

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Oh, Henry!

Texas A&M gets gold in hiring of track and field coach Pat Henry

By Shawn C. Millender
THE BATTALION

Since Texas A&M athletic director Bill Byrne arrived in Aggieland in December of 2002, he has demonstrated neither reluctance nor hesitation to bring in top-flight coaching talent.

His tireless pursuit of athletic excellence led to personnel changes in men's and women's basketball. On Tuesday Byrne announced his next step on the path to the elusive national championship with the hiring of former Louisiana State University track and field coach Pat Henry.

"We need these people in College Station to help us build champions," Byrne said.

Henry joins a cadre of A&M coaches as the only one to have previously won a national championship, something he has done in leaps and bounds.

In 17 seasons of coaching LSU's men and women's track teams, Henry won an unprecedented 27 national championships. He brings an impressive resume to a program that has yet to win its first.

"LSU is a very tough environment to leave," Henry said. "We're excited about this challenge. We think we can do some things here at A&M. This is a place where we've looked forward to this opportunity."

Henry says the lure to come to A&M didn't spawn from the facilities or the talent already in

place, but the biggest factor in deciding to come to College Station was the people.

"The best recruiter in the room is right here," Henry said, motioning towards Byrne. "His staff is a big reason Gail (Henry's wife) and I came here."

Henry is replacing former A&M coach Ted Nelson, who resigned June 28 after serving as track coach for 12 years.

"Ted has been a friend for a long time," Henry said. "I hope he stays involved with the program — he really is a value to the program."

Henry said his first task will be to evaluate the personnel within the program.

"My initial priority is to surround myself with people who we can be successful with, staff-wise," Henry said. "Then we can evaluate talent."

Byrne went to great lengths to stress the importance of wooing Henry away from LSU.

"I'll quote John Thornton, who told me, 'If we get Pat Henry at Texas A&M that would be like taking Coach Krzyzewski away from Duke,'" Byrne said. "He recruits dual-sport athletes, and he's been killing us here in Texas while he was at LSU."

Henry said recruiting talent is not the only key to winning meets and national championships.

"It's not always about recruiting the greatest high school athlete out there, but it is important to recruit great people," Henry said.



BRIAN WILLS • THE BATTALION

New track and field coach **Pat Henry** speaks at a press conference on Tuesday at the Anderson Track Complex. **Henry** won 27 national championships while serving as head coach for Louisiana State University.

Henry said many changes will be made within the program and though some may seem significantly different, they will all be beneficial.

"The only way to change where you are is to be different," Henry said. "You can't be afraid to make that jump."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Moore named assistant coach

Men's head tennis coach Tim Cass announced Monday that Steve Moore will be filling the assistant coach vacancy left by Shuon Madden. Moore is an account manager for Plastipak Packaging, one of the nation's largest beverage bottlers, and he comes to A&M from Southern Methodist

University, where he was women's head tennis coach. During his two years at SMU, he led his team to a 13-3 WAC record.

Moore has 10 years of experience coaching tennis and five years of head coaching experience. Moore was the head coach at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi in 1998, the inaugural season of the program. During his time there, his team earned a 45-17 record.

Moore has a combined career record of 80-40. Moore was also assistant coach at Texas Tech University from 1995-98.

Former assistant coach Shuon Madden departed from the team to pursue a career in the professional tennis tour.

Moore graduated from Abilene Christian University in 1993 and was nationally ranked as well as serving as the team captain.

Cook ousted from tournament

Aggie three-time All-American tennis player Lester Cook fell in the first round of the Mercedes-Benz Cup, an ATP Tour Event, Monday at the Los Angeles Tennis Center. Cook earned the wild card bid into the tournament after winning the tiebreaker tournament, the All-American Shootout over

the weekend.

ATP tournament play is the highest of three tiers in professional tennis. Cook participated in both events as an amateur.

In the round of 32, Cook faced former NCAA singles champion Jeff Morrison, who is ranked No. 116 in the world, and lost 6-2, 6-2.

Cook ended his junior season with wins in 19 of his final 22 matches. In the last three months

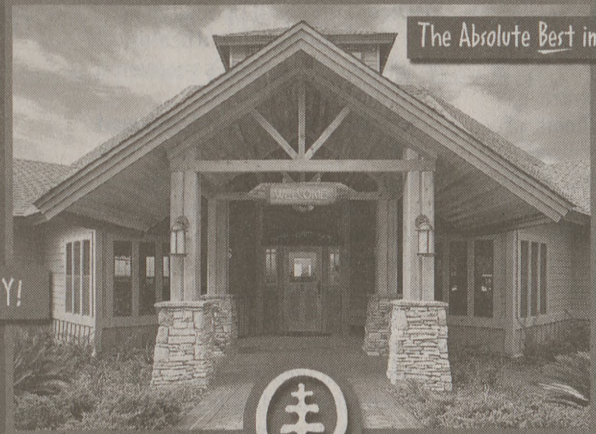
of the season, he rose from No. 27 to No. 8 in the singles rankings, a career best.

Cook was also named one of six men's players for the 2004 USA Tennis Collegiate Team, which is administered by the United States Tennis Association and the Intercollegiate Tennis Association.

Cook's selection to the USA Tennis Collegiate Team was his second such honor in the last two months.

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