

the sports

Defense 'poised' for kill

By KURT ALLEN
Battalion Sports Staff

It's been a strange year for Texas A&M football, where after the Aggie offense showed such great promise in preseason, it is the defense that surprisingly has carried the team through the season thus far.

Texas A&M defensive coordinator R.C. Slocum does not claim to be able to explain all that is wrong with the offense, but he does have a reason for his defensive squad's consistent play.

"We've made a good deal of progress because we've been able to keep our poise and learn from mistakes," said Slocum. "We're still basically a young defense. We've made some mistakes this year, and we'll certainly make some in the future, but we're able to keep our poise at the same time."

Slocum said he felt the only time the Aggie defense lost its poise was in the first half of the Baylor game.

"That really upset me, because we'd worked so hard that week, and then to have that happen was a little hard to take," Slocum said. "Of course, we came back in the second half. We allowed Baylor a first down early, and then they didn't get another one the rest of the game."

Slocum credited the togetherness of his squad for stopping Penn State.

"In the first quarter, we had a chance to stop them, but we missed a couple of tackles and they scored," he said, "bam, bam, just like that, we're behind 7-0. But we kept stressing poise on the sidelines, and the players responded as one cohesive unit with the common goal of holding Penn State."

Togetherhness is important to the Texas A&M defense because it's not a very big team Slocum said. Size definitely is a problem for the Aggies, considering Arlis James is the largest line player at 6-3 and 245 pounds. Because left end Jacob Green only plays at 235 pounds, many teams double team him, feeling they'll have better success that way.

"To combat that, (the doubling teaming) we flip-flop Jacob from one end of the line to the other so our opponents stay confused and can't double team him."

While size is a consideration, it's not necessarily a problem for the linebackers. Both Doug Carr and Mike Little are undersized, but in the words of Slocum, "they've played their hearts out. What can be said for one of them can be said for the other."

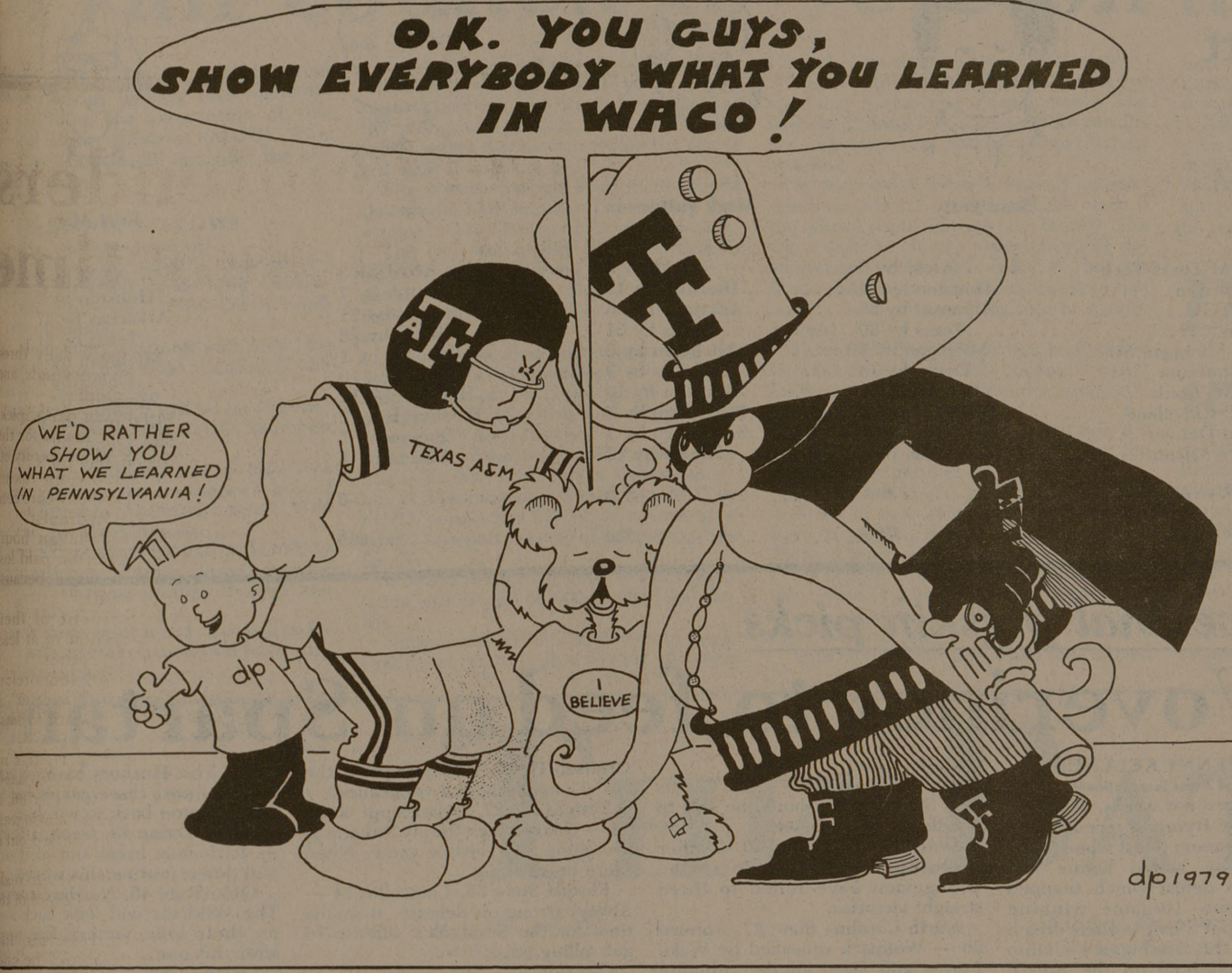
"In the case of Carr, he just has a knack of knowing where the ball is," Slocum said. "That combined with his speed, makes him the player he is. Cal Peveto, our weakside linebacker, is coming along and he's finally established himself. I'm very happy with all three of them."

Slocum's crew comes off a Memphis State game that saw Texas A&M hold the Tigers on the Aggie nine-yard line. Memphis State missed a field goal on fourth down in what might have been a turning point in the game. Slocum said he once again credits the squad's togetherness for holding back the Tigers.

Now the task at hand is to stop a Texas Tech team that boasts an awesome running attack led by fullback James Hadnot. For Slocum, the strategy is simple.

"Mistakes aren't killing us right now, so we're not going to change any of the basic strategy we've been using. Naturally Hadnot is a great big back and we'll be looking to stop him. But maybe our biggest weapon is that our players know we have to win this game. The outcome just may be the difference in our season."

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Wilson returns to beat alma mater

By MARK PATTERSON
Battalion Sports Staff

Okay, here's the imaginary schedule.

The Texas A&M-Texas Tech game starts at 7:30 p.m. Saturday so we'll have plenty of time for the celebration. It will start at about 11 a.m. with a ticker-tape parade from Jones Stadium, down University Drive to the Lubbock City Hall.

There, the mayor will present Wilson the key to the city and give a speech about how great Tom was when he played quarterback at Tech and how they wished he was coaching the Red Raiders instead of the Aggies at tonight's game.

Then there'll be a luncheon so everyone can see how pretty Wilson's wife Dawn, the ex-Tech cheerleader, still is. About 5 o'clock a helicopter will take Wilson and his wife back to the stadium in time to meet the team before pregame warmups begin.

Not too bad a plan for the homecoming celebration of Tom Wilson, the pride of the Panhandle in the mid-60's. As the team captain and quarterback in 1965, he led the Raiders to an 8-3 season record and a trip to the Gator Bowl.

This will be Wilson's first trip to Lubbock as head coach of Texas A&M. It may not be the way Wilson wanted to return as a head coach.

Wilson's name was mentioned as the possible choice as head coach of the Red Raiders the past two times the job became available. The best shot seemed to come at the end of the 1977 season when Steve Sloan headed for Ole Miss.

But the job went to Tech's offensive coordinator Rex Dockery.

Saturday night Wilson takes his team against the Red Raiders and Rex Dockery.

"I'm looking forward to the game," Wilson said, "but I think there's enough incentive there on both sides without getting my personal feelings involved. It's a great rivalry and has always been a good game."

"I'm looking forward to going back and taking this A&M football team. It's going to be fun."

Aggie fans remember the fun the Aggies had two years ago on their way to a 33-17 win. The score should be a little closer this year. Now the Raiders have a guy by the name of Hadnot playing fullback

and a fellow named Reeves at quarterback.

"(Ron) Reeves and (James) Hadnot are carrying the load for them now," Wilson said of the two. "Reeves is a strong runner. He's not gifted with great speed, but he'll get three, four and five yards a carry for them."

"And Hadnot, well he's just huge. Hadnot weighs more than every player on our defense, with the exception of Arlis James."

Statistics bear reason for Wilson's respect. Through four games this season, Reeves ranks fourth in the Southwest Conference in total offense (rushing and passing) with a 131-yard-per-game average. Hadnot is right behind with a 128-yard average.

The Aggies will counter with a running machine of their own. Curtis Dickey leads the SWC in both rushing (135.5-yard average) and

total offense with a 140-yards-per-game average.

Dickey is second in the nation with his 135.5-per-game rushing average. Hadnot ranks sixth nationally with a 128.7-yard average.

The Raiders enter Saturday's game after losing to Baylor last week 27-17. It was the first conference game, and conference loss, for Tech.

"It hurts to lose the first one, but our players know we have seven more games left this season," Dockery said. "Our team understands we're only four games into the season (1-2-1 record). We need to regroup and get it all back together."

Both teams have one loss in conference play. A second could spell disaster.

"I'm not even thinking about a second loss," Wilson said. "I'm only thinking about coming home 3-2 (on the season), regrouping and getting

ready for Houston next week.

"I don't have anything on my mind but winning."

Not now, but when the plane touches down at the Lubbock airport, Wilson's thoughts may drift back to 1965, playing in front of the home crowd.

This year he'll be looking for another victory in Jones Stadium.

But not for the Texas Tech Red Raiders.

The Texas A&M-Texas Tech game can be seen here live on closed-circuit television in C. Rollie White Coliseum Saturday. Tickets are on sale today at the coliseum and will be on sale at 6 p.m. Saturday. Kickoff is at 7:30.

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