

Holyfield has chance to gain needed respect

Don Norwood
Sports Writer

In a sport where outspokenness is a job requirement, undisputed heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield is an anomaly. A vocal born-again Christian, Holyfield's almost meek demeanor has cultivated an image as a timid fighter in a profession that requires savage brutality.

As a result, many of the so-called boxing experts have deemed Holyfield as soft after decisions over opponents like Bert Cooper and senior citizen George Foreman.

Now, Holyfield's low standing in the eyes of his critics has many predicting his demise as he prepares for challenger Riddick Bowe, a bruising, undefeated hulk that has had more knockouts than birthdays.

Bowe's resume is tainted a bit, as he has fought almost as many marshall-lows as Foreman has during his comeback. But this summer, Bowe redeemed himself when he knocked out South African Pierre Coetzer, an unflinching boxer with possibly the hardest jaw in the division. That one fight, which lasted seven seemingly endless rounds, spoke more of Bowe's heart than any other of his fights since the 1988 Olympics in Seoul.

Taking the entire situation at face value, Holyfield appears to be in danger of becoming just a more successful version of Buster Douglas. None of Holyfield's fights since he has become champion have been exhibitions of knockout artistry. And the runaround that delayed his ill-fated fight with Mike Tyson hurt Holyfield, despite the fact that it was the product of squabbling between promoters.

But taking a closer look at Holyfield reveals possibly the most economic boxer in the professional ranks. Holyfield fights up to his competition, doing

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Lady Aggies ready for success

A&M volleyball team hoping to make most of potential

By DON NORWOOD

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

The word "potential" is one that teams throw around before the beginning of every season. From national champions on down to the lowliest of cellar-dwellers, every team seems to have that ever-present potential for success on their side, whether it is genuine or not.

But as another volleyball season rolls around this week, head coach Al Givens and the Texas A&M Lady Aggie volleyball team are ready to prove that they are capable of fulfilling the potential they exhibited time and again during last year's 18-16 campaign.

On paper, the Lady Aggies appear to be loaded, having lost only one starter from last year's team. Ten letter-winners are back, led by second team All-Southwest Conference and third team Academic All-American Elizabeth Edmiston.

And A&M football coach R.C. Slocum was not the only coach on campus to bring in an outstanding recruiting class, as Givens welcomes five brilliant newcomers, including San Antonio Clark teammates Dana Santleben and Suzy Wentz.

"Three of the five freshmen are in a position where they could help us," Givens said. "Two of those three have quite a bit of experience, not only in high school, but in club ball as well. Two of the five are behind, but they're working real hard to get caught up."

For A&M's rookies, their high school numbers speak volumes about their ability. Wentz leads the pack at setter, earning spots on Volleyball Monthly's second team All-American squad and Fab 50 list of national recruits. Santleben, a Fab 50 member as well, helped Wentz lead Clark to a Class AAAAA state championship and a 105-8 record over three years.

Joining Santleben and Wentz are another San Antonio native, Churchill's An-

drea Williams, as well as middle blocker Sally Gibson and setter Renee Kukla.

"The freshmen are great," the veteran Edmiston said. "They have real good work ethics. They're not hard to get going or motivated at all."

If Edmiston sounds like the voice of experience, it is no accident. The only senior among five returning starters, the Lady Aggies' co-captain led the team in six categories last year. And, as her being named the 1991-92 GTE/Texas A&M Female Scholar Athlete of the Year shows, Edmiston is intelligent enough to know her role this year will be a crucial one.

"I feel like it's every hitter's responsibility to put the ball away," the 5-10 Kingwood native said. "I feel like I need to have a good season, not only to be vocal on the court, but to lead by example as well."

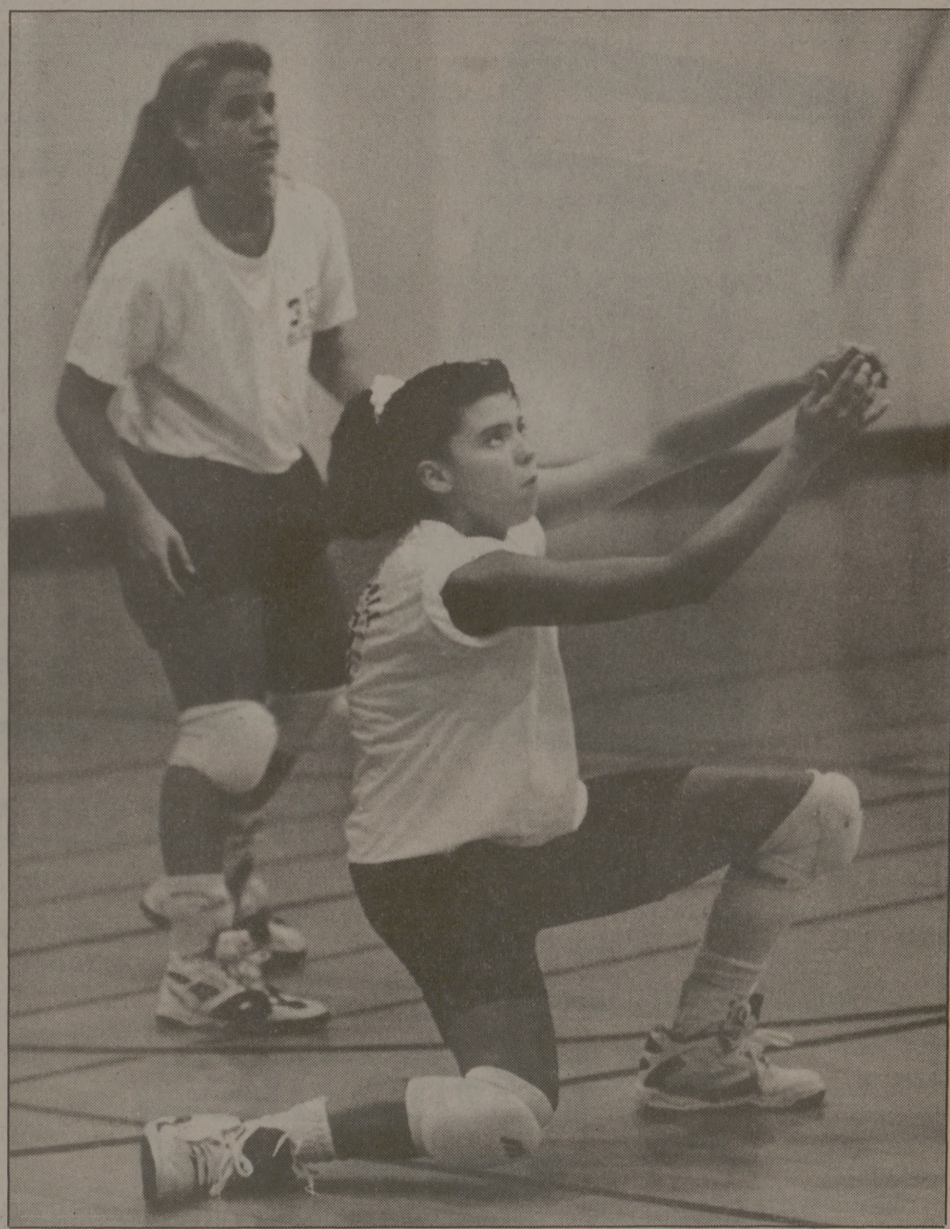
Edmiston will not be alone in setting the pace for the Lady Aggies. Juniors Amy Kisling, Kim Mitchell and Genny Wood, along with sophomore Karen Richards, form a nucleus of returning players with starting experience. Throw in a healthy Raychelle Michalke with her Howitzer-like serves, and it is no wonder why Givens is looking forward to his seventh season at A&M.

"This is probably the most experience we've had since I've been here," he said. "The players truly want to win in the worst way."

"Do we have the experience and ability to win the Southwest Conference championship? I don't know. Do we have the want? Definitely. They have much more confidence than they did last year."

"I came here saying that by the time I left, we would win a Southwest Conference championship," Edmiston said. "I think if we work hard and get everyone on the same wavelength, we will have a good chance of doing that."

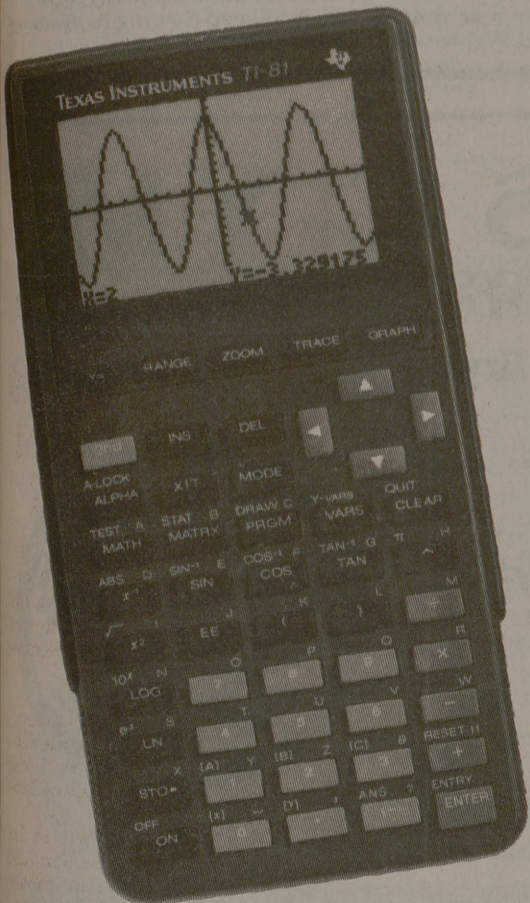
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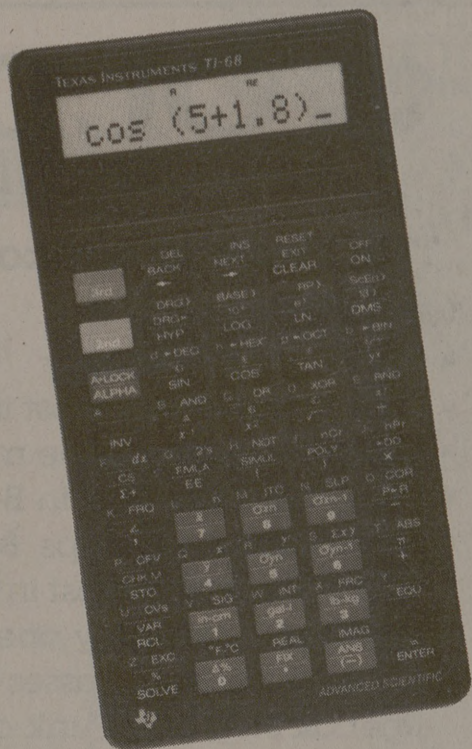
Junior Genny Wood returns a serve in practice as the A&M volleyball team prepares for their season opener against Sam Houston.

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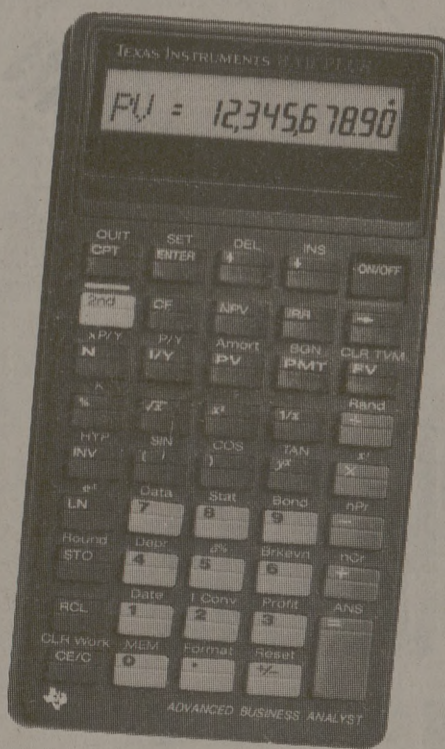
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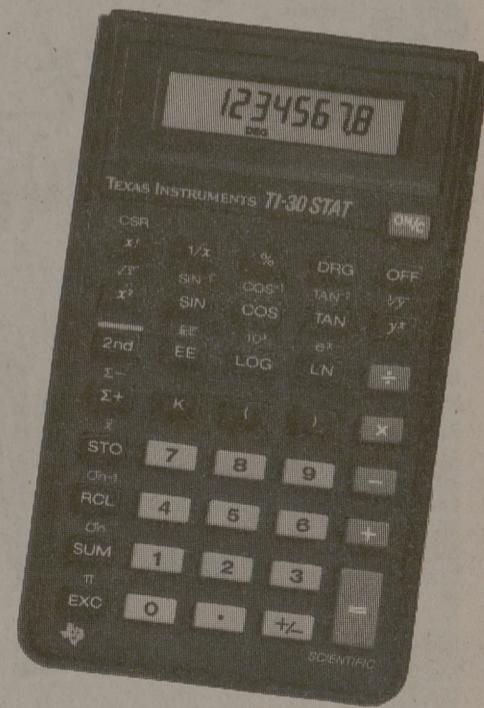
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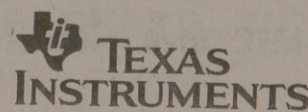


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