

Hope for the future

Kubiak sees success ahead for Aggies

by Joe Tindel Jr.

Battalion Staff

In 1979 a scrappy young quarterback from Houston St. Plus High School joined the ranks of an Aggie football team in transition. Having set the state high school passing record, Gary Kubiak seemed a logical choice to break in the airborne attack.

But change was slow. With a goose egg in his passing yards column in 1979, Kubiak looked forward to a year off — being redshirted — and a chance to work on things.

But the beginning of conference play his sophomore year saw him called to duty against Houston. No year off. Only 322 yards passing.

The numbers tell the story of the next two years. The familiarity of Kubiak's name rose as many times as his passing stats. He did become that transition man — he and a newcomer named Jackie Sherrill.

With 1,808 yards by air his junior year, 1,948 this past fall and smash performances in the Blue-Gray game and Hula Bowl, Kubiak has proven he's worthy to be watched by the pros.

And Tuesday after the Hula Bowl, his last college game, Kubiak sat down and reflected on his career at Texas A&M and gave his forecast for Sherrill's program.

Q. You've been around a few team crises over the past four years. There were some disciplinary problems during your sophomore season and your head coach was under fire your junior year. And there were the years that the team supposedly had the talent but fell short. How can you have gone through all that without it lessening your enthusiasm for the game?



Gary Kubiak, who passed for over 4,000 yards as an Aggie quarterback during the past three seasons, lets a pass fly in a game during his junior season.

A. I think every program has controversy. I think A&M gets pinpointed because of the great institution that it is. A&M expects a lot out of their athletics just like they do their students or anybody else, so when things go wrong, it really gets a lot of attention.

Things have been tough the last four years, but it's never been any problem for me be-

cause I love A&M and I always will. Whether we were 0-8, and I stepped on the field the next Saturday for number nine, I was ready to compete. I don't look back at the negative stuff. The only things that enter my mind are the positive things, and there were many of them.

I'll continue to support A&M, and I know they're headed in the right direction. Next to a

couple of schools, probably the most stable situation in college football right now is right here at A&M, with Coach Sherrill, the staff he's assembled and the direction they're heading.

Q. You had to be really thrilled last winter to hear that Coach Sherrill was coming to Texas A&M. Did he meet your expectations of him?

A. I think as far as us as a football team, he definitely met every bit of ours. Now if you talk to anybody who just looks at our record, sure, they say 'Well, what happened? Y'all had Coach Sherrill. Why didn't you win?' I think if we were expected to be a 12-0 football team this year, they never would have brought him down here.

We had a lot of holes to fill, we had a lot of young people playing and when you lose two starting backs and a tight end in the first ball game, it makes it kind of tough. But that's an excuse, and everybody has them, so you can't really go with that.

With the direction that Coach Sherrill is heading and the positive aspects surrounding the program right now, once he gets the guys to think positive ... things will start to go their way.

I think that's been one of the biggest problems around here. Once things got going bad everybody thought negative, and whenever a game got tight it seemed like everything went against us. I think that'll come from a guy like Coach Sherrill installing confidence and getting a positive feeling in all these guys. Things will start to go their way.

You take a school like Penn State and people like that. They stay up there for a long period of time. I think that's the direction

that Coach Sherrill's heading, and I wish I could be a part of it. I think it'll happen within the next couple of years.

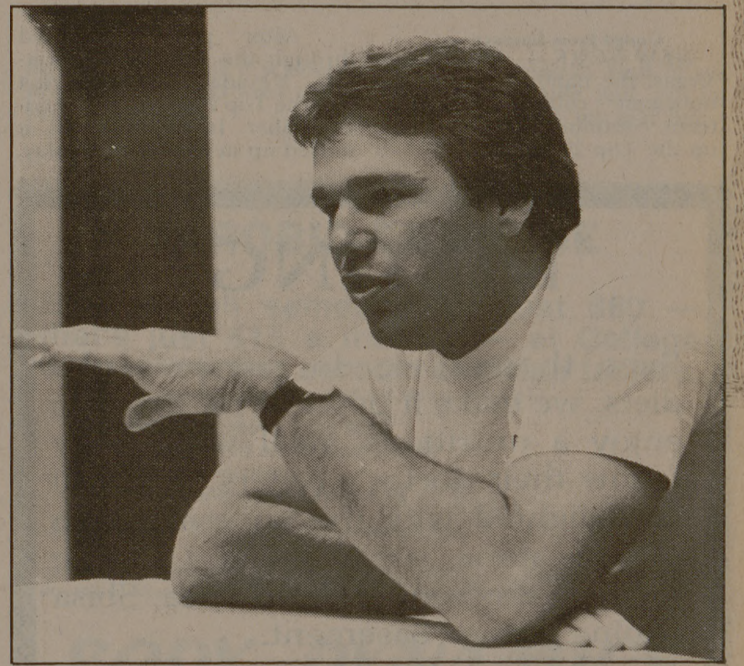
He's (Sherrill) not going to press himself. He's going to go with the plan he has set. He's not going to get in any hurry to turn around and try to win it all this year by disrupting the type of plan he has for this program.

Q. There was a period of transition for you between your sophomore and junior years when you almost immediately changed from a relatively jittery back-up to a solid starter who took charge on the field. How did you gain your confidence so quickly, and when was the turning point?

A. Now that I look back, when I came here as a freshman, I had really good three-a-days and two-a-days and got a chance to play against Penn State early. I think it was the third game of the season. We went down there, and I started and had a lot of confidence. I felt like that was my chance. I broke my arm on the first play. I was down at that point, but I hadn't given up or anything.

My sophomore year, they told me they wanted to redshirt me, and Gary Kubiak didn't prepare for a football season because I felt like I was going to sit out. I wasn't ready to play my sophomore year and ... after the Houston game I think I was putting the blame on other people, but I was more disappointed in myself. I went home, and I almost gave up football, to be truthful. I got a call from (quarterback) coach (Greg) Davis, and he asked me, 'Are you coming back?' And I said, 'Well, I don't

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