

the sports

Countdown started

# Ags ready for BYU

By MARK PATTERSON  
Battalion Sports Staff

The countdown has begun. With only a few days left before Texas A&M's season-opening game, Aggie head coach Tom Wilson held his weekly press conference of the week, using the occasion to praise his offense and defense and to point out that we're ready to play a game, Wilson said. "I've said I can say about this team. It's time to get on the field and see what we're made of."

The chance comes Saturday night, in Houston's Rice Stadium. The Aggies open play against Brigham Young University, the defending Western Athletic Conference champions. BYU has been ranked in the top 20 in several pre-season polls.

"Everyone knows how dangerous these guys can be," said Wilson, who enters his first full season as a head football coach. "BYU is an explosive team, able to score from anywhere at any time."

BYU ranked eighth in the nation in passing offense with a 238.2 yards-per-game average last year. The air show was led by Jim McMahon, who got the starting nod when starter Marc Wilson, the WAC Player of the Year in 1977, went down with a knee injury. Both McMahon and Wilson will return this season for Coach LaVell Edwards' Cougars.

"Our success will depend on our ability to keep possession of the ball and keep our offense on the field," Wilson said. "We have to keep their offense off the field as long as possible."

Brigham Young runs a lot more ground than you would imagine. Their bigger, more mobile offensive line is on offense to protect the quarterback. With the mobility of the offense, they can change the play that they set up the pocket. The mobile pocket makes it very difficult to rush the quarterback. It will

be quite a challenge to our defense. "We'll stay with the 4-3 defense but our thinking and concepts have changed. We won't blitz as much and we'll lean to zone coverage in the secondary over man-to-man. We want to eliminate the big play and force our opponents to move the ball on their own merits, not on our mistakes."

Four of BYU's starting five linemen from last season return to supply the passing protection. Leading the returnees is all-WAC guard Tom Bell and two year starting center Scott Neilson.

All-WAC defensive end Mat Mendenhall returns to anchor the front wall of the Cougars' defense. The linebacking corps is colored red at the season's beginning with red-shirts Gary Kama and Danny Frazier at two of the starting three slots. In the secondary, two of the starting four return to lend stability.

"BYU doesn't overpower you on defense," Wilson explained, "but it gets the job done with technique. You know right where they are going and what they are going to do. Our offense is ready to go. We'll see what we can do against them Saturday night."

The Texas A&M offense will be led by quarterback Mike Mosley, who is up to 195 pounds this season. With last year's back-up David Beal out with a shoulder injury, freshman Gary Kubiak has been elevated to the second string quarterback slot.

The familiar look of tailback Curtis Dickey and fullback David Brothers will be seen in the starting backfield for the Aggies Saturday night. Ample back-up will be supplied at tailback by Temple Aday, Johnny Hector and Earnest Jackson. David Hill, George Woodard and Ronnie James will play behind Brothers.

"All our tailbacks will get some game time in this week," Wilson said. "I wouldn't hesitate to put any one of them into the game at any time."

"We'll shuffle them in and out, according to the situation. Of course, we'd love to have Curtis Dickey in the game as much as possible. But he has to build up to the 30-carry games. It might take three or four games for him to get in that kind of shape."

Saturday night might also be the debut of the slimmed-down George Woodard. Since returning to the team this fall, Woodard has suffered a bruised knee and is questionable for this week's game.

"We're on a wait-and-see basis with George," Wilson said. "We have to see how he'll do in practice this week."

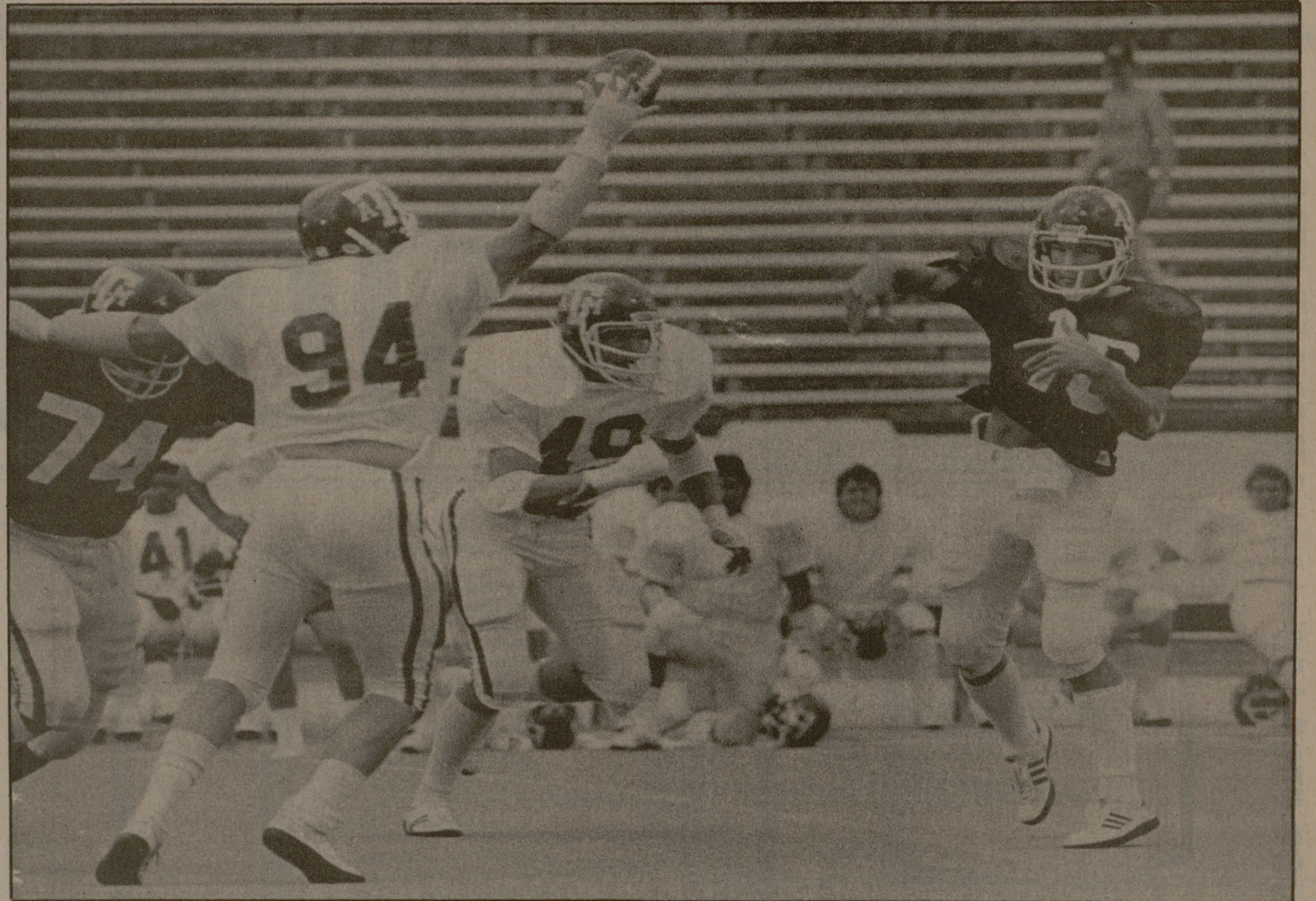
"The injury is totally unrelated to his ankle injury. He's going to practice all week and we'll know by Friday. I think he'll be ready to go."

Although the game will be played at Rice, Wilson stressed that the team will make it as much like a home game as possible. He said the Aggies will work out Friday afternoon and stay here Friday night. The team will travel to Houston about 10 a.m. Saturday and check into their hotel and relax before the night game.

"We want the guys to be able to sleep in their own beds the night before the game and be able to get up and eat a good breakfast at Cain Hall," Wilson said. "Then we'll bus into Houston and check in to the hotel so the guys can relax and think about the game."

The game against BYU might be the biggest game of the year, not because it's the first but because it will preview what's to come in 1979.

"This first game won't answer everything about us or determine what kind of team we will be this year," Wilson said, "but the game will answer a lot of questions that we have about ourselves."



The making of a quarterback

Gary Kubiak, a freshman quarterback from Houston St. Pius, throws over the head of an A&M defensive player for one of his five completions in the intrasquad scrimmage Saturday at Kyle Field. Kubiak has impressed Aggie coaches from the start, picking up the A&M system quickly and running the option very well. Head coach Tom Wilson described him as

"an unusual freshman who handles pressure like few freshman can." Kubiak will be backing up starting quarterback Mike Mosley against Brigham Young because former backup David Beal is out for at least three weeks with a shoulder injury.

Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

## Volleyball bouncing into good year

By CAROLYN BLOSSER  
Battalion Staff

Texas A&M's 1979 volleyball team will be going into its first tournament of the season seeded first, based on its strong showing last year. The Aggies are the defending Regional champions and finished ninth out of 24 teams at Nationals.

With that impressive record, the Aggies have established a reputation as a winner. But whether this year's team can live up to its great expectations is another question.

One key word can be used to describe the 1979 team — youth. Gone from last year's squad are four starters, three to graduation and one to injury. Wendy Wilson, who started last year as an outside spiker, is sitting out this season with

bursitis in the knees. That leaves head coach Dave Schakel's team comprised entirely of freshmen and sophomores.

The term "inexperienced" is usually synonymous with youth, but not in this case. Anchoring this year's team will be sophomores Kristin Bloom, Nancy Dunn and Krista Sodich.

Bloom and Dunn, along with Wendy Wilson, participated in the Colorado Sports Festival this summer. The program, sponsored by the Olympic Committee, is used as a training center for the Olympics, Schakel said.

"It is getting more and more young people involved with international competition. Just the best players in the country are invited to go," he said.

The players selected to the Festival are divided up into four teams and compete against each other. Players 19-years-old and under try out for the Junior National Team, while those 19 and older try out for

the Women's Olympic Team.

This summer Wilson and Bloom made the Junior National Team for the second year in a row. They went with the team to compete in the Pacific Rim Games in Hawaii last month, facing the best players from other countries including Mexico, Canada and Japan.

Krista Sodich from Caldwell also has valuable playing experience. She started front row as a spiking and blocking specialist for A&M last year.

The other three starting positions will be open to the six new freshmen, including two Texans. Cheryl Ford from Port Arthur is the tallest player on the squad at 6-1. "She's very agile for her height and has tremendous vertical jump," Schakel said.

Beverly Isaiiah from Refugio is 5-8, and very quick and agile, Schakel said.

Rounding out the team are four top recruits from Southern California: Setter Elizabeth Echternach

(5-7), and middle blockers Ann Yardley (5-9), Sue Wetzel (5-9), and Suzanne Askew (5-8).

"They're all from different high schools but played together on the Orange County Volleyball Club," Schakel said.

The Aggies open their season away Sept. 13 with a match against the University of Texas at Arlington. The following day they begin play in the North Texas State Tournament in Denton, in which A&M is the No. 1 seed.

The highlight of A&M's schedule comes in mid-October when the Aggies travel to Hawaii to face the University of Hawaii at Hilo in two 3-out-of-5 game matches, and the University of Honolulu in two matches. Honolulu finished third in last year's Nationals.

On the way back, A&M will stop off in California for matches against UCLA and Pepperdine University, who respectively placed second and fourth in Nationals last year.


The Aggies will see their first home action when they host the Texas A&M Invitational Tournament Sept. 28-29 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Their strongest competition will come from the University of Houston, University of Texas at Arlington, Lamar, and the University of Texas.

"I think we're a young team but we're going to be as competitive as any team in Texas," Schakel said. "We've got pretty good experience, height and consistency. Without injuries, we'll be tough."

Will the Ags have an encore season for their impressive ninth-place finish at Nationals last year?

"Being this young you just can't tell right now," Schakel said.



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## Basketball anyone?

The Bryan Parks and Recreation Department is organizing City League Basketball once again. The deadline for entering a team in the Bryan's Men's City League is Sept. 10th at 5 p.m. The entry fee is \$50 per team and should be paid at 203 E. 29th St. In addition to the open league, a 30-and-over league will be offered this year. All 30-and-over teams are encouraged to enter. For further information please call 822-1054.

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