

A-State adds former Olympian to track

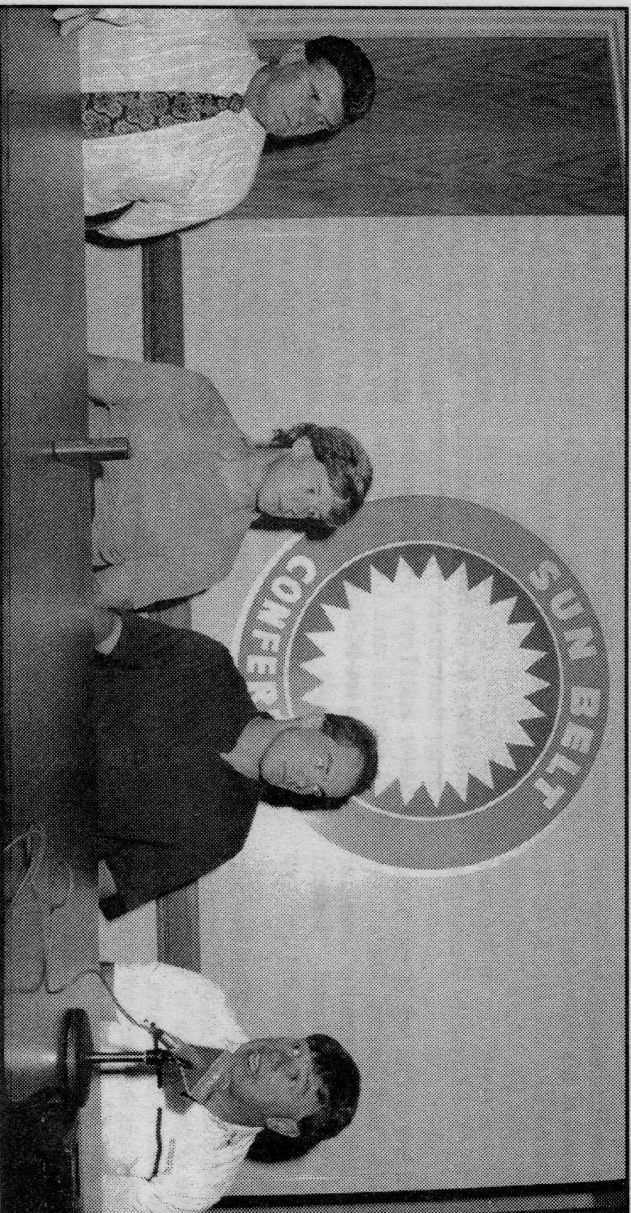
By TONY MANLEY
Sun Staff

The Arkansas State University football program hired a big-name coach to take it into Division I-A. The ASU track program now has a big name on its coaching staff, too.

Brian Oldfield, a former world record holder and the man who nearly 20 years ago revolutionized the technique of throwing the shot, has joined the A-State track coaching staff along with former ASU pole vaulter Scott Shaffer and former NCAA decathlete Brad Miller. The three, designated as limited earnings coaches by the NCAA, were introduced to the media at a press conference Wednesday. Oldfield and Shaffer will be classified as assistant coaches, while Miller is a graduate assistant in physical education.

"Other than Ray Perkins, I don't know if we have anyone with the background in sports that Brian Oldfield has," said ASU head coach Jay Flanagan. "He has the longest shot put throw in the world. His knowledge of the weight events will be a great asset to the program."

The 47-year-old Oldfield, who competed collegiately for Middle Tennessee State, devised the spin technique used by most shot put-



NEW ADDITIONS

Arkansas State University head track coach Jay Flanagan (right) announces the addition of three new coaches to the ASU staff. Those additions include (from left) Brian Oldfield, Scott Shaffer and Brad Miller. Oldfield was ranked among the top 10 shot-putters in America from 1969 until he retired from competition in 1988.

"I seem to have been blessed with an eye for the throwing events, so I'm hopeful of passing some of the knowledge I've gained from my experiences on to others," Oldfield

said. "There's one thing about the shot put—I know it and I can teach it."

Oldfield, a three-time American record-holder, threw his personal best of 75 feet in 1975. That throw ranks as the fourth best in world history. He currently holds the world Masters' record with a 70-3½ toss in 1986.

Miller placed 13th in the NCAA decathlon last year and qualified for NCAA pole vault competition three times during his college career at Northern Iowa. Shaffer owns the third-best outdoor pole vault mark (18-1½) in ASU history.

Flanagan said the additions to the staff have become a necessity. "In the last four or five years, the

role of the coach has changed significantly," Flanagan said. "A great deal more paperwork has to be done. You have to keep a count of how many minutes you practice. When I started coaching, you just had to go out and get the athletes and coach them. Now, you have to be a secretary, you have to be a counselor."

"It makes it completely different than when I started coaching. That was one of the main reasons Guy Kocheil quit. A lot of the work has been put on Doug (Case, ASU assistant)."

Oldfield said he has given clinics on his specialty since 1973, traveling throughout Europe, Asia and South America.

"I knew of Brian, and I knew he was looking for a job," said Flanagan. "I told him we didn't have much money, but we could give him some exposure. We go to top meets. He had some other opportunities, but he liked the program here and what we're doing and decided to stay here. He enjoys it here, he likes the people in the program and thinks we can be successful."

"In the 1988 Olympics, 19 of the top 20 finishers were throwing with the 'Oldfield Spin'," said Oldfield. "I have a philosophy that they (his

staff

students) will be teaching some day. I feel like I have to teach them everything I know.

"I think we (ASU) will be able to compete as well as we ever have in the conference. The athletes are really enthusiastic. I have a good feeling."

Shaffer, a 1987 ASU graduate, has been a regular helper at ASU's summer pole vault camps. "He knows the pole vault well, he's a great teacher," said Flanagan. "We have done the pole vault by committee so long that I think it has hurt us some. Now we have someone to go to, some direction."

Shaffer said he has worked with ASU pole vaulters since 1986. He said he's glad to finally be an official coach.

"It's kind of a perk," he said. "I have a key now — I don't have to climb the fence anymore."

Miller, who graduated from Northern Iowa in May, will work with ASU multi-event performers.

"I worked mostly with guys on the track team at UNI, when the coaches weren't available," said Miller, who coached a high school cross country team this past year.

"I've been around track for a long time, and I've learned techniques in a lot of different events."