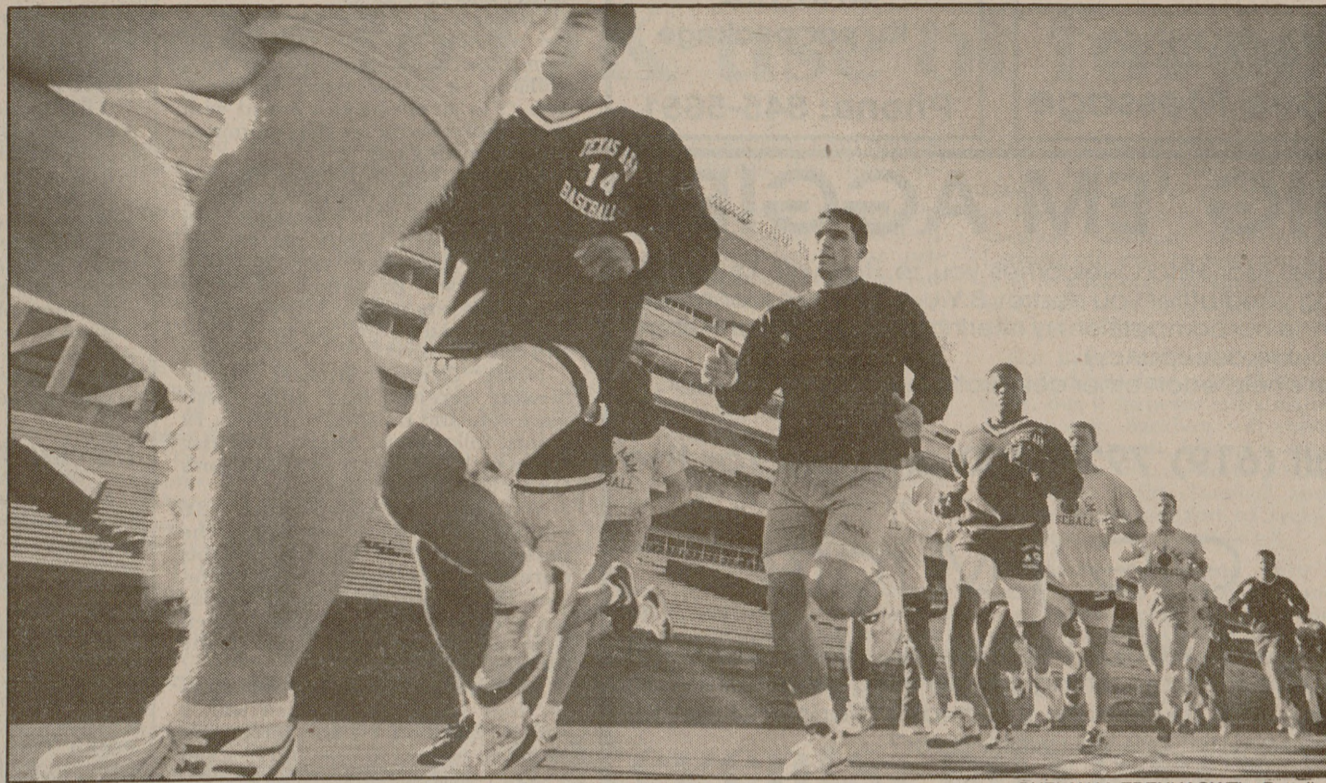
"I think they're bad people," Poller said. "There's no justification for what they did. They can't just throw me in the garbage can after two years of serious talks. I wouldn't want to fight baseball, but I'd like to take the Astros apart in court. All they had to do was say they didn't want to do business with me two years ago."

If Astros majority owner John McMullen had been willing to sell the club, Poller said he was prepared to challenge baseball on the antitrust issue by moving the team from Houston to the Miami area.

"Everybody thinks it's terrible to take a team away from a city," Poller said. "But the people in Houston haven't supported the Astros. And here I am in a situation where I could put 50,000 people in the seats every night."

The Post also reported today it had obtained several letters from Salomon Brothers Inc., the investment banking firm retained by HSA to conduct the sale, and from Harter that indicate the Astros were for sale long before the club's public announcement last week.

Beat the Clock



Members of the Texas A&M baseball team run a timed mile Tuesday afternoon in Kyle Field. PHELAN M. EBENHACK/The Battalion

Winter baseball meetings get expensive

ROSEMONT, Ill. (AP) — Dave Righetti and the money-mad San Francisco Giants zeroed in on each other Tuesday, while the price of pitching again zoomed when the Boston Red Sox won a bidding battle for 18-game loser Matt Young at baseball's winter meetings.

A Bay area trade that moved Ernest Riles to the Oakland A's, a lesser deal that sent Dave Gallagher to the California Angels, a contract extension for Steve Sax and all-day meetings between Vince Coleman.

The Giants quickly moved into the best position to lure the northern California native back home from New York.

The Giants already have spent \$13 million for Willie McGee and \$10 million for Bud Black this winter, and it could cost them about \$8 million for three years to land the Righetti. Oakland also entered the

sweepstakes and so did the Minnesota Twins. The Twins might have to settle for Steve Bedrosian, who could become available if San Francisco gets it's main man.

Righetti, 32, saved 36 games last season and is the New York Yankees' all-time leader. But the Yankees has offered just \$2.1 million per year and besides, Righetti's preference is the Giants.

Sax will be staying with the Yankees. The second baseman, who had one year left on his contract, signed an extension through 1995 for \$12.4 million.

"Steve loves New York," said Adam Katz, one of Sax's agents. "He's not one of those guys who wants to leave."

Young has been a starter and-reliever in his career. The left-hander does not have a lifetime winning record — 51-78, including 8-18 with a 3.51 ERA last season for Seattle.

The Red Sox offered Young a three-year, \$6.35 million contract, and that was a little more than the Detroit Tigers and the Baltimore Orioles wanted to pay.

"We are thrilled to have Matt Young, and we see him as an important member of our starting rotation next season," Boston general manager Lou Gorman said. "He has a great arm, and we believe that he can be a winner on a contending ballclub."

Young, 32, pitched 225 innings last season. He made 33 starts and had seven complete games.

The Giants and Oakland each got what they wanted in a trade for reserves. San Francisco sent utility infielder Ernest Riles to the Athletics for promising outfielder Darren Lewis and a player to be named later.

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