

Texas A&M

# The Battalion Sports

July 1, 1982 Page 7

## Slocum guides defense again; stresses intensity

### Four-man front to stay a part of Aggie scheme

by Joe Tindel Jr.  
Battalion Staff

Although the local football enthusiast has no doubt encountered former students' tales of the awesome Texas A&M defenses of the mid-'70s, he may not be as familiar with the men responsible for fashioning those defenses.

After a year in sunny southern California, one of those men has recovered the reins of the Aggie defense. R.C. Slocum, who returned as Texas A&M's defensive coordinator in January, plans to stick to the same basic defensive alignment used in the past.

The 37-year-old Slocum was a defensive coach at Texas A&M from 1972 until 1980, when he accepted the defensive coordinator's job at Southern California.

"We're a four-man front team with three linebackers," Slocum said of his plans for the Aggies. "We will continue to look very similar to what we've always looked as far as the alignments."

Slocum will add a few odds and ends to compensate for the variety of offenses the Aggies will encounter this fall, but the variations will be built around the 4-3 alignment, he said.

"We're a multiple 4-3 team, and we base everything we do as a starting point from the 4-3 defense," Slocum said.

Slocum praises the 4-3 for its flexibility since it makes easier the adjustments to multiple offenses used in college football today.

"You've got to have a basic scheme defense," he said, "but it's got to be flexible enough to be able to defend against all those different styles of play. I think the 4-3 defense lends itself to flexibility."

Slocum said that although Head Coach Jackie Sherrill determines the overall style of defense the Aggies will use, their compatible philosophies will contribute to the team's defensive plan.

Slocum drew his 1982 defensive package from several sources.

"I've borrowed some of the things we did at Southern Cal that were good, and we've bor-

rowed some things that Clemson did that were good and some things that (defensive end coach) Bobby Roper did in his background," he said.

Slocum said changes in the defensive line over the years have been necessary because of the evolution of the game. Last year, for example, college teams nationwide piled up more passing yardage than ever.

Slocum's defensive unit will face a variety of offenses from week to week, and he said variety is what makes college football

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exciting as well as a challenge to coaches and players.

"One week you play a team that's a heavy option team, and the next week you may play an all-out drop-back passing team," he said.

To prepare for the likelihood of confronting some of those ac-

tionally oriented teams, Slocum is putting his faith in zone pass coverage.

"We will have a number of different coverages," he said, "so if a team is trying to attack us in any particular area, we should be able to adjust to it with a change in coverages."

"We (Southern Cal) played against John Elway out at Stanford last year, and a lot of your concepts in pass defense change when you play against one of those guys."

Although Slocum said the secondary is the weakest part of the Aggie defense, it has perhaps shown the most improvement.

"We had a good spring training; we had a minimal amount of injuries," Slocum said.

"We improved quite a bit on our technique. I think our linebacker positions will be strong and I think our defensive line is good."

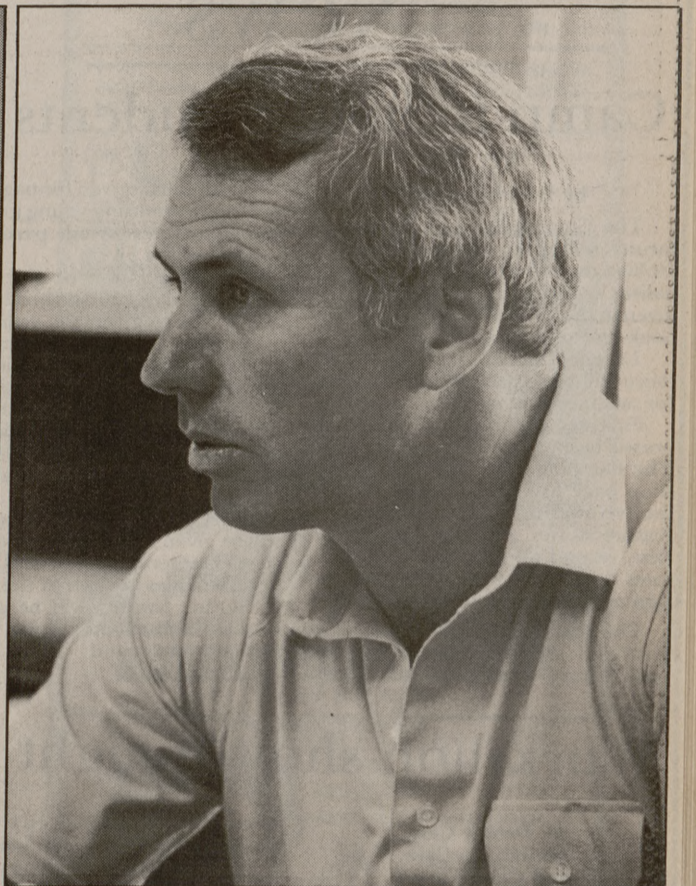
He said 6-2, 220-pound senior linebacker Will Wright "is on the fringe of being a real good player."

The potential for an outstanding defense is present, Slocum said. The quality that helped those Aggie defenses in 1975 and 1976 to become so powerful was intensity.

Slocum once again seeks that intensity.

"I see us being a good defensive team, and the one thing that we have to do to be the kind of defensive team that we want to

See SLOCUM page 10



staff photos by Peter Rocha

Defensive coordinator R.C. Slocum, back at Texas after a one-year stint at USC, has big plans for the Aggies during the 1982 season. The 37-year-old has

brought a few tactics learned during his stay with the Trojans, and hopes they will give the Aggies an advantage over their Southwest Conference foes.

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