

Ags Seek Help From Former Marine

Solution To Quarterback Problem?

The Texas Aggies have called on the Marines for help at their critical quarterback post and the way Mike Jay sees it college football can't be near as bad as boot camp.

Jay, 21, was the quarterback for the Quantico Marines last year before the service team had to drop football because of financial problems.

A&M Coach Emory Bellard and

his staff tracked him down and the former corporal, just a sophomore in eligibility, is running as a No. 1 Aggie quarterback in fall drills.

"He has the talent to be out-

standing," said Bellard. "The first time we saw him on film he ran 78 yards for a touchdown. He is quick, has poise and can throw and run. He sort of reminds me of James Street at Texas. Mike is wired up tight . . . like most wild bull riders."

The 5 foot 11, 175-pound Jay is from Torrington, Wyo., where he was an all-state quarterback. He played at Hiram Scott in Nebraska before transferring to Wyoming after Hiram Scott dropped football.

Jay left Wyoming to join the Marines when the school failed to give him a chance to play quarterback.

At Quantico, Jay led the team to an 8-4 record, including victories over Villanova and Xavier. He completed 11 touchdown passes and averaged 5.2 yards per carry.

"I had about 30 schools contact me when I got out of the Marines, including Wyoming again," Jay said.

Jay, who was a court-martial reporter in the Marines and gets a charge out of Brahma bulls in rodeos, said, "College football is tough but so is boot camp and riding wild bulls."

He said of the A&M team, "You'd have to be blind not to see the talent they've got out here. There's great speed and drive."

Jay ran the Houston Veer-T option offense at Quantico and was an option quarterback in high school.

"I came here (A&M) because it's an option school and Coach Bellard knows all there is to know about the offense," Jay said.

He said he also noticed a difference in attitude between players at Quantico and A&M.

"There is a lot of spirit at A&M whereas at Quantico a lot of guys were just playing to get out of doing their daily duties," Jay said.

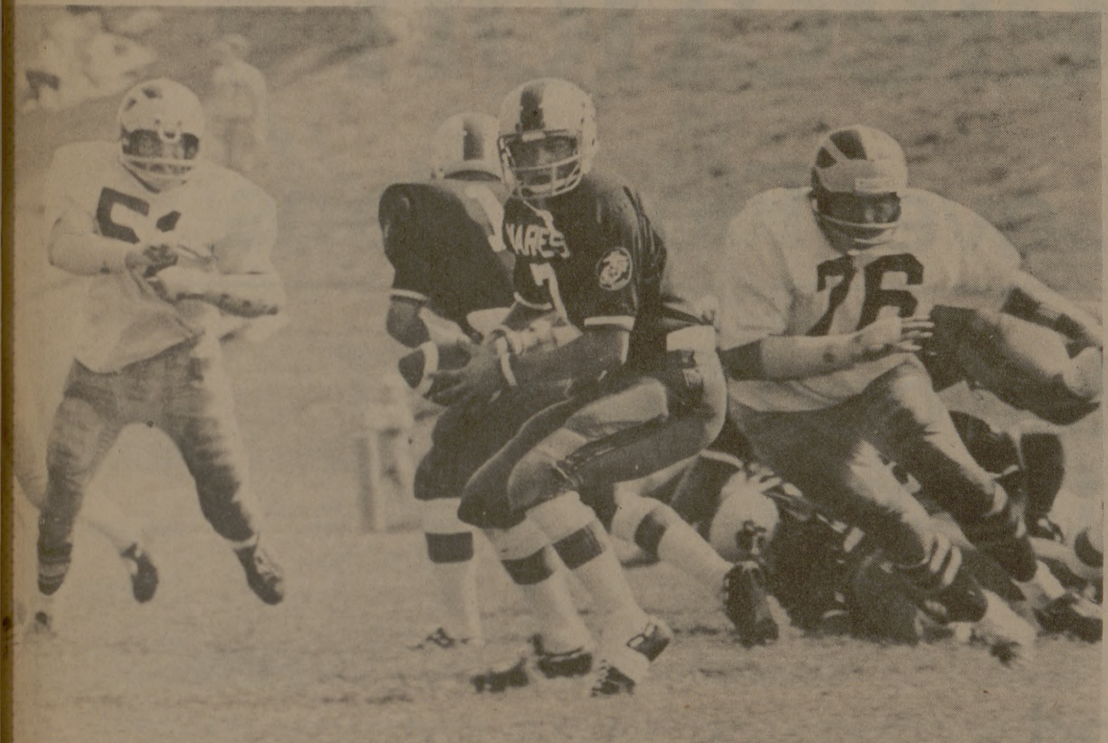
Jay is in competition with freshmen David Shipman of Odessa Permian and David Walker of Sulphur, La.

Bellard said: "Jay has as much experience as a junior college transfer. He just has all kinds of ability. We're about ready for a blessing."

Jay has an Irish setter he named "Brazos" from a country and western song by Marty Robbins. He named the dog even before he knew the Brazos River runs near A&M.

"I never knew it was a river . . . I thought the Brazos was a tundra or something, but I liked the sound of the name," Jay recalled.

In Spanish, Brazos means "arm." The Aggies hope they have found themselves one.



ONRUSHING LINEMEN didn't disturb quarterback Mike Jay as he lead the Quantico Marine team to an 8-4 season last year. Jay is competing with freshmen David Shipman and David Walker for the top A&M QB spot.



By KEVIN COFFEY Sports Editor

A&M Head Football Coach and Athletic Director Emory Bellard talks with an air of cautious optimism when the subject is the 1973 edition of Aggie gridiron talent.

"Youth and inexperience are the only real weak spots of the entire team," the second year mentor told members of the 1973 Southwest Conference press tour. "Offensively, I think we can be anywhere from a good football team to a darn good team," Bellard said. "I really don't have anything to base that statement on except that I feel we have some highly talented but young football players on the squad. I just don't know how fast they can develop into real good ballplayers."

Almost Illegal

To call the Aggies young is almost an understatement.

Since A&M abolished its freshman program, all 33 new recruits have been moved right into varsity competition. Only 17 lettermen return from last year's 3-8 team, the fewest in the conference. Five of the 10 returning starters were freshmen last season and four were sophomores. Larry Ellis is the only senior letterman on the squad.

Of the 97 scholarship players on the roster, there are seven seniors, 20 juniors, 37 sophomores and the 33 newcomers. That means nearly three-fourths of the squad are freshman or sophomores. Only 31 have ever appeared in a varsity, only 19 ever started a varsity game and only 10 have started more than one varsity contest.

"If we were any younger," Bellard muses, "we'd be illegal."

"We are awfully young and have no depth. We'll be depending on a lot of freshmen to fill the gaps."

Bellard caution is echoed by all-conference candidate Ed Simonini. "Our team could be even worse than last year," the Aggie linebacker said, "or we could win the conference. If we stay healthy and learn to play together we could be ready by the Texas Tech game." Tech is the Aggies first conference opponent.

The Ags presently list nine sophomores on the offensive unit which will run from the new T-Bone formation.

Pre-season predictions for Bellard's Aggies run the gambit from rags to riches. Dave Campbell's highly respected "Texas Football" magazine tabs the Aggies sixth in the eight team conference race but "Playboy" sees A&M the 18th best team in the nation, finishing the conference second to Texas.

Need Talented Quarterback

The fortunes of the Aggies seem to ride in the hand of the new quarterback or quarterbacks. Bellard has recruited three dandies in hopes of finding the winning combination.

"We looked at every junior college quarterback in the country last year," said Bellard, "and Mike Jay was the only young man with any previous experience we brought down to show the campus."

Jay is currently listed the No. 1 signal caller but is being hard pressed by freshmen David Shipman and David Walker.

"Shipman and Walker are both very mature for their age and both exceptional prospects. All of our quarterbacks will be able to make our offense more versatile than we were last year," Bellard said.

The need for a qualified signal caller at A&M is obvious. The Aggies ranked dead last in total offense in the conference last year almost 100 yards per game behind the league-leading Texas Tech Red Raiders. The Aggies 165 total points ranked last with the rushing offense seventh and the pass offense fifth. They need to find a man to make the T-Bone go.

Trackster Killed In Summer Wreck

One of A&M's brightest hopes for the upcoming track season was killed this summer in a one-car accident July 10.

Freddie Fleming, 18, was considered by A&M track coach Charlie Thomas to be "one of the finest athletes I've ever seen."

"He had more potential than anybody since Curtis Mills," said Thomas.

The body of Fleming and Veronica Maldonado, 16, were discovered in a smashed car in a drainage ditch three days after the accident.

Fleming was set to attend A&M this fall on a track scholarship. His track talents sparkled in the state track meet in early May.

He was the high point athlete among all entries, winning 100 yard dash, the 220-yard dash and the long jump in which he set a new state record.

Fleming was a multi-talented athlete, finishing the last football season for the Somerville Yequas as the top pass catcher on the team. His football coach rated him one of the best high school receivers in the state.

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