

SPORTS

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THE BATTALION

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Baseball sells itself out with new divisions

Major League Baseball took a step toward mediocrity last week when team owners approved the realignment of divisions and an expansion of the league playoffs for the 1994 season.



ROY L. CLAY
Sportswriter

Currently, the American and National Leagues have two divisions. Next year, each league will have three. That means there will be three division champions and a wild card in the playoffs.

The fourth team will be the second place club from each league that has the best record.

In baseball, there is one philosophy that has stood above the rest: there is no reward for second place. We strive to be the best, and anything less is only a building stone for the next battle.

It may sound elitist, but the game was never meant to reward a team that didn't win. When watching the World Series this year, the two teams competing have run a 162 game gauntlet and proven themselves as not only the best in their division, but the best in their league.

The teams finished first, not second. It's right to be proud of placing second, but it is nothing to be rewarded. It's called competition.

The National Basketball Association, National Football League and National Hockey League all have

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A&M disputes NCAA graduation findings

By Roy L. Clay

THE BATTALION

An NCAA report released last May showed the Southwest Conference and Texas A&M University fall below the national average in student-athlete graduation rates.

Data compiled by the NCAA indicates that the national average of athletes who entered Division I schools in 1985 and graduated within six years is 52 percent.

Texas A&M was tied with Texas at 39 percent. Graduation rates for non-athletes at A&M is 68 percent.

The Southwest Conference averaged 44 percent with Rice leading the league at 77 percent. The University of Houston lagged behind at a 10 percent graduation rate.

SWC President Dr. Joseph Helmick said the low graduation rates for SWC athletes is recognized as a problem by the league, but the conference has little influence in this area.

"It (the study) was a fair representation of the information gathered," Helmick said. "We can't tackle this as a group; the responsibility is placed on the individual institutions to increase graduation rates."

Dr. Tom Adair, SWC Vice-President and physics professor at Texas A&M, said that the schools themselves are solely responsible for their athletes' graduation rates and Texas A&M is not filling its commitment.

"Our graduation rate is not what we want it to be," he said. "There are many different excuses that could be made, but the bottom line is we have to improve graduation rates."

Dr. Karl Mooney, an assistant athletic director in charge of academics at A&M, said he doesn't believe the NCAA report reveals the entire picture.

"It doesn't take into account athletes who receive degrees beyond the six year window," he said. "Part of the problem is that the NCAA's studies began before the new program was initiated in 1989, which was when I arrived."

"At that point, the Academic Support Staff and the University re-evaluated the academic program and decided we weren't where we wanted to be academically."

Mooney also said that a clearer picture will develop once the next NCAA report is released.

"The students in the NCAA study included only athletes who entered no later than 1986," Mooney said. "The new program doesn't affect those in the study. The first report to reflect the affects of the current program will be in 1995."

Texas A&M is one of a 100 members in the National Consortium for Academics and Sports.

The NCAS includes both Division I and non-Division I schools across the nation.

A&M has led the NCAS in post-college graduations beyond the six year window for the last three years, Mooney said.

In 1989, the school began the practice of reviewing each student-athlete's academic records in greater detail before they arrived at A&M.

This allows the academic support staff to locate trouble areas in a student's educational background before he or she enrolls.

Mooney said this chore was made easier because the staff has been expanded so they could be more capable of helping athletes with their education.

"We expanded the tutorial staff and defined appropriate academic standards for tutors," he said. "All tutors have to have at least a 3.0 GPA in their major if they are undergraduates."

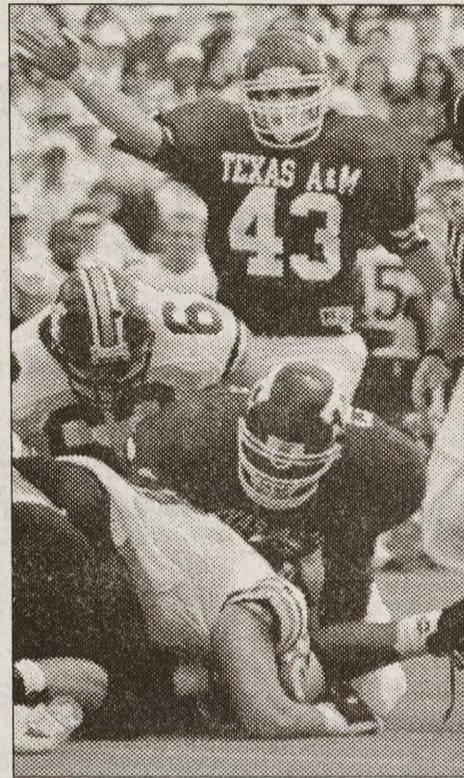
"The supporting staff also includes graduate students and doctoral candidates."

A&M has also upgraded its academic facilities to be on par with other institutions around the nation.

"In 1989, we added more study carrels, eliminated or moved entertainment areas and built offices for graduate assistants," Mooney said. "We rebuilt the computer lab system in 1991."

With this current program, Mooney said A&M's student-athletes can prosper.

"If you ask any one around the nation on the NCAA level about programs providing the most services to their student-athletes, A&M would be one of the first mentioned," he said. "By 1994-95, you'll start to see student-athlete graduation rates rival non-athlete graduation rates."



Kyle Burnett/THE BATTALION

A&M senior linebacker Jason Atkinson (43) reacts to a fumble Saturday against Missouri. Atkinson was last year's Texas A&M student-athlete of the year.

Giants drop Astros

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — San Francisco moved 2 1/2 games behind Atlanta in the NL West on Monday night as Darren Lewis delivered a three-run double in the sixth inning to help the Giants beat Houston 7-2.

Jim Deshaies (2-2) pitched five innings for the Giants and beat his former team.

The Giants have won four straight to keep pressure on the idle Braves.

A&M Sports Briefs

From Staff and Wire Reports

Kickoff time changed

Texas A&M has an open date this Saturday but when the Aggies return to action it will be at an earlier time.

ABC-TV announced that A&M's game against Texas Tech in Lubbock on October 2 will be televised.

Kickoff was originally scheduled for 7 p.m. but has been moved up to 11 a.m.

Glenn wins award

Texas A&M senior defensive back Aaron Glenn won the AT&T Long Distance "punt return" award for his efforts last Saturday against Missouri.

Glenn juiced and jived his way to a 76 yard return early in the third quarter to give the Aggies a 45 point lead in A&M's 73-0 lopsided victory.

AT&T donated \$400 to the NCAA's Degree Completion Scholarship Fund and Glenn will receive an engraved plaque for his efforts.

Lady Aggie Soccer moves into regional rankings

The Texas A&M women's soccer team (5-2) moved into the number 10 spot in this week's South Region Rankings after capturing the Texas Christian University Invitational in Fort Worth.

The Lady Aggies took the tournament with a 6-0 victory over TCU in the championship match. A&M posted its third shutout of the season.

After taking a two week break, the Aggies will host Oral Roberts on October 2 in College Station. The game will be the Aggies' home opener.

A&M golf opens season

Sixteenth-ranked Texas A&M finished in ninth place overall at the Jack Nicklaus Collegiate Invitational at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio this past weekend.

A&M junior Anthony Rodriguez was a runner-up for individual medalist by registering scores of 71, 74 and 79 for a total of 224.

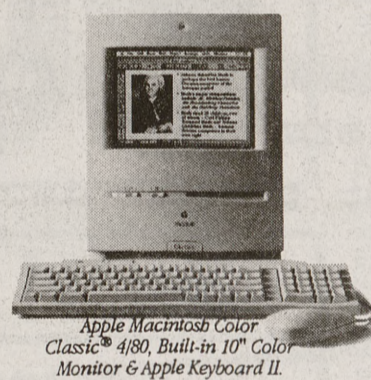
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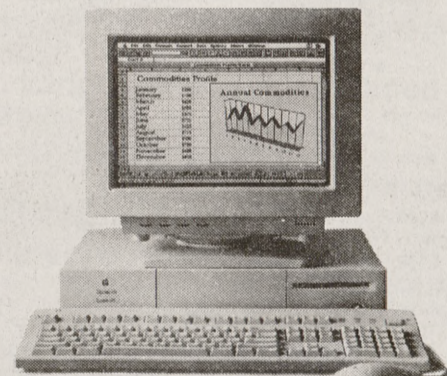
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Don't miss the Microcomputer Fair (23-24 September), at the Rudder Exhibit Hall. There will be exhibits, presentations, prizes, and a chance to win a Raleigh Mountain Bike.

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