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Youth Dominates A&M Football

By TED BORISKIE

Using a new offense, A&M will field one of the youngest, if not the youngest, football teams in the nation this season.

Emory Bellard, architect of the Wishbone, unveiled a new formation in spring training that, hopefully, could have the same success as the Wishbone that has sent the University of Texas to the Cotton Bowl for five straight years. A cross between the Wishbone and the straight "T," the new formation has been labelled the "T-Bone."

Running this formation will be a team so young as to have only one senior two-year letterman on

the entire squad. This promises to be an exciting, if unpredictable, season.

The 2-year letterman is Larry Ellis (6-0, 173), a safety from Troup. Joining him at right safety position will be James Daniels (6-2, 180), junior college transfer. At cornerbacks will be another JC transfer, Tim Gray (6-1, 190), and sophomore Pat Thomas (5-10, 180).

Quarterback is the big question mark for the season with last year's starters graduated or transferred. Tim Trimmier (6-4, 210) is back from last year's squad and Jim Hartman (5-11, 190) quarterbacked last year's

freshman team. However, A&M is looking to one of its newcomers to fill the position. Of these, Mike Jay (5-11, 180) looks to be the favorite. Jay was all-conference, all-state and all-America while in high school at Torrington, Wyoming, and has spent the last couple of years quarterbacking the Quantico Marines team.

Expected to challenge Jay for the position are incoming freshmen David Shipman (6-1, 200) and David Walker (6-0, 185). Shipman made all-state at Odessa Permian playing both quarterback and halfback. Walker made all-state in Louisiana and was voted the outstanding offensive play-

er in the state. A dark horse in the race is Carl Menger (6-0, 188) who made all-state as a junior at Houston Westchester two years ago.

At halfback, A&M has three experienced sophomores who rotated in the halfback spots last year as freshmen. Bubba Bean (6-0, 195) made all-state his junior year in high school and all-state and all-America his senior year. He played hurt last season but this year he may fulfill his potential. Ronald Hubby (5-10, 195) was the top running back on the freshman team last year until he was promoted to the varsity in mid-season. Skip Walker (5-10, 185) is the top returning rusher from last year's varsity with a 4.0 average.

Sophomores Alvin Bowers (6-0, 212) and Bucky Sams (6-0, 202) will fight it out for fullback. Bowers lettered as a freshman last year with a 4.6 average while Sams was the sensation of the freshman team running 638 yards in five games for an incredible 7.1 average.

Carl Roaches (5-8, 165) will return at split end. He scored four touchdowns but only one from a pass. The other three came from two punt returns and a kickoff return as he led the conference in punt returns and was second in bringing back kickoffs.

Richard Osborne (6-5, 225), was A&M's leading receiver and sixth in the conference last year when he alternated with Roaches at split end. He is a two-time high school all-America and was named the outstanding player in Texas in 1971. This year he has been moved to tight end where his major competition will probably be David Green (6-0, 204).

The interior of the offensive line was decimated by graduation with only one letterman returning. He is Ricky Seeker (6-3, 240), a junior who made the all-SWC sophomore team as a tackle last year. He is moved to center this year, a position he played on the '71 freshman team. At the tackles will be senior Mike Bruton (6-1, 205) and sophomore Dennis Smel-

ser (6-4, 240), who made both offensive and defensive all-state teams and was selected all-America as a high school senior in 1971. Sophomore Bruce Welch (6-4, 245) and senior Bud Trammell (6-2, 250) will fill in the guard slots.

The defensive line was not as unfortunate as the offense, as it returns three lettermen, all ends. Juniors Paul Hulin (6-1, 215) and Don Long (6-3, 235) and sophomore Blake Schwartz (6-2, 220) all return to give A&M some degree of experience at the ends. Juniors Ted Lamp (6-2, 225) and Warran Trahan (6-4, 245) have been posted at tackles.

Talent abounds in the linebacking corps with sophomore Ed Simonini (6-0, 205) leading the way. One of the brightest spots of last season, Simonini was named outstanding defensive freshman in the SWC last year. Play boy Magazine has picked him as the sixth top sophomore in the nation this year and if he has a season as good as last year's, he could pop up on a couple of all-America lists at the end of the year. Joining him in the other two slots are junior Ken Stratton (5-10, 195) and Garth Ten Napel (6-2, 202). One of the top reserves in JC transfer John McCrumby (6-2, 245) who comes to A&M with an impressive list of credentials. McCrumby made all-district three straight years and all-America once while in high school. At Tyler Junior College he was all-conference both years and JC all-America last year.

Mark Stanley (6-2, 195) and Lee White (6-0, 195) are both kicker-punters off of last year's freshman team where neither missed a PAT attempt and both had identical averages of 41.8 for punts. Randy Haddox (6-5, 240) returns as kickoff specialist.

A&M will not field a freshman team this year, possibly the only major college in the U.S. not to do so. The 35 newcomers will join the team later this month and will, in the words of Coach Bellard, "... play just as high as they're man enough."

It is almost impossible to pick which freshman will play or even what position they will play. Bellard had probably the best recruiting season in the SWC last year, so we are bound to see several freshmen on the team this fall.

Del Leatherwood (6-1, 190) is the top recruit for split end as he made all-district, all-state and all-America at Houston St. Thomas last year. Robert Verde (6-1, 170) was named his district's most valuable player at split end while Gary Haack (6-1, 195) made honorable mention all-state as a tight end.

The offensive line is the weakest spot but there are several fine recruits that could help plug up the holes left by graduation. Tackles George Burger (6-4, 250) Brad Burnett (6-2, 220) and Dennis Swilley (6-4, 225) all made all-state. Burnett played at Port Neches where he ran interference for one of the top high schools backs in the nation last year, Jeff Bergeron. Guards Billy Lemons (6-5, 280) and Craig Glendenning

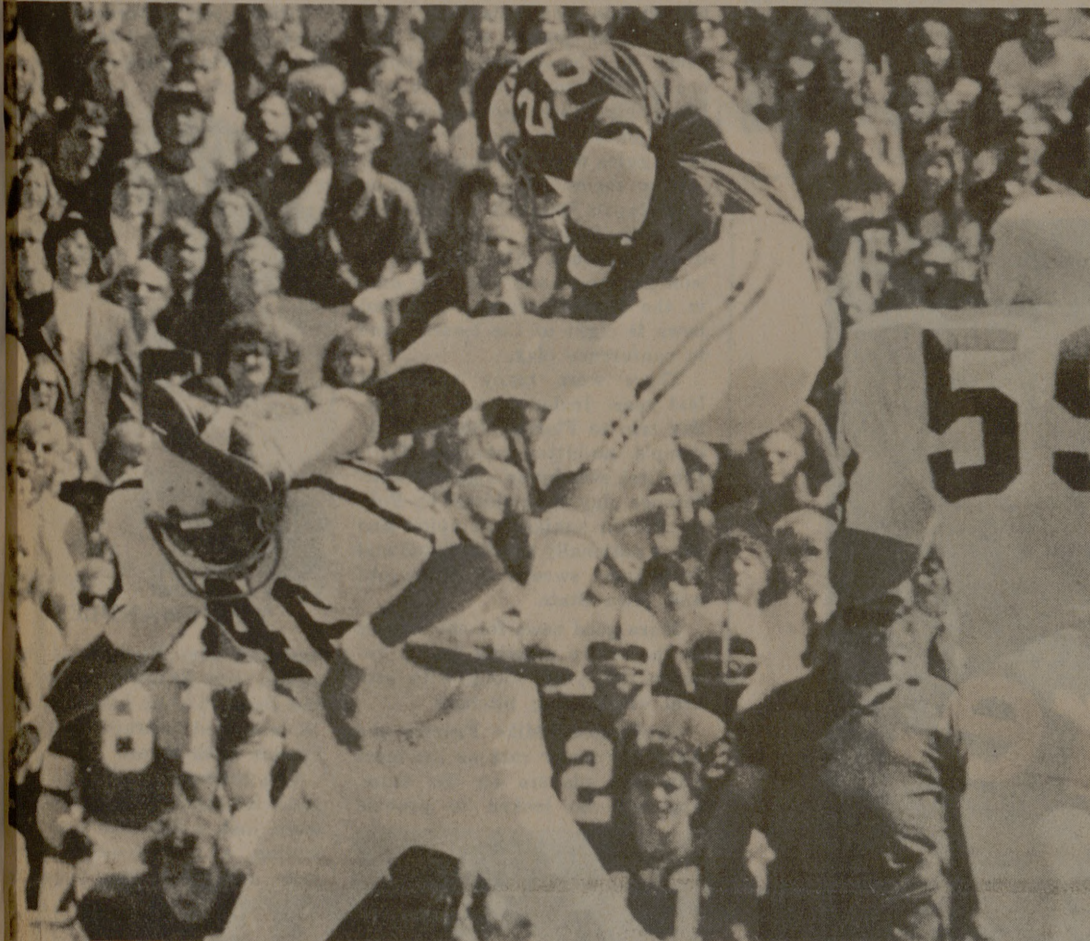
and center Matt Freeman (5-11, 212) all made all-state, Glendenning two years. Also, Lemons made the prestigious blue chip list (top 12 players in the state.)

Top Defensive linemen include all-America Jimmy Dean (6-5, 250), super all-stater Anderson Harrison (6-4, 258) and speedster Lester Hayes (6-2, 189).

To bolster the already tough linebacking squad are Phil Grawunder (6-0, 210) and Grady Wilkerson (6-3, 215). Both made all-state and Wilkerson is also a blue chipper.

A&M also picked up all-state defensive backs Mike Floyd (5-10, 165), Bill Dawkins (6-1, 203) and Reggie Williams (6-3, 185). Williams is a super all-stater and a blue chipper.

So it looks like A&M will be young and largely inexperienced this year. It will probably take a few games to jell, so the team will be more polished the second half than the first. But as a wise man once said, "Sometimes young players don't know when they're supposed to lose."



A&M'S LARRY ELLIS stops Nebraska's superstar Johnny Rodgers in last year's 37-7 loss to the then defending national champions. Ellis is the only senior letterman on this year's squad.



A&M HEAD COACH EMORY BELLARD caught in a moment of frustration.



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