

Larry Wade returns in grand fashion



Jeremy Furtick

Larry Wade Returns to Hurdles Competition

Junior Larry Wade returned to hurdle competition last weekend at the Texas A&M-Texas dual meet at the Frank G. Anderson Track Complex. Wade had not competed outdoors in the hurdles since the 1995 NCAA Outdoor Championships, where he turned in the fifth-fastest 110-meter hurdle time in NCAA history (13.41).

Wade suffered a stress fracture in his back after the 1996 indoor season that kept him out of last year's outdoor and this year's indoor competition. After spending the first few outdoor meets of this season running the 400-meter dash, he was finally ready to run the hurdles.

Head Coach Ted Nelson said he was happy Wade is returning to his best event. Nelson said he told his hurdler last week during practice he would be happy if Wade finished the race with a 14.5. Wade did better than that, turning in an incredible 13.61, the second-fastest time in the nation this season behind Clemson's Jeremiah Williams (13.59).

Wade automatically qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Championships and set Frank G. Anderson track and A&M-Texas dual meet records with the time.

Nelson gave Wade's performance his highest compliment.

"It may have been one of the best track and field performances I've ever seen," he said, "and I've seen world records fall and things like that. It was a fantastic time, and he still banged through some hurdles and lost probably another tenth of a second there."

Other Aggies Qualify For the NCAA Outdoor Championships

Two other Aggies join Larry Wade as automatic qualifiers for the NCAA Outdoor Championships. On the men's side, senior Russell Nuti qualified in the discus, while senior Anjanette Kirkland qualified for the women in the 100-meter dash.

Other women who have qualified provisionally for the NCAAs are senior Donyale Canada in the 100-meter dash, sophomore Kelli Schrader in the discus, and junior Ceci Hudson in the heptathlon. The men who have posted NCAA provisional qualifying marks are junior Billy Fobbs in the 100-meter dash and senior Danny McCray in the 200-meter dash.

Both the men's and women's 400-meter relay teams have run NCAA provisional qualifying times.

Aggies head to historic Relays

A&M track and field travels to Austin to compete in the 70th annual Texas Relays

By JEREMY FURTICK
THE BATTALION

This weekend will provide an early-season test for the Texas A&M's Men's and Women's Track & Field Teams, who are ranked 20th and 19th in the nation respectively.

Both teams will travel to Austin today to compete against the country's best athletes in the 70th Annual Texas Relays at Darrell K. Royal Memorial Stadium, on the University of Texas campus.

Schools from across the nation will attend the meet, as will 10-time Olympic gold medalist Carl Lewis. The Aggie men's and women's teams will compete in 13 events apiece.

Head Coach Ted Nelson is pleased with the progress his teams have made in the last few weeks and looks forward to competing in Austin.

"Three weeks ago we were not at a point I wanted us to be at," he said. "But we've made some big strides to get back on schedule. This weekend should give us a good idea of what we need to do to improve even more."

A&M competed well against the Longhorns' 15th-ranked men's and second-ranked women's teams last weekend, losing both A&M-Texas dual meets by close margins (89-74 men, 79-65 women). But Nelson said he sees a lot of room for improvement in both 4x400-meter relays.

"We were consistently improving in our men's 4x400 until last weekend," he said. "We still won



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Members of the women's A&M track team practice hurdles at the Frank G. Anderson Track Complex.

the race, but we didn't run really well. Billy Fobbs was only running at about 85 percent and that hurt our performance."

Fobbs should be 100 percent by the Texas Relays, which Nelson said should improve the relay time.

Nelson also said the women's 4x400-meter relay team struggled last weekend after running well in previous meets. He said these are the two events he wants his teams to improve on in Austin.

The only major change in the teams' lineups will be in the 4x200-

meter relay.

"We are going to run some guys and ladies in the 4x200 that normally aren't sprint-type people; they're more mile runners," Nelson said. "That will really be the only change this weekend."

The Texas Relays have become a showcase for collegiate and professional competitors alike.

Lewis, who said 1997 will be his last year to compete in track and field, enters the meet each year as part of the Santa Monica Track Club's 4x400-meter relay team.



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Senior decathlete Travis Maher practices pole vaulting.

McCray sprinting his way to fame

By CHRIS FERRELL
THE BATTALION

As a wide receiver for the Texas A&M Football Team, senior Danny McCray caught six passes for 49 yards in three years. As a sprinter for the Texas A&M Track Team, he has been named a three-time All-American.

Danny McCray is a sprinter. For the first time in his collegiate career, McCray is concentrating strictly on track and field. McCray credits his parents and teammates for helping him make the difficult decision.

"I really felt like I had a lot more places to go in track and field," McCray said. "I didn't feel like things worked out for me the way I wanted them to in football. After I left the (Olympic) trials this summer, I knew where I should be and how good I could be."

"I feel that it's impossible to be a world-class track and field athlete and not have that training time in the fall. I wanted to go through life knowing that I can be the best that I can be. I think it was one of the best decisions I made in my life."

Teammate and fellow All-American Larry Wade was glad to see McCray focus his efforts on track.

"I think that was a very positive move," the senior hurdler said. "At first I thought he had second thoughts about doing it. I think that was the best decision for him because he is a very talented track athlete and he can be and is one of the best in the world."

With his mind now set on track, McCray is setting high goals for 1997.

"I set some pretty high goals for myself," McCray said. "I want to break a collegiate record. I want to win a national championship. I want this team to win a national championship."

"One of the things that I noticed about A&M this year is that we haven't had a lot of success in our sports. And I want to leave A&M on a good note. I want to bring back not only an individual national championship, but relay national championships for both the men and the women."

In a sport dominated by individual performers, McCray's team mentality is unusual. Even with a track and field career ahead of him after school, McCray wants to make sure the Aggies are still running strong after he leaves.

"I've tried to work with some of the younger guys to get them ready to run in some of the bigger meets," McCray said. "I want them to know that it's time to step

up because I'm not going to be around next year. When I'm doing my own thing next year, I want to be able to look back on the A&M track team and see all those young guys running fast."

His dedication to his events and his team have made McCray a leader. Despite his quiet demeanor in practice, the other runners listen carefully to his words.

"I see myself as a quiet leader," McCray said. "Someone people can look at and follow my example. I offer advice and help people when I can but I let the younger guys step up and talk. They're the ones who really need to step up, and I try to put them in a position where they have to step up."

Wade said McCray's influence on his teammates is evident.

"A lot of times, he doesn't have to say anything to get the team pumped up," Wade said. "Sometimes him just saying, 'Let's get it done, fellas,' or, 'It's time to run,' is good enough to get the team going."

McCray's 'get the job done' attitude has been important to the Aggies over the past four years. McCray's accomplishments, much like his work ethic,



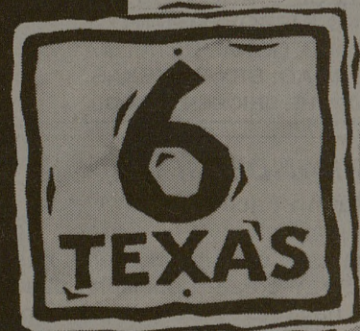
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Senior Danny McCray (left) runs with his partner junior Michael McKinney at practice.

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