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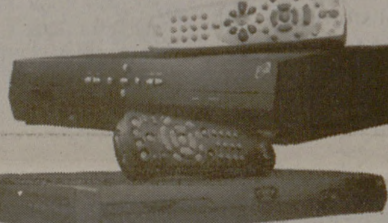
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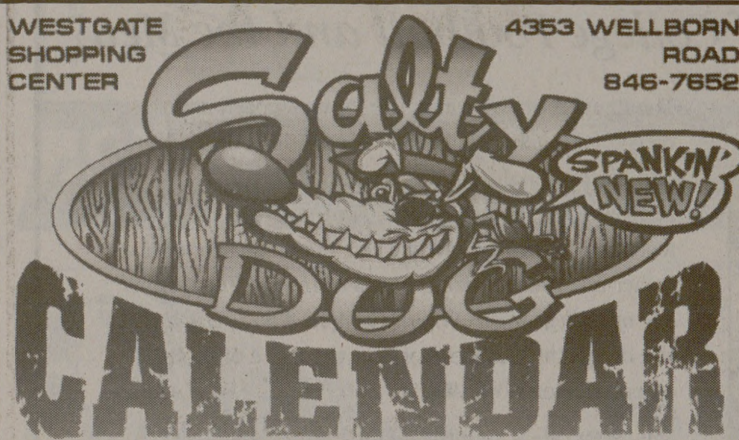
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# AggieLife

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THE BATTALION

Friday, September 28, 2001

## Balancing Act

Student athletes manage time between sports, studies

By MATT STELLBAUER  
THE BATTALION

A normal college day for most students consists of getting up in the morning or afternoon, going to class for a couple of hours, coming home to study and then possibly going out for the evening. For a student athlete, college life is anything but that.

"My day starts at 5:30 in the morning," said sophomore golfer and journalism major Stephen Reed. "That's when I get up to go to morning practice. That's the start of a really long day for me."

"After getting up at 5:30 its practice at six. After practicing for an hour, I will go get cleaned up and eat breakfast to prepare myself mentally for classes," Reed said.

For college athletes, going to class and doing schoolwork takes on a whole new meaning because it takes up so much time in their busy schedule.

"We have to study a minimum of six hours a week, but it takes so much more than that," said freshmen business major and runner on the track runner Katie Cullen. "We have tutors available to us for some of the harder classes, such as accounting, if we so choose to take advantage of that option."

Most of the athletes are required to keep a certain grade point ratio (GPR) to play a sport without fear of probation, but most athletes do not see the GPR requirement as a problem. They like to keep their grades above the minimums.

"With all that we have to do during the course of a day, we are forced to set priorities for ourselves," Reed said. "We can either choose to do our sport really well or let our sport suffer and do really well in school. So it sometimes becomes difficult to find a medium for those two things, espe-

cially when we travel."

After morning practices, the athletes get cleaned up, eat breakfast and then some go to class, which is sometimes the most taxing part of the day.

"I have had some really bright athletes

Christian Rodriguez. "You learn very quickly that it can either make you or break you. You also come to see that during your season, there is very little time for social life. Being an athlete on campus is all about your priorities."

So the classes are tough, but what about down time for the athletes? It would seem that with a jam-packed day, there is not a lot of room for relaxation. However, even the toughest competitors need time to chill.

"When I am not studying, practicing or sleeping, you can probably find me hanging out in the lobby of Cain Hall just shooting the breeze with my fellow athletes," Reed said.

Being an athlete brings the art of studying to a whole new level. While on the road, they often find it hard to concentrate.

"We are traveling to Mexico next week, and I will be surprised if I get a whole lot of studying done," Reed said. "That's where my tutor comes in. They help me to stay on top of my studies when I am not around to go to classes."

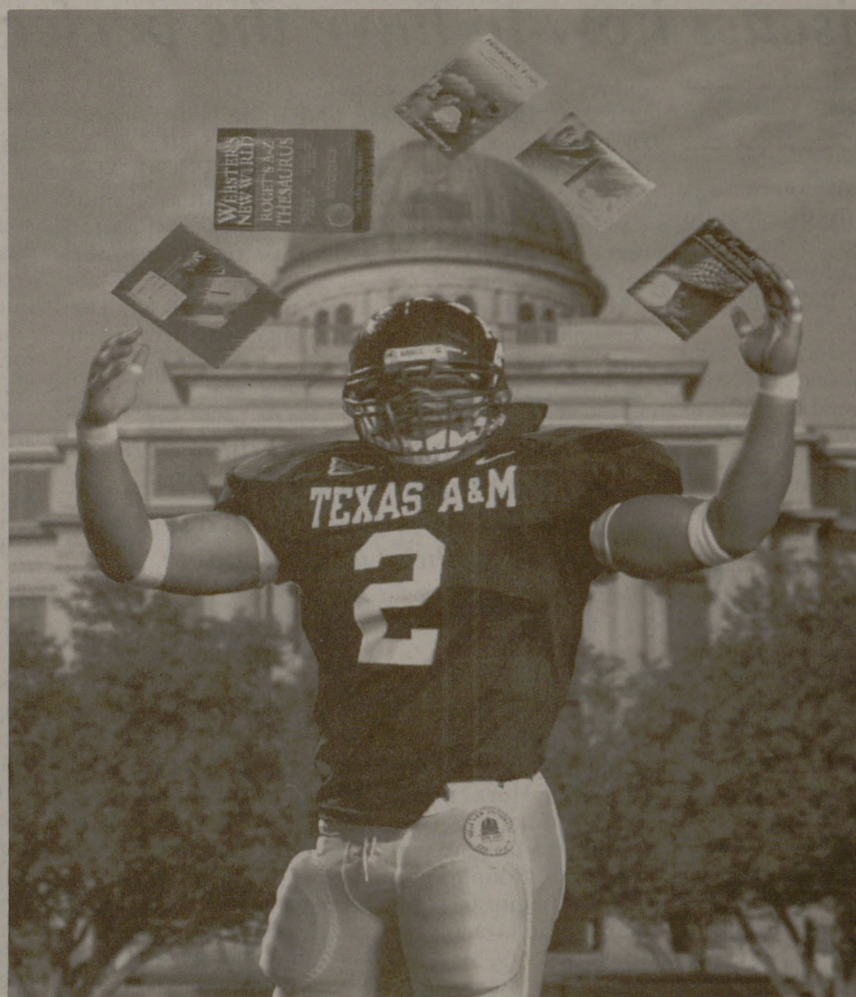
Even with so many concerns, being an athlete is not all that bad. They are essentially the 'big men' on campus - especially when the team does really well, such as winning a conference championship.

"Some days you are just a regular student, but then there are those days that you haphazardly wear a football shirt or say somebody recognizes you," Rodriguez said. "It makes you feel almost like a celebrity of sorts. As for the pay-off, some may have aspirations of going pro while others are counting on their college education to provide their future."

"I am majoring in journalism," Reed said. "I would like to go pro, but if that doesn't work out for me, I will have my college education to fall back on. Either way I win."

For others, the pay off will come much later, but it is the present that really makes playing a sport worth while.

"The fact that I can go up to another athlete and say 'You work hard, yeah, I work hard too.' That's what being a student athlete is all about," Cullen said.



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

and I have had some pretty dense ones, so as a professor I get to see the whole spectrum," said history professor David Snyder. "I have the utmost respect for these students. They go through so much more during the day than your average student. They have to deal with studies as well as staying on top of their game."

It seems like athletes would be stressed by game time. So what is the secret to keeping their heads on straight during the game while knowing they have several hours of homework ahead of them?

"It's all about time management," said graduate student and football linebacker

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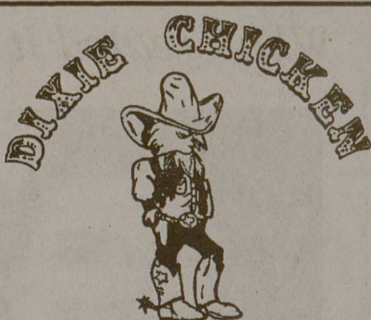
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