

'Mr. Cowboy' discusses Dallas' past, present

BY JAMIE BURCH
THE BATTALION

All of Fame defensive tackle Bob Lilly (1961-74) played football in a different era. An era in which the media, the players, football and the Dallas Cowboys were naive and innocent. Football was the same metaphorical battle on the gridiron that it is today, but it was less corrupt and less provocative.

Lilly, who visited TCA Cable yesterday as part of a promotional for Classic Sports Network, said he believes the blemished image of the Dallas Cowboys falls on the shoulder of the head coaches.

"Coach (Tom) Landry was a good person and a stickler for morals and character," Lilly said. "He instilled that in us. He would put up with a little, but not a lot. Jimmy Johnson was the same way. He knew that the team came before the individual."

"Barry Switzer, [on the other hand], is very lax when it comes to the standards of the players. I don't think he realized the difference between media in college and media in the pros. They scrutinize every move you make, especially when you're World Champions."

Lilly said he dislikes what has occurred with the Dallas Cowboys.

"I travel all over the country," Lilly said. "Fans everywhere tell me 'we used

to be Cowboy fans, but now we're going to have to find somebody else', because they don't like the current image of the Cowboys."

Lilly helped build the franchise known as "America's Team." The Cowboys selected Lilly, a two-time All-Southwest Conference pick and an All-American at Texas Christian University, with the team's first pick in 1961. Nicknamed "Mr. Cowboy," Lilly played in two Super Bowls, Super Bowl V and Super Bowl VI.

While Lilly recalls his first few years in the National Football League were not enjoyable, he said he would not have wanted it any other way.

"It wasn't any fun," Lilly said. "Because, believe it or not, we won the (SWC) conference twice when I was in college. Looking back, it was a lot more fun for me to be on a team that was building, than if I would've come in and been on a winning team to start with."

"I wouldn't want to do it again, but at that age, I didn't know any better."

En route to becoming the first Cowboy inducted into the Cowboys Ring of Honor, Lilly played 196 consecutive games. During his 14-year career, Lilly, who was elected to 11 Pro Bowls, never missed a game.

Lilly said there were times when he was not 100 percent.

"I think there were a lot of times that I should've missed a game," Lilly said. "But

Coach Landry didn't see it that way. I broke several bones. They just weren't crucial bones like a femur."

Discussing various football injuries, Lilly said his favorite display of toughness was when Cowboy fullback Walt Garrison constructed his own method of treatment for a broken collarbone during the 1976 playoffs.

"We'd go get in the whirlpool [after a game] and there would be a snorkel sticking up out of the water," Lilly said. "Walt was down in the whirlpool, underneath the water, letting the water hit his collarbone."

"It amazed me that anyone would go to such extremes to get the soreness out, so he could practice. That's the way our whole team was. We had enough guys like Roger (Staubach), Walt, and Leroy (Jordan) who would play hurt, that everyone else felt bad if they didn't do the same thing."

Lilly, remembered by some for his 58-yard helmet toss after losing Super Bowl V, said his favorite memory was the post-game celebration of Super Bowl VI.

"When we carried Landry off the field he had a grin from (ear to ear)," Lilly said. "That was neat."

But more than anything else, Lilly said he treasures his 1975 induction into the Hall of Fame.

"The biggest thrill of my life was being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame," Lilly said. "It makes you reflect back on your mother and father, and your high school and college teammates."

Lilly, an All-American and All-Pro, played football in an all together different era. More importantly, Lilly is all class.



Dave House, THE BATTALION

The first draft pick of the Dallas Cowboys, Bob Lilly, paid a visit to TCA Cable in Bryan yesterday to sign autographs for fans.

"Barry Switzer is very lax when it comes to the standards of the players."

Bob Lilly
Former Cowboy
defensive tackle

A&M gets first taste of ranked competition against Arizona

BY JEREMY FURTICK
THE BATTALION

This weekend the Texas A&M Baseball Team will put their No. 7 national ranking on the line against a perennial national baseball power — the Arizona Wildcats.

The Aggies (5-2) will be facing their first nationally renowned opponent after competing against in-state squads in the first three series of the year. Today's starting pitcher, freshman Casey Fossum, said Arizona's distinction adds a little motivation to the team.

"Playing a big Division I school instead of the small Division I teams like we have been gives us more incentive to play harder," Fossum said. "There is a little more pressure in this series because of (Arizona's) reputation as a good baseball team."

Sophomore outfielder Jason Tyner and senior first baseman Jason Stephens will lead A&M's offensive attack against the Wildcats (7-5). In the Aggies' first seven games, Tyner has been on a tear, going 17 for 30 (.567) and scoring seven runs from the lead off spot. Stephens has blasted three home runs, collected 10 RBIs and raised his average to .357.

The Aggies are hitting .367 as a team and are averaging over seven runs a game, but they have not been able to

get early leads on their opponents.

A&M Head Baseball Coach Mark Johnson said this trend is due to an inexperienced pitching staff and shaky defense.

"You have to realize most of our guys are crossing the line for the first time," he said. "Four of our main pitchers didn't even throw last year."

Senior John Codrington and juniors Ryan Rupe and Jamie Smith are returning from injuries sustained last season, while Fossum was in high school a year ago.

"Crossing the line for the first time, or for the first time in a while, at Texas A&M is tough," Johnson said. "And then if we make an error or two behind them, it really multiplies the problem. So it's not all a pitching problem we haven't played solid defense either."

Johnson said the pitchers' early-inning struggles will decline as they gain more starting experience. Fossum will be making his third start of the season today, while Rupe and Codrington will make their second starts tomorrow and Sunday, respectively.

Stephens said he does lay some of the blame on the offense, saying the Aggies' experienced lineup should respond better in early innings.

"We know how to get ready for a

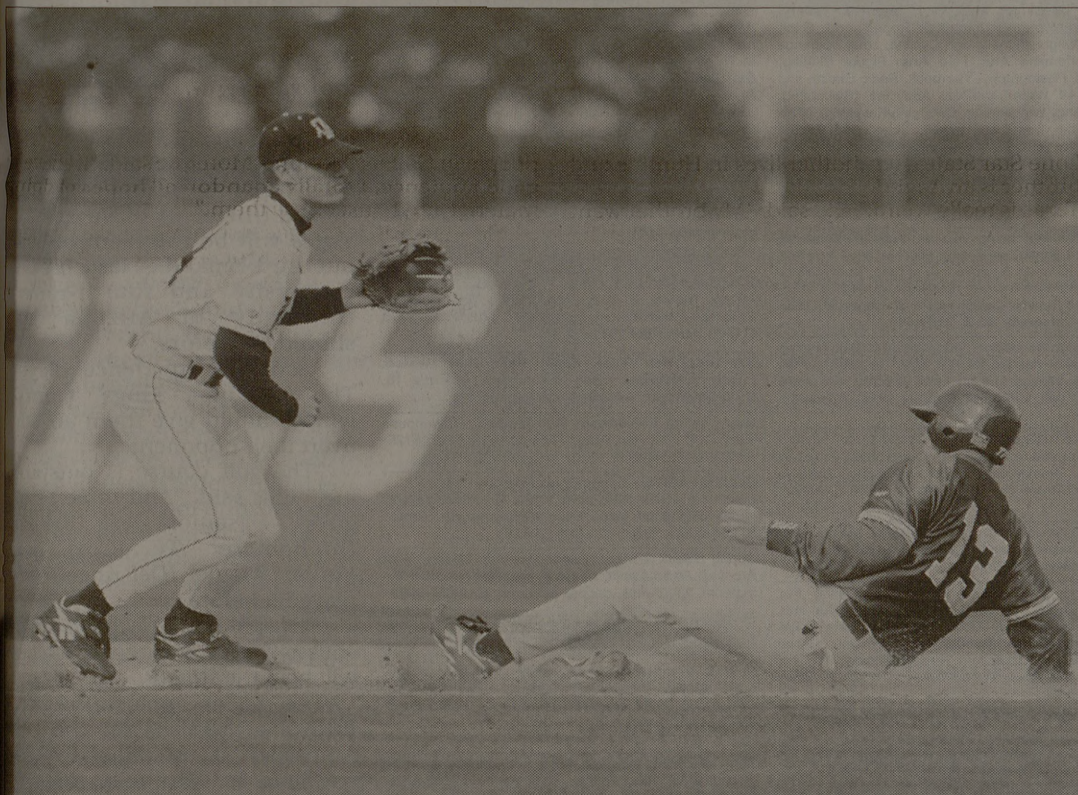
game, we just need to do it," Stephens said. "But it will come. We've got the talent, we're just getting off to slow starts. We've got to drive runners in when they're on base."

In the Aggies' two losses, there have been ample opportunities to win the ballgames. Even in their five wins, A&M has struggled to put teams away, winning by an average of three runs a game. Johnson said the close-game experience has been good for his team but he would not mind a blowout.

Stephens said the tension-filled games are holding back part of the Aggies' offensive arsenal.

"When we're playing from behind all the time, we have to play station to station," Stephens said. "We have great team speed and would like to jump out and get a lead so we can just turn it loose and get going."

Today's and tomorrow's contests will begin at 3 p.m. at Olsen Field, while Sunday's game starts at 1 p.m. As a special Valentine's Day event, the Diamond Darlings will be taking photos of fans and their sweethearts or having their pictures made with fans for \$1. Sweethearts will also receive half-price admission to today's game, while free schedule posters will be handed out on Sunday.



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Junior second basemen Brian Benefield waits for the ball to convert a double play against the University of Texas-Arlington Tuesday afternoon.

To play or not to play

Softball waits to hear word on tournament

BY NICKI SMITH
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Softball Team was all set to put its hard work and dedication to the test at the Pepsi-Cola Classic Tournament held at the University of Texas at Arlington this weekend.

However, because of inclement weather, the Lady Aggies may not receive this opportunity. Today's games have been canceled. UTA officials anticipate to begin playing games Saturday afternoon or evening.

After splitting two games with Southwest Texas State University in a double header held last Tuesday, the Lady Aggies will put on their tournament game face for this weekend.

In the whole tournament, there are 26 teams divided among six brackets. Some of these teams include the University of Texas-Arlington, Baylor University, New Mexico State University, Texas Tech University, Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma. However, the brackets have not yet been determined and a revised schedule will be announced today.

A&M Head Coach Jo Evans said regardless of the situation, the Lady

Aggies will face some tough competition, but are hoping to play well and place among the top teams in the tournament.

"There are going to be some very experienced teams," Evans said. "We know going in that this tournament will be a challenge for us, but at the same time, it will give us a better feel of where our strengths and weaknesses lie."

Senior pitcher Lori Gioco said the tournament will help the team work on its concentration.

"We still have some major things we need to work on," Gioco said. "We should be pretty strong because we have good players filling the shoes left open by last year's seniors, but at the same time we haven't seen each other at game time."

The Lady Aggies have attended the Pepsi-Cola Tournament the last three years and won the first place crown in 1994. But the Lady Aggies have not advanced to the finals since then.

Senior center fielder Gina Perez said this year's team is going to try to change that.

"Ever since I have been here we have always done well in our first tournament," Perez said. "We are all dying to play and have become pretty anxious. Hopefully, we will use that to explode on the field."

Cowboys ride into town to face Aggies

BY MATT MITCHELL
THE BATTALION

Following a frustrating loss to Texas Tech University Wednesday night, the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team has double vision. The Aggies' next two games are both against the Oklahoma State University Cowboys, with the first coming Saturday at G. Rollie White Coliseum. Tip-off is slated for 12:45 p.m.

"We've got to go out and battle," A&M Head Coach Tony Barone said. "It's a big-bang game for us."

"They've had a lot of close losses and they're coming off a tough one at Kansas, where most everybody gets their pants handed to them, so I don't think that's anything unique."

OSU is still smarting from the 104-72 whacking they received Wednesday night at the hands of the Kansas Jayhawks. The loss dropped OSU to 0-9 on the road this year, a statistic that bodes well for the Aggies, losers of four straight games.

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Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Junior Calvin Davis battles with Tech's Tony Battie for the rebound.

Lady Ags continue grueling road trip

BY JAMIE BURCH
THE BATTALION

Forced to playing without heralded senior guard Lana Tucker for the rest of the season, the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team (8-14 overall, 2-10) continues its road trip as the Lady Aggies travel north of Lake Texoma to take on Oklahoma State University (13-9 overall, 5-7) Saturday at 7 p.m.

The Lady Aggies, who have lost five of their last six games, are searching for any way possible to finish the season on a positive note. A&M is coming off a demoralizing 29-point loss (75-46) to Texas Tech University Wednesday night, in which the Aggies scored just 17 points in the first half and shot a horrid 24 percent (16-of-65) from the field.

A&M's ineptness was even more obvious on the defensive end. Tech junior center Alicia Thompson torched the Lady Aggies, scoring 30 points.

Senior guard Melissa Rollerson led the Aggies in scoring with 13 points, but said she has not been playing up to par.

"I try not to think about [having to be the leader] because I haven't been playing good," Rollerson said.

"I try not to put any additional pressure on myself because it's only going to make the situation worse."

OSU is trying to halt a three-game skid of its own. The teams latest defeat came in overtime at the hands of Kansas University, 79-76. Junior forward Renee Roberts leads the Cowgirls in scoring (14.5) and steals (2.36). While Freshman forward Jennifer Crow is a threat from three-point range, averaging 44 percent (33-of-75) from downtown. As a team, the Cowgirls average a sizzling 70 percent from the charity stripe.

Assistant coach Lisa Jordan said the team is less concerned with wins and losses than achieving a set of goals.

"We have four goals for each game," Jordan said. "We want to hold our opponent under 70 points, rebound our opponent, get to more loose balls, and take at least three charges."

"If we can do those four things, then regardless of what the score is, you can feel good about your performance."

But as the Lady Aggies have learned, the problem with a theory is that until you prove it to be true, it is just a theory.