

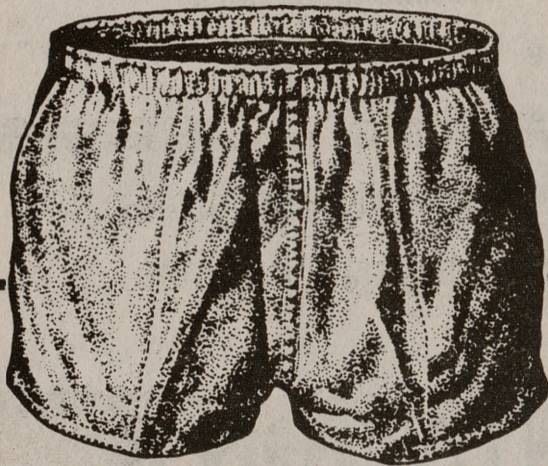


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Sports

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Aggies go hunting for Bear Saturday

By RITCHIE PRIDDY
Sports Editor
The Texas Aggies, who have fast become the mystery team of the Southwest Conference, will soon find out what they are made of when they open the 1981 fall campaign Saturday against the California Golden Bears in Berkeley, Cal.

The Golden Bears are not one of the most impressive teams in the

nation, then again, neither are the Texas Aggies — on paper at least. The Bears have a proven passing attack and with the installation of the highly touted "run and shoot" offense, brought in from former Portland State University head coach and now offensive coordinator Darrel "Mouse" Davis, the Bears will once again be one of the top passing threats in the nation.

Last year the Bears finished with a miserable 3-8 season but ended on a high note, much like the Aggies, with an upset victory over arch-rival Stanford. They also finished as the seventh most productive passing team in the nation, averaging just over 260 yards per game through the air, an average good enough for third in the Pac-10.

The "run and shoot" offense is considered a middle-distance, ball control passing attack. It features four receivers (two slot backs and two wide receivers) and one running back.

Davis' 1980 PSU team, using the run and shoot, averaged 49 points and 504 yards per game through 11 games. He, along with head coach Roger Theder, are considered two of the sharpest offensive coaches in the game.

The Golden Bear receiving corps is made up of several outstanding players with an abundance of experience. Mariet Ford (5-8, 156) is considered a game breaker at the right slot position. He is a junior college transfer and is considered the Bears most exciting player in several years. He also is the kick returner and his speed and size is comparable to former Aggie great Carl Roaches.

Tyrone Portee (5-9, 175) is the left slot back and Tyrann Wright (5-11, 192) and Floyd Eddings (5-11, 170) are the wide receivers. All three are considered exceptionally good receivers and all possess good speed.

The quarterback position has long been the Bears stronghold. All-American quarterback Rich Campbell graduated and is now playing for Green Bay. Campbell was injured midway through the season (against USC) and was replaced by then sophomore J. Torchio. His first series against the Trojans resulted in a long td drive.

Another quarterback, sophomore Gale Gilbert is expected to start against the Aggies. Gilbert also saw plenty of action last year and went the distance against Arizona St. Both quarterbacks, though young, have the talent and experience needed to direct the team's high-powered offense. Torchio ended the season with a 57 percent completion record (43 of 75 for 644 yards) in two and one-half games. Gilbert finished with a 48 percent completion record (13 for 31 for 192 yards).

The Bears don't have much of a running game with only one back, but fullback John Tuggle is considered one of their best runners since Chuck Muncie. He doesn't have blazing speed but can take a lot of punishment. He finished with 580 yards on 136 carries last season, but when you consider that the Bears are a passing team, that's not too bad. He also finished as the number two receiver with 36 receptions.

"Tuggle can run both inside and outside with equal talent, and he is a superb pass catcher out of the backfield. Add his blocking ability and we have one of the best all-around backs in the conference," Theder said.

Theder said that the biggest question mark his team faced this Saturday would be whether or not the offensive line could hold off the stubborn attack of the Aggie front four.

"The key to the game is whether or not our offensive line can hold off their front four. They are quick, aggressive and very physical," Theder said. I also worry a little bit about their great speed in the secondary. They match up very well with our receivers. Anytime you have slotbacks with wide receiver speed like we do you

seem to think we can find a way to stop them. I don't see any weaknesses in their secondary."

Coach Tom Wilson will be trying to stop the Bears' touted offense by putting pressure on the quarterback using a variety of coverages. The Bears are expected to put the ball in the hands of some 50 to 55 times in the game. With that amount of passing, Wilson will probably be shutting down secondary men in search of a right combination and giving them a bit of rest.

The Bears run a 3-4 defense which finished last in the conference almost every category last year. That defense, however, has been altered somewhat by new defensive coordinator Ron Lynn. Lynn has the advantage of his quick, hard-hitting linebackers and defensive backs.

Rich Dixon is the mainstay of the Bears defense and is considered a pre-season All-American.

Wilson and his staff have prepared their team, both mentally and physically, for the game with the new offensive and defensive coordinators. Cal has not done a pre-season All-American workout.

"We have researched California as much as we can. We've run against their offense in practice and the defense reacted well. We'll have to react to the game with a little more than we normally would because we don't know what they are going to do," Wilson said.

Wilson said the key to the game from the Aggie standpoint is to control the ball because the offense Cal has they are capable of scoring a lot of points. One of the best mysteries is the best of the Bears picked up the offense. By all indications, they have quiet well.

Wilson is taking a complete healthy squad of 64 players to Berkeley, including his top freshmen.

The Aggies are fired up and ready to play ball. With renewed enthusiasm and new alignment they know they can win and are looking forward to a tough, uphill struggle that will matter how the team has to prove it can win the field to make people stand and notice.

"We have as much confidence in our team as we can have without playing a game. The first game is so important to this team. I feel we are going to gel as a team, still have to prove it on the field."

"We're all anxious — this is the longer weeks of the season. They are going to get out there and see what we can do."



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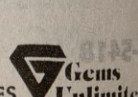
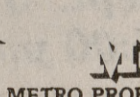
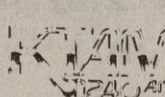
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