

A&M Track and Field

PAST

Matson propels A&M track

By Nick Georgandis
THE BATTALION

The nameplate on Randy Matson's office door reads 'Executive Director - Association of Former Students.' But the man behind the door is anything but an ordinary former student.

Standing 6 feet, 6 inches tall, and with limbs more reminiscent of tree trunks than arms and legs, it is easy to guess what Matson might have been during his time at A&M. He was definitely an athlete.

More specifically, he was the athlete who shocked the world of track and field 30 years ago by becoming the first shot putter ever to throw the 16-pound shot more than 70 feet.

The historic occasion occurred on the A&M campus at Kyle Field during the 1965 Southwest Conference Track and Field Championships.

"I had set the world record a few months before, and I kind of thought that would be it for the year," Matson said. "I came back, and I was so excited because we were having the Southwest Conference meet at Kyle Field."

The previous summer, Matson had won a silver medal in the Summer Olympics held in Tokyo, and had already established a world record with a throw of 67-11 1/2 feet. Matson said that attempting to reach the 70-foot landmark was a difficult path to travel.

"I had started to kind of dream about 70 feet," Matson said. "If I would have been trying too hard though, I probably would have messed it up."

That day at Kyle Field, Matson lofted a throw 70-7 1/4 feet, shattering his own record by nearly three feet.

Matson won the SWC Championship and the NCAA Championships in 1965, and repeated both of those feats in each of the next two years.

In 1968, he received the highest track and field honor in the world when he won the gold medal in the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City.

Despite winning a large number of championships over his career, Matson said one goal always kept him going.

"My goal was to be the world-record holder," Matson said. "It was almost anticlimactic when I got (the record) because all of a sudden I wasn't chasing it anymore."

Matson attributed his success to having the same attitude when whether he was practicing in solitude or competing in front of a crowd of thousands.

"I had the satisfaction of competing and working out every day," Matson said. "I enjoyed throwing by myself out in practice as much as I did in competition."

While setting records left and right in the shot put, Matson's excellence in another event was

nearly overlooked. In 1966 and 1967, Matson also won the NCAA Championship in the discus.

He kept the world's shot put record for eight years before it was broken.

The record itself however, was not to stay away from College Station for long.

In 1990, Randy Barnes brought the world record back to Texas A&M with a throw of 75-10 1/4 feet in Westwood, Calif.

Matson said he was pleased when the record entered the hands of a fellow Aggie.

"I had always hoped that another Aggie would get the record back here," Matson said. "Hopefully, someone else from A&M will come along and break this record."

Matson has been employed at A&M since 1972 and has been executive director of the Former Students Association since 1980. He said the association now numbers 180,000 members and that member involvement makes his job relatively simple.

"What we're mainly doing is raising money and giving the former students a chance to give something back," Matson said. "Of course, the spirit at A&M is the greatest in the world, and the student loyalty is always amazing."

Much like one of Matson's old throws.



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Despite running with a severely sore ankle Saturday, A&M sophomore hurdler **Larry Wade** took second place in the men's 110-meter hurdles at the NCAA Track and Field Championships held in Knoxville, Tenn.

PRESENT

Sophomore Wades into record books

By David Winder
THE BATTALION

There he was, moments away from the start of the 110-meter hurdles final in the NCAA Outdoor Championships last week, preparing for the race of his life.

The black Nike socks fit snug around his feet and the golden hoop earrings hung gently from his ears — just like before every other race. The pain in his right ankle, however, had never been there before a race.

He had hurt the ankle while practicing for the championships and had been diagnosed with either a stress fracture or ligament damage. But All-American sophomore Larry Wade put it all behind him when the starting gun sounded, and he ran the best time of his life.

"The Lord has blessed me all season and he blessed me for that race," Wade said. "I ran well, but there was room for improvement. I always want to improve on my performance."

Texas A&M managers Ryan Rozyal and Brandon Williams put treatment on Wade's ankle up until the time of the race. Even with the injury, Wade set the Texas A&M school record with a time of 13.41 seconds finishing behind Clemson's Duane Ross. Both Wade and Ross broke the track record of 13.54, for

the event previously set by Willie Gault in 1982.

Running with an injury was nothing new to Wade, who spent the first half of the outdoor season dealing with a back problem. Like the ankle injury, Wade put the back problem behind him by capturing five straight outdoor meets, including the prestigious Penn Relays, Texas Relays and the Southwest Conference Championships.

"I had a wonderful season. The injuries set me back some but the Lord blessed me and helped me make it through."

— Larry Wade,
Sophomore hurdler for A&M

"I had a wonderful season," Wade said. "The injuries set me back some but the Lord blessed me and helped me make it through."

Wade enjoyed just as much success inside this season as he did outside. He qualified for the NCAA's and finished third in the 55-m hurdles after finishing second in the 55 at the SWC Indoor Tournament with a time of 7.25 seconds.

When Wade first arrived at Texas A&M from Elgin High where he won district, regional and state

championships in the 110, he did not think he would be having many wonderful seasons.

"When I first came here, (head) coach (Ted) Nelson and coach (Abe) Brown let me experiment with my style," Wade said. "After I set a pattern of running, they told me the different things that needed to be changed."

"At first, I didn't listen to them and I failed. Then I started listening to them, and by trial and error, everything started falling into place."

As a freshman, Wade won the 110 in the Border Olympics, the Rice Invitational, the Arizona Shootout and the A&M Invitational. He finished third at the SWC outdoor with a time of 14.06.

Wade is more concerned about the Texas A&M team than he is about any individual event.

"At the first of the year, the team was separated," Wade said. "As the season went on, we became a lot closer as a team. We need to support our teammates in all the events because all the points count. Even if it's just worth a half of a point, we need to support that half of a point."

Wade will have his ankle X-rayed today to see if he will be able to participate in the US Track & Field Championships June 15-17 in Sacramento, Calif.



Roger Hsieh, THE BATTALION

Executive Director of the Former Students' Association **Randy Matson** was the shot putter to break 70 feet.

Superstitions rule sports fan's existence

I've always been the superstitious type. Lucky socks, special shoelaces and unwashed T-shirts have all helped me in my athletic career. Baseball caps, stuffed animals and an unshaven chin have all helped my favorite sports teams win.

But because of health reasons, I think I'm going to have to stop one of my most successful superstitions. I started hitting fists with my friends when the Houston Rockets' playoff run first began in April. Since then, numerous plays have been worthy of fist-hits, and my hand is starting to show it.

At first the hits were minor, but as the Rockets moved farther into the playoffs, the taps became full-blown punches. I didn't mind though, because it seemed the harder we hit, the better the Rockets played.

Well now I mind because my knuckles are starting to look like raw hamburger meat. I'm having trouble gripping the steering wheel and tying my shoelaces. I'm beginning to think that the Rockets are going to have to play the NBA Finals without me.

My superstitions have not always been violent. When I was in high school, my basketball teammates and I would gather to watch the "NBA Superstars" video before games. If we turned it off after the Dominique Wilkins section of the video, we were guaranteed a victory.

On the day of the biggest game, we gathered at my teammate's girlfriend's house to watch the video. Somewhere between the Charles Barkley and Hakeem Olajuwon segments, she

DAVID WINDER
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discovered that my teammate was being unfaithful.

We were quickly asked to leave without seeing any of Dominique's dunks.

That night, we got our butts kicked by 43 points. Call me crazy, but I still believe in my heart of hearts that if we had seen Dominique's video, we would have won that game.

To this day, I still blame my teammate for putting another blemish on our 11-19 record.

Tonight, I think I'm going to try positioning for a Houston victory. If the Rockets are doing well while I'm in a certain position, then I'm going to stay that way until their hot streak is over. If the Rockets are rolling while I'm standing on one foot and gagging myself, then I'm doing it for the duration.

The superstition started back in 1986 when the Houston Astros were trying to capture the National League West title. The Astros were behind by about seven runs when someone bet my friend that he couldn't put his fist in his mouth. He did, and right after he had accomplished the amazing feat, Astro first baseman Glenn Davis hit a home run.

As the Astros continued to rally, my friend started to turn blue, but we didn't dare let him remove his hand. The Astros scored three runs in the bottom of the ninth for an important victory, and we all celebrated in the ambulance that picked up my friend.

I sure hope the Rockets can survive without me hitting fists because I know I can't put my hand in my mouth.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Wilbert signs on for French rendezvous

Texas A&M senior basketball player Joe Wilbert signed a contract Tuesday to play professional basketball in France, if he does not make an NBA team's roster this year.

The contract calls for Wilbert to be paid \$40,000 as a base salary with the opportunity to earn up to \$60,000, including bonuses. He has to honor the contract only if he is not drafted or signed as a free agent by an NBA team.

Wilbert, a first-team All-Southwest Conference player this year, led the Aggies in scoring for the second consecutive season in 1994-95, averaging near 25 points per game.

If he is not signed by an NBA team, Wilbert will leave for France on Aug. 1.

Rogers deals complete game against Kansas City

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Kenny Rogers matched the longest winning streak of his career with his seventh consecutive victory and Mike Pagliarulo snapped a 1-1 tie with a sixth-inning single as the Texas Rangers cooled off the Kansas City Royals 2-1 Tuesday night.

Rogers (7-2) allowed seven hits, had one walk and struck out seven to shut down the Royals, who'd won 10 of their previous 11 games. Rogers, who

threw his second complete game of the year, is tied with Kansas City's Kevin Appier and Montreal's Jeff Fassero for the major league lead in victories.

Texas took a 2-1 lead against Mark Gubicza (3-5) in the sixth when Mickey Tettleton singled with one out and scored on Pagliarulo's two-out single.

Astros' win streak over in extra-inning loss

HOUSTON (AP) — Charles Johnson's 11th-inning double, his third of the game, scored Greg Colbrunn from second base and gave Florida a 7-6 victory over Houston on Tuesday night.

Colbrunn led off the 11th with a single off John Hudek (2-1), who took a 0.68 earned run average into the game. Colbrunn was sacrificed to second by Kurt Abbott and scored when Johnson doubled to the center field fence past Derek Bell.

The outcome snapped the Astros' five-game winning streak and the Marlins' three-game losing streak.

Mark Gardner (1-4) pitched 1 1/3 innings, striking out two, for the victory, running his career record to 6-1 against the Astros.

Simpson's trophies returned to pawn shop

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Two trophies belonging to O.J. Simpson have been returned to a pawn shop, which is barred from selling them until the former football star decides whether he wants them.

State Supreme Court Justice Vincent E. Doyle Jr. ordered Buffalo police to

return the trophies to Kary Enterprises. The judge gave Simpson 60 days to decide whether he will sue the pawn shop for the trophies.

The pawn shop bought the items for \$300 after Simpson was charged with the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman last June. The trophies were purchased from a woman who knew Booker Edgerdson, a teammate of Simpson's during the 1969 season with the Buffalo Bills.

Edgerdson had been holding the trophies for Simpson for more than two decades.

Red Wings stretch series lead to 3 against Chicago

CHICAGO (AP) — The Detroit Red Wings are within one victory of their first Stanley Cup finals appearance in 29 years.

Vladimir Konstantinov beat goaltender Ed Belfour on a soft shot from just inside the blue line 9:25 into the second overtime as Detroit defeated the Chicago Blackhawks 4-3 Tuesday night.

The Red Wings, who took a 3-0 lead for the third straight series, tied a team season playoff record with their eighth consecutive victory. Detroit, which has won each game this round by one goal, can wrap up the Western Conference finals Thursday night at Chicago.

Konstantinov's first career playoff goal ended the longest game in this year's NHL playoffs.

The play looked innocent enough, with Konstantinov gaining control at center ice, striding into Chicago's zone and putting a soft wrist shot toward the net.