

Superstar

Vrazel makes Aggies volleyball contenders

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff

In the 106 years of Texas A&M's existence, many great athletes have walked across the Aggie campus — Kimbrough, Crow, Hargett, Krueger, Simonini, Dickey, Woodard, and now Vrazel.

Joey Vrazel is a bonafide superstar. She's been all-America twice, a member of the 1980 U.S. Olympic team, and a starter on a national championship team at Utah State.

And now, Joey Vrazel plays volleyball at Texas A&M.

Vrazel chose to come to Texas A&M after deciding that playing on the national team was not exactly what she wanted.

"After we won the national championship at Utah State I was invited to play on the United States national team — so I went," she said. "But even though I got to travel around the world and play against international teams, things just didn't work out for me up there. I felt like I wasn't getting anywhere."

Another factor in Vrazel's departure from the national team was her love of education.

"I never realized how much I missed school until I was away from it for awhile," she said. "I just wanted to be a normal student again."

After leaving the national team, Vrazel could have gone to any university in the country to play volleyball, but decided to come to Aggie because of the potentially

great team at Texas A&M and her ties to the South.

"I'm originally from Alabama so I wanted to stay close to home," she said. "And I didn't want to go to a school with a team full of all-stars. I wanted to go to a team that had a lot of potential and that's exactly what I've got here. I've been on some real good teams and I'm real impressed with the girls here. I think this team has more potential than any team I've ever been on — including Utah State."

After being away from a college campus for two years, Vrazel had to re-adjust to life as a student, but she said it was an easy transition.

"After being here a month, I became a true-blue Aggie," she said. "I can't believe how much the students get involved. I love it. The only thing I'm not used to is the lack of support for the volleyball team."

"At Utah, volleyball was the big thing, but here people see me with my volleyball warm-up on and tell me they didn't know A&M had a volleyball team."

Volleyball coaches Terry Condon and Lindy Vivas were also factors in Vrazel's choice to become an Aggie.

"They made me feel so comfortable about coming to A&M," she said, "because they're both experienced players. They've been through everything I'm doing right now so they won't make me do anything that they haven't done. I have a lot of respect for Terry and Lindy."

Vrazel said Condon and Vivas hold a distinct advantage over their male counterparts in their coaching philosophy since they don't have a win-at-all-cost attitude.

"I'm not putting down male coaches," Vrazel said, "I've played under a bunch of good ones, it's just that most men learn how to coach the Japanese way and that's just too serious. But maybe it's better, I know it's working for the U.S. team."

After finishing her playing career, Vrazel wants to become a coach, but not on the international level.

"I want to coach here in the South because there are so many good athletes here and I think it's a shame that they have to go so far away for good coaching," she said. "There aren't enough schools in the South with good programs."

Vrazel said, however, that the Aggies are one of the better teams in the South. So good, in fact, that a conference championship is well within their grasp.

"No one should be able to even touch us in conference," she said. "I have a lot of confidence in our team. I think Texas should be a good match, but we're good enough to beat them. We should be able to reach the final four at the national tournament."

The Aggie Ladies currently have a record of 7-0, but face their stiffest competition to date this weekend when play in a Nebraska tournament.

Intense Bullitt lethal to opposing players

by Joe Tindel Jr.

Battalion Staff

While the Aggies' middle linebacker isn't faster than a speeding bullet, when it comes to homing in on a ball carrier, nothing works better than a speeding Bullitt.

Jerry Bullitt, that is. Although the 6-2, 230-pound junior may not be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound and will seldom be found in a nearby phone booth, Bullitt seems to have all the makings of a super linebacker.

Bullitt, who moved from strong-side to middle linebacker prior to last week's contest, chalked up seven tackles and returned an interception 32 yards for a touchdown against the University of Texas at Arlington.

"I really didn't realize I had the ball," Bullitt said of his interception. "I saw it coming and the next thing I remembered I was going into the end zone. It happened really quick."

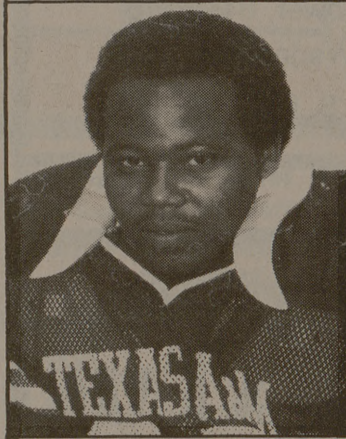
"Going back and looking at the films I had some good blocks that really helped me out a lot, especially from Jeff Fuller and Greg Williams," he said.

Bullitt's intensity is one reason he is so well suited for the middle linebacker position.

"I played it (middle linebacker) in high school and I played it a little my freshman year," Bullitt said. "I've always really wanted to play the middle, but I kind of got used to playing the strong side."

"I like it better because you've got more freedom to roam the field. You have a lot more responsibilities playing the middle and I kind of like that, too," he said.

But Bullitt admitted he'll have



Jerry Bullitt

to become more familiar with those responsibilities peculiar to his new position. The learning started last Saturday.

"When we went in a halftime they were saying I needed to get underneath the curl and get a weak drop because they were hitting the curl," he said. "Making that switch from (strong side) linebacker I didn't realize that my drops weren't right."

"After I got that drop right I did get right underneath it and that pass was kind of short and low and it was right to me," Bullitt said.

While everything won't be that easy, Bullitt should be able to deliver the intensity in the middle linebacker position that defensive coordinator R.C. Slocum has said he was counting on in the backfield.

Although some mistakes are likely while he continues to learn the ropes, Bullitt will likely cover some of his technical errors on the field with his crushing blows to backs and receivers.

"I think if you get mean enough — get as mean as you can and as mean as you want — if you knock the other guy around, they're going to make the mistakes looking out for you," Bullitt said.

"Even when they don't have the ball, when they step up and block, I think you really ought to step up and give them a shot."

"I really try to relax before the game and I try not to think about it too much," Bullitt said. "Once it does start I get excited. I get in a serious mood and I really don't feel like talking and once we get out there I just want to hit — and every time I hit I want to hit as hard as I can."

A look at the shots Bullitt gave his opponents Saturday could start future opponents hoping he can't hit any harder.

But Bullitt said he's set on continuing to improve.

He's depending on additional experience to improve on his individual game and to increase his level of intensity.

"I'm getting more aggressive as I go along," Bullitt said. "My game is getting better. I think the longer I play in the middle and the more licks I get, I'll get better, my intensity will get better and my concentration."

Bullitt said the last time he saw action at middle linebacker position before last week was his freshman year, when he had far less experience with reading keys.

"My freshman year I played five games in the middle, and I really didn't know too much about what was going on," he said. "I was just out there and I was just trying to run to the ball. Now it helps to really know the

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Oiler's owner: Replace strikers

HOUSTON — As an original owner in the old AFL, Bud Adams knows what it's like to start from scratch and field a pro football team. He'd like to do just that now in this strike-torn season.

"If it wears five to six weeks and there's no agreement, we've just got to get on with our business," Adams said Tuesday. "We ought to look at something else."

Asked what he had in mind, Adams said he would hire a roster full of players to replace the ones who remained on strike at midseason.

"There are plenty of players out there. It's not fair to our fans to throw in the towel. You can't shut the whole season down. This is a going business," he said.

Without Oilers fans buying beer and peanuts Sunday in the

Astrodome, the Oilers financial situation is "hurting," Adams said. If refunds have to be made for the 40,000 season tickets for seven home games, the Oilers will lose "several million dollars."

Adams has owned the Oilers for all of their 21-plus years. He was one of the first people called by old AFL Commissioner Lamar Hunt in 1959 to organize a team to compete with the

established NFL.

Adams said in all the years he's not seen players do anything as foolish as this.

"I'm optimistic. I think the players might have struck with the idea that they wanted to show solidarity, that they could call a strike and all the players would go out. I think they've showed that. Hopefully, now they'll regain their senses," he said.

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