

A&M boasts best crop in years

Six Aggie footballers anticipate NFL draft

BY ROBERT CESSNA
Staff Sports Writer

They call it the National Football League's player draft but to the people being drafted and the people doing the selecting it's more like Russian Roulette.

The Aggies should do well in the NFL draft Tuesday and Wednesday with as many as six athletes being chosen by various teams. The list includes James Daniels, Tim Gray, John Paul McCrumby, Warren Trahan, Randy Haddox and Ricky Seeker. Where or when they get drafted is unknown.

Gray was the Aggies' right cornerback for two years and was named first team, All-Southwest Conference. The 6'1", 203 lb. Gray has been contacted by the New England Patriots, Buffalo Bills and New York Giants.

"I don't have a special preference of where I go," Gray said. "I'd like to go to a winning team. And I'd like to go to a team with moderate weather," he added.

Some athletes are asked to change their position when they enter the pros but Gray hopes this is not the case. "I'd like to play right cornerback because I've been playing that ever since I've been playing football." But he would play strong or weak safety if they needed him at those positions.

There has been much talk about the legality of the NFL draft. Many say it is a restriction of freedom for the person being drafted. Once the draft is conducted they are obligated to one team.

Gray said, "I never have thought that much about it." But it's a sys-

tem where the teams can pick the athletes they need. Then it's your decision if you want to sign or not, he added. Gray speculates that without the draft the best players would end up on one team creating a monopoly. "There is no monopoly going on now," Gray said.

It is believed that Gray will be the first Aggie selected and will go very high in the draft.

Gray's buddy in the secondary which helped A&M rank second in pass defense is Daniels.

The 6'2", 187 lb. Daniels earned second team All-SWC for his season's play at safety. Teams showing an interest in Daniels are the Dallas Cowboys, Los Angeles Rams, New England Patriots, and New York Giants. Daniels has no preference of cities. "I wouldn't care which one I went to as long as I got a good deal."

Even though Daniels has made his mark at A&M as a defensive back he has other hopes. "I'd like to be a running back and give it one more shot," Daniels said. Daniels played running back at McGregor High and was very good, scoring 34 touchdowns. Then at Navarro Junior College he also played running back. But when he came to A&M they needed defensive back-field help and Daniels was the answer.

"I really wanted to be a back when I came to A&M," Daniels said. He may get the chance once he enters the pros.

Daniels viewpoint of the NFL draft is: "From the player's point of view I'm in favor of it. Players not of higher quality can still get drafted."

Defensive tackle Warren Trahan

is the only Aggie who has been able to display his talents once the season ended. The 6'4", 268 lb. Trahan played in the American Bowl in Tampa.

While at the game, scouts from (SEPCO (Pittsburgh Steelers, Philadelphia Eagles, Green Bay Packers, Baltimore Colts and Houston Oilers) talked to Trahan. But mostly agents talked to him in Tampa. The agents represented

ex-player agencies as well as other centrally located agencies across the country.

Other teams that have contacted Trahan are the Los Angeles Rams, Cincinnati Bengals, Oakland Raiders, New England Patriots, New Orleans Saints and Dallas Cowboys.

"I think I will go on the eighth round or later," Trahan said. "Louie Kelcher hurt me with that game he had against A&M." Even though

Trahan made first team All-SWC he was overshadowed by Kelcher of Southern Methodist and Doug English of Texas.

Trahan doesn't care where he plays as long as he gets the chance and a good deal.

The position the pros pick for Trahan does not bother him. "I don't care where I play. I've played offense all my life until I came here. I could play offense if I had to."

Trahan likes the draft the way it is and is glad they have it. Trahan said, "If you get drafted you can get a contract for a certain number of years and then when it expires, you can bargain."

McCrumby is the fourth senior on defense expected to go in the draft. The 6'2", 245 lb. McCrumby was the Aggies' middle linebacker. He played two years at Tyler Junior College before coming to A&M. This past season he made second team All-SWC. With the major emphasis being put on linebackers in the pros, many teams have shown an interest in McCrumby.

Another Aggie who will probably go in the draft is place-kicker Haddox. The 6'4", 235 lb. Haddox earned first team All-SWC and has been in contact with the Dallas Cowboys, San Diego Chargers and New York Giants.

Haddox also doesn't really care where he goes. "I'd like to stay in the South where it isn't cold," was Haddox's only request.

Haddox does not feel he is hampered by being a place-kicker which probably means he cannot change positions. "I think I have as good a chance as anyone. There are less kickers coming up than other positions," he said.

His views on the draft: With no draft one team would get all the good individuals. With no draft less people would get picked and the ones that got selected would get more money. Then the rest of the teams would get lousy choices.

The Aggie we will mention last started all the plays first, center Ricky Seeker.

The 6'3", 257 lb. Seeker who earned second team All-SWC has been in contact with the Dallas Cowboys, Atlanta Falcons and New York Giants.

"I don't know if I'm getting drafted," was the initial reaction of Seeker. "If I get drafted I'd like to stay in the Southwest area. I don't



TIM GRAY



WARREN TRAHAN



RANDY HADDOX



JOHN McCRUMBLY

really want to go up North. But if they drafted me I'd go."

It appears Seeker will have to make it at center in the pros. "I don't have the speed to play anywhere else," he said. "To play guard I'd have to put on speed and weight and I've never played defense," Seeker said.

Seeker was disappointed with the season. "I was supposed to be first

team (SWC)," he said. Aubrey Schultz of Baylor took first team All-SWC. "Schultz is good but he isn't no All-American."

On the draft: "There's no inside connection to know which team needs what. You can't try out for every team. There is no other way right now."

The NFL draft has a lot of variables, said Melvin Robertson, Ag (See NFL, Page 8)

Sportfolio

By MIKE BRUTON
Sports Editor

I've often wondered why basketball teams from the Southwest Conference seem to bog down against teams from other major conferences, especially in the NCAA playoffs. After watching the A&M-Rice game Tuesday it became apparent that the officiating in the SWC could be the reason. Baylor went to the free throw line 38 times against TCU Tuesday night and that's not counting no-shot fouls. Half of those must have been from sweating too hard.

The players in other major conferences are accustomed to playing a more physical brand of basketball. But in the SWC the officiating is so close that the players seem to concentrate more on setting themselves up to draw fouls than playing basketball. I know that basketball is a so-called non-contact sport, but whatever happened to the "no harm, no foul" philosophy.

When SWC teams play interconference foes they seem to lack aggressiveness under the boards, probably because they're so foul-conscious.

The SWC leads the nation nearly every year in total fouls called, because the SWC office supports the close call method of officiating. Many officials in the SWC call high school games on Friday nights prior to SWC games on Saturday. From high school to major college is quite a transition, so this could also be cited as a contributing factor.

The SWC office should really consider a change in the current officiating methods. The present trend weakens SWC teams against major interconference contenders and makes SWC basketball dull in the eyes of the fans. The 48 fouls called in the A&M-Rice game made the contest miserable. The game was repeatedly interrupted by questionable fouls. In one case an offensive foul was called on Aggie Mike Floyd as he approached a Rice defender, who fell before Floyd made any contact. It was a superb acting job by the Owl defender and one of many lousy calls.

The excessive foul-calling kills the excitement of the game by keeping talented players on the bench also. There are many SWC games where the star players either foul out or spend three quarters of the game on the bench because they get in foul trouble early. This frustrates the player, his coaches and the fans.

The close officiating, in many cases, distorts the play and talent of individual players to such an extent that the inferior team wins. With all the time and hard work by players and coaches devoted to preparation for play, it would be a shame for it to be ruined by officiating that warps the whole game.

In the SWC basketball was a sport that football players used to stay in condition ten years ago, but today basketball is played by people who specialize in playing the game to its fullest extent. So the officials should let them play.

The Southwest Conference will never rate with the other major conferences in the NCAA, unless the officials rest the quick whistle.

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