

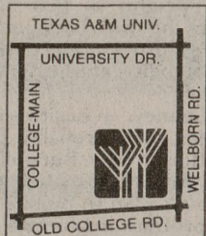
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sports

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August 25, 1982

Freshman split end Bolton facing tough competition

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

Jeff Bolton relied on divine guidance in making his decision to attend Texas A&M University. In fact, he says he considers the Lord and his parents to be the most important parts of his life.

While trying to decide whether to attend UCLA, Texas A&M, Nebraska, SMU or LSU, the freshman split end from South Garland High School didn't know which route to take. Bolton says he allowed the Lord to pilot him in the right direction.

"If I didn't have a relationship with Christ, I wouldn't be at this university," Bolton said after finishing his first week of football workouts with the full Aggie football squad. "I was in a state of confusion about where to go. Everybody — my parents, pastor and friends were all praying with me to make the right decision."

"One day, it just all transpired and there it was before me on a platter."

And Bolton believes he's made the correct choice.

With veteran receivers Don Jones, Jimmy Teal and Jimmie Williams, as well as Aggie track star Rod Richardson and transfer Tommy Sugg, the 6-2, 170-pound Bolton has more competition than he can handle. Add to that the fact that tight end Mark Lewis, fullback Johnny Hector and fullback Earnest Jackson will catch their share of passes in Jackie Sherrill's new offense, and freshmen like Bolton really have their work cut out for them in trying to make the team.

Bolton, along with Shea Walker, Jeff Nelson and Tony Slaton, are the four freshman receivers who find themselves in a the toughest, most competitive situation of their lives. But Bolton said he knows it's only a matter of time before he makes a contribution to Sherrill and the Aggies.

"I really didn't do all that well during freshman workouts," Bolton said. "I haven't done well enough to write home about. I think I'm going to get better. As of now, I haven't panned out enough."

"As of today, I don't know the system well enough to go out there and start. When we get to the Boston College game, I'll know more about what I'm doing. But right now, I'm not big enough and I'm not ready."

Bolton realizes that not making the squad could mean spending a year as a redshirt player, so he's trying his hardest to make the squad.

"I'd like to go ahead and play this year," he said, "even if it's just on the scout team. I want to get to the Cotton Bowl, too, even if it takes playing scout team."

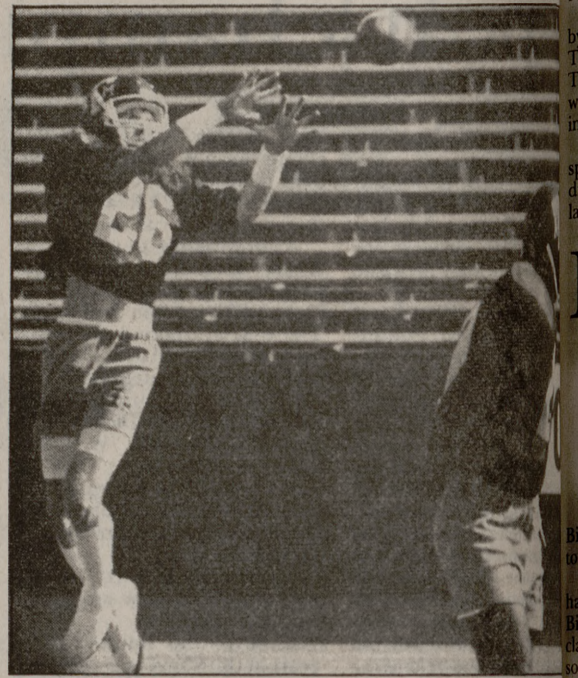
Bolton, the only member of his family to attend a major college, didn't know much about the University before making his decision to come here. Aggie receiver coach Jerry Pettibone, whom Sherrill hired away from Nebraska, had recruited Bolton for the Cornhuskers.

"But I lost interest in Nebraska because they didn't pass much," Bolton said. "I got interested in UCLA and then when Coach Sherrill came here, I got much more interested in A&M."

Within a week, Pettibone became an Aggie coach, and Bolton found out "through the grapevine," he says. Pettibone called him the night he was hired, and that was when Bolton decided on Texas A&M.

Since coming to Texas A&M for the second summer session of classes, Bolton says, he's learned a great deal about his teammates and the school. Those upperclassman receivers he's competing against have been sources of direction as well, Bolton said.

"They've been really nice to me," he said. "Sometimes you're in a situation where you don't want to bug the coach by asking him about something you don't



staff photo by David...

Freshman wide receiver Jeff Bolton (26) attempts to catch a pass during the Aggies' two-day workout at Kyle Field, while sophomore running back Ronald Kins watches. Although he's facing his stiffest challenge ever in trying to make the Texas A&M team, the 6-3 Bolton remains confident about his chances.

remember or that you don't understand. All I have to do is ask one of the players and they'll help me out."

But more than anything, Bolton puts his trust in the Lord for inspiration and guidance.

"My relationship with Christ is so important to me," he said. "I've gained a lot of my strength from the Bible and from studying it."

Bolton said he's pleased that attending Texas A&M will keep him closer to his parents, who adopted him when he was one day old.

"So many prayers were answered by my being able to stay near my parents," he said. "I

really love my parents — I haven't given me everything I wanted, but they've given me everything I've needed."

Bolton said he'll have an extra hard during the remainder of two-day workouts in order to make the squad.

"I don't know what's going to happen," he said. "I'm going to do my best — that's all I can ask from anyone and that you can give."

"If I don't succeed, obviously I'll be disappointed, but I'll be content. No matter what happens in football or anything else, I'm going to heaven — that's my tom line."

Mustangs

(continued from page 17)

the team's strongest areas.

"Hopkins is one of those players who has a knack for being exactly where he's supposed to be," Collins said. "It seems like good things happen around him. In our defensive scheme of things, the strong safety has to be a great athlete, and Hopkins really is."

Uncertainty lies within the punting and place-kicking positions, where SMU lost Eric Kaifes and Eddie Garcia to graduation. As a result of a finger injury to Whit Smith, the Mustang punter after spring training, James will start the season with double-duty at that position and tailback.

"Craig James wants to punt," Collins said. "He's worked hard

on his mechanics and is our No. 1 punter at this time."

But Collins doesn't relish the prospect of having James work harder by playing two positions.

"I'd rather have a specialist and know that I have Craig there if I need him," Collins said.

Replacing Garcia at place-

kicker will be Jeff Harrell, a 204-pound junior square whom Collins described as the most consistent kicker in Mustangs' spring camp year.

Several SMU players said team's goals are set high because of the probation which kept year's Mustangs from competing in a bowl game.

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