

Thursday • October 9, 1997

# Dicky V. invades Aggieland, baby

*Bogey With Barone weekend gives University, basketball program national spotlight*

By CHRIS FERRELL  
Sports editor

ESPN college basketball analyst Dick Vitale will be the guest speaker at G. Rollie White Coliseum Friday night to help kick off the 1997 Texas A&M Basketball Team's season as part of this weekend's "Bogey With Barone" festivities.

Vitale's speech will be the highlight of an entire day of activities. "We think it's an honor to have Dick Vitale here first of all," coach Tony Barone said. "He's recognized as the premiere basketball analyst in the country. I think any time you can expose your fans and your supporters to a guy like this, it's nothing but a plus for our basketball program and Texas A&M in general."

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. outside of the Coliseum, with free food provided by On The Border.

There will also be games and a Dick Vitale sound alike contest.

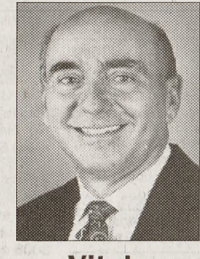
"It's something that we're hoping the students are going to get behind 150 percent," Barone said. "It's a simple night. You come over, you do On The Border, you get yourself some free food, get some soda, you go in and hear Dick Vitale speak and when that's over, you walk over and get ready for yell practice. The next day we play Iowa State in football, it's a great, great weekend."

Vitale will arrive at G. Rollie White at approximately 7:15 to take part in the party, at 8:30, the program will be moved inside for Vitale's speech.

Barone said the night will be a great chance for A&M to gain national exposure.

"This is a guy who has a major affect (on college basketball). It gives us an opportunity to show that there is a spirit here at Texas A&M that is second to none," he said.

"A lot of times you hear about the spirit at Texas A&M, but if you've never been here, or you've never really seen it, you don't know what it is. So I think the students have an opportunity here to promote Texas A&M's spirit, not just part of athletics, but as part of the university. Dick Vitale will talk about this trip all year long and he will be an ambassador for Texas A&M based on what he sees at this particular event."



Vitale

Friday night's event will mark the conclusion of an entire day of activities. The day will begin with a golf tournament at Pebble Creek Country Club and will also include a dinner at G. Rollie White. Barone said that there are

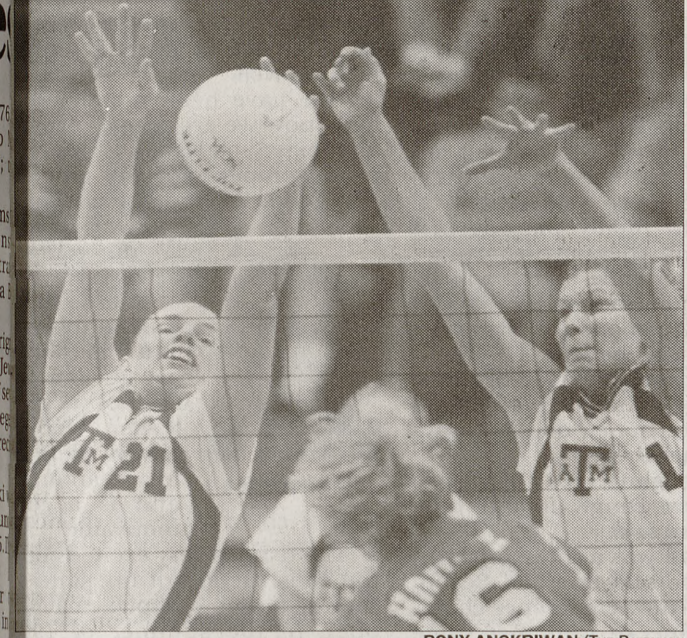
currently about 220 people signed up to play golf and 550 planning to attend the dinner.

Barone said the day will help shine the national spotlight on a basketball program which is about to take off.

"We have spent six years trying to get this thing organized so that once we were moving forward, there weren't going to be anymore road blocks, so I hope that's where we're at right now," Barone said. "We have guys who have worked harder in the preseason than I've ever had. I think they recognized what they had to do and did it."

"We're going to be on ESPN. We want Dick Vitale to come back for the Texas game and this is a way to do it. There's something to be said about guys who stay and fight. There's something to be said about guys who don't run. Eventually your going to look back and see how important you are to the program. We've got a bunch of guys like that right now."

Return to sender



RONY ANGRIWAN/THE BATTALION

Senior Cindy Lothspeich and freshman Celia Howes block an attempted spike in A&M's win over UH. See complete story, Page 14.

# 'Tongan Terror'-izes Texas A&M opponents

By JAMIE BURCH  
Staff writer

Four-hundred miles southeast of Fiji in the south Pacific lies a small island chain known as Tonga — where rugby is the sport of choice. The battle on the gridiron is the focus in the world of sport from Friday Night Lights to the institution known as Monday Night Football. Texas A&M offensive lineman Seimesi Heimuli, of Tongan descent, is well aware of this fact.

Heimuli, a native of California, said he grew up around rugby, but began playing the pigskin classic because of its popularity.

"I watched my dad, when I was little, playing rugby," Heimuli said. "The main Tongan sport. All the kids would go to our own field and start imitating the men. Rugby is

not as big in the U.S. as back in the (Tongan) islands, New Zealand, or Australia. So, I started playing contact football in the ninth grade."

Heimuli grew up in California and moved to Euleess, Texas after his freshman year in high school. The 6-foot 3-inch, 300 lbs. lineman only visited the Tongan islands as an infant. He knows about his heritage because of his parents, but has never lived in the south Pacific.

Heimuli said he came to A&M in 1995 because of his pleasant recruiting experience.

"I wanted to go somewhere back in California like Berkeley, UCLA, or USC," Heimuli said. "(Defensive line) Coach Johnson was the best of the guys recruiting me. He was straightforward. All those other guys told a lot of lies. He talked about A&M and no one else. Other coaches would put

down A&M and other programs. They'd say 'look at A&M. They're on probation. They're a bunch of cheaters.' Coach Johnson never did that. He just talked about what it was like to play for A&M. I respect him for that."

The Tongan has never looked back since. After his redshirt season, Heimuli got his chance to prove his worth as a player. Heimuli was battling then junior center Koby Hackradt for a starting position on the offensive line. Prior to the season opener at BYU, Hackradt went down with an injury. Guard Calvin Collins was shifted to center and Heimuli was penciled in at right guard.

Heimuli said the emotions were running high minutes to the start of the game in Provo, Utah.

"The team always walks out on the field, before the game, to check out the stadium," Heimuli said.

"Afterwards everyone just went to the locker room, but Cameron Spikes and I just sat in the stands. Fans were coming to the game and we were still sitting there."

"People kept asking us what we were doing. It was incredible. We were about to start our first college game ever."

But once the game got underway, Heimuli said his nerves settled down. "Once we started it was nothing, because the guys I went against in practice were better than those I was going against in the game. Brandon Mitchell, Pat Williams and Troup (Eddie Jasper) were all ten times better."

Heimuli went on to start all 12 games, helping the offense post an average of 404.5 yards per game, including 230.3 yards via the run.

But Heimuli was not sure he would start for the remainder of

the season.

"I had the start for that game," Heimuli said. "It doesn't mean I'm gonna have it for the next. When Koby came back it put a lot of pressure on me. He hurt his knee but came back as if it never happened. It made me nervous."

"The old offensive line coach, Mike Sherman, said 'Koby's coming back. He's looking good. You need to pick up your performance.'"

During his red shirt season against the University of Texas at Kyle Field, the Aggies were stunned by a 16-6 loss. Following the game, Longhorn players and fans stormed the field. Heimuli tried to his part to control the chaos.

"Some Texas football players were jumping on a corps member," Heimuli said. "I was being stupid, I wasn't thinking. I grabbed one of the players and hit him."

PLEASE SEE HEIMULI ON PAGE 13



DAVE HOUSE/THE BATTALION  
Seimesi Heimuli led A&M with a 425-pound bench press.

# CONGRATULATIONS U.S. MARINE CORPS OCS GRADUATES



1st Row: GySgt. Cecilia Henderson, John Hunt, Bryan Clifton, Jason Morgan, Capt. J.K. Daniels  
2nd Row: Matt Merrill, John Marshall, Gilbert Trejo, Michael Roundtree, Jr., Michael Erickson, Mark Divita  
3rd Row: Scott Wilson, Gary Hill, Ben Wilson, Ryan Walker, Shane Floyd, Mike Owen  
Not Pictured: Kevin Crespo, Mike Hays, Jesse Thomas, John Warren

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