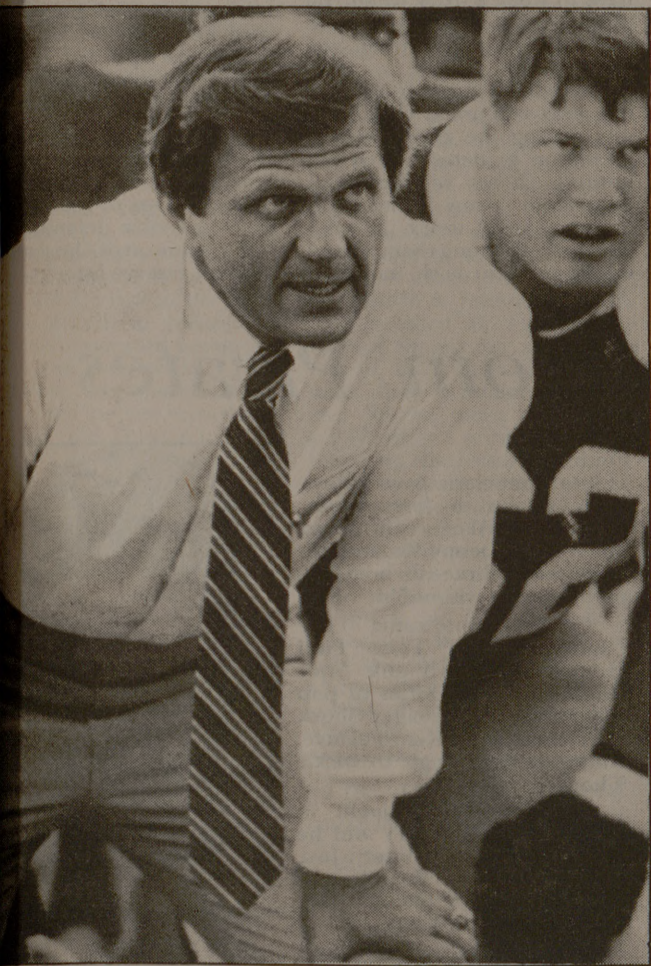


Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

Wednesday, August 24, 1983/The Battalion/Page 17



staff photo by David Fisher

A&M head coach Jackie Sherrill is hoping offensive newcomers and a new defensive formation will make a difference in 1983.

Firepower

New offensive strengths have Sherrill, players confident

by John Wagner
Sports Editor

Wearing a bandana around his neck like a U.S. Cavalry sergeant, Texas A&M coach Jackie Sherrill greeted members of the Southwest Conference media tour Tuesday touting the Aggies' new-found offensive firepower and their switch to the 3-4 defense.

The bandana symbolizes the Aggies' "blood and sweat," Sherrill explained, and he wears one in practice along with offensive tackle Tommy Robison and linebacker Jerry Bullitt. As Sherrill talked about his unusual clothing accessory, A&M Sports Information Director Ralph Carpenter gave one to each of the visiting sports writers.

But Sherrill had more up his sleeve than free bandanas. Saying the Aggie offense has the potential to be "extremely efficient" in 1983, the A&M head coach praised each part of his offensive unit and told reporters the Aggies were "in much better shape" than they were this time last season.

"The three important keys are: How John (Mazur) plays, how our secondary plays early, and (Ray) Childress has got to play well," Sherrill said.

The new watchword around Aggieland appears to be depth, and the Aggies have it in several positions — especially on offense. Sherrill said his offensive line

"The players look up to him, and he's done an excellent job of running this football team. He's a tough, vocal kid, and he's got the ability to move around in the pocket." — Jackie Sherrill, talking about A&M quarterback John Mazur

— Matt Darwin, Greg Porter, Robison, Ken Reeves and Nathan Steadman — has the ability to be "the best I've ever coached."

"I'll be honest with you," Sherrill said, "(a good offensive line) is the reason Texas has been the dominant team in the conference for so long. You've got to have dominant people up front."

Another reason Sherrill is confident about his offensive attack is quarterback Mazur. The transfer from USC has all the characteristics of a good leader, Sherrill said.

"The players look up to him," Sherrill said, "and he's done an excellent job of running this football team. He's a tough, vocal kid, and he's got the ability to move around in the pocket."

Because of injuries in the backfield, Sherrill's 1982 Aggie squad finished the season first in the SWC in passing

offense, but next to last in rushing. The Aggies hope to be more balanced in 1983.

After Sherrill spoke to the group, several A&M players came up for an interview session, and Robison explained the offensive scheme.

"We've worked hard on the fundamentals," he said. "The plan is to even it out more this fall and run the ball."

But Mazur says the Aggies won't be conservative.

"We're putting the ball up a lot in practice," he said. "We're not going to say we can't throw here because we've already thrown the ball so many times. We'll see what's working and go with that."

With the running backs Mazur has behind him, however, he may find it's just as exciting to hand the ball off. Junior college transfer Joey Harris and sophomore Ira Valentine are penciled in as

starters, but once again, the Aggies have plenty of depth. Transfer Anthony Toney and freshmen Rob Bernstine and Keith Woodside will see playing time behind Harris, and sophomores Jimmie Hawkins and George Smith will back up Valentine.

Mazur said the running backs may be the Aggies' "secret weapon."

"Our running backs are really gonna be super," he said. "To some people they may have been a question mark — especially at the beginning — but we're gonna have a fine crop of backs by the end of the season."

Defensive, Sherrill said the switch to the 3-4 and the move by Billy Cannon to outside linebacker should make the Aggies a faster — if not better — football team.

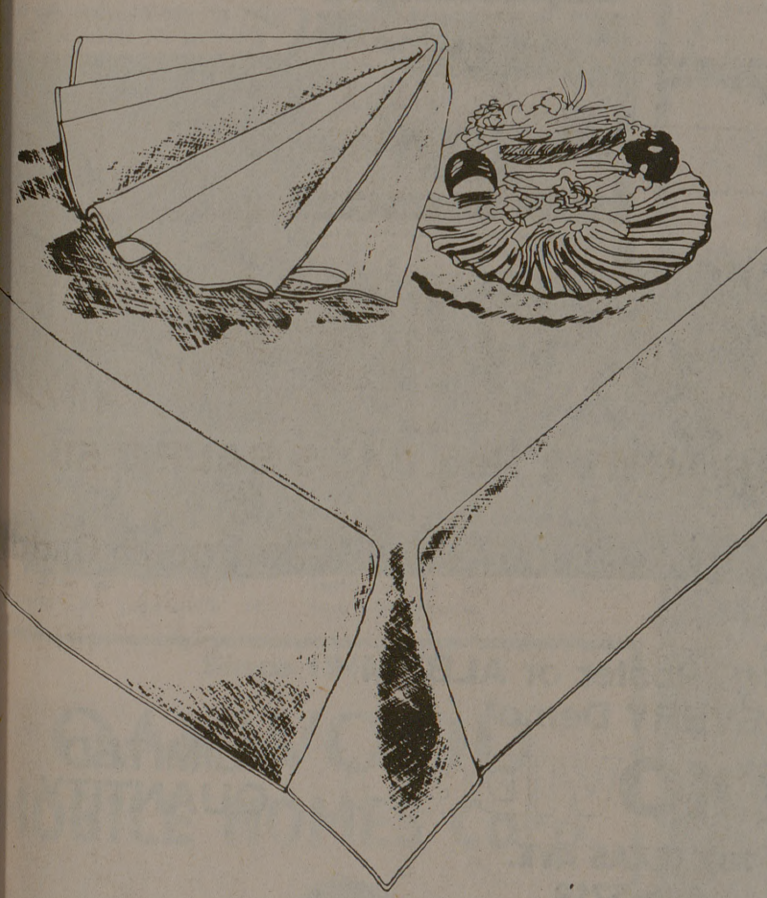
"We're putting a lot of speed on the field," Sherrill said. The Aggies' main defensive problem last season was keeping up with quicker offensive players. The 3-4, with its emphasis on small, fast linebackers instead of big, lumbering linemen, should help the Aggies contain on the ends better.

Sherrill said Cannon's speed and quickness will give the Aggies more "flexibility" on defense.

"Every time Billy takes a snap on the field, he takes it full-speed. He's gonna give a lot of people problems."

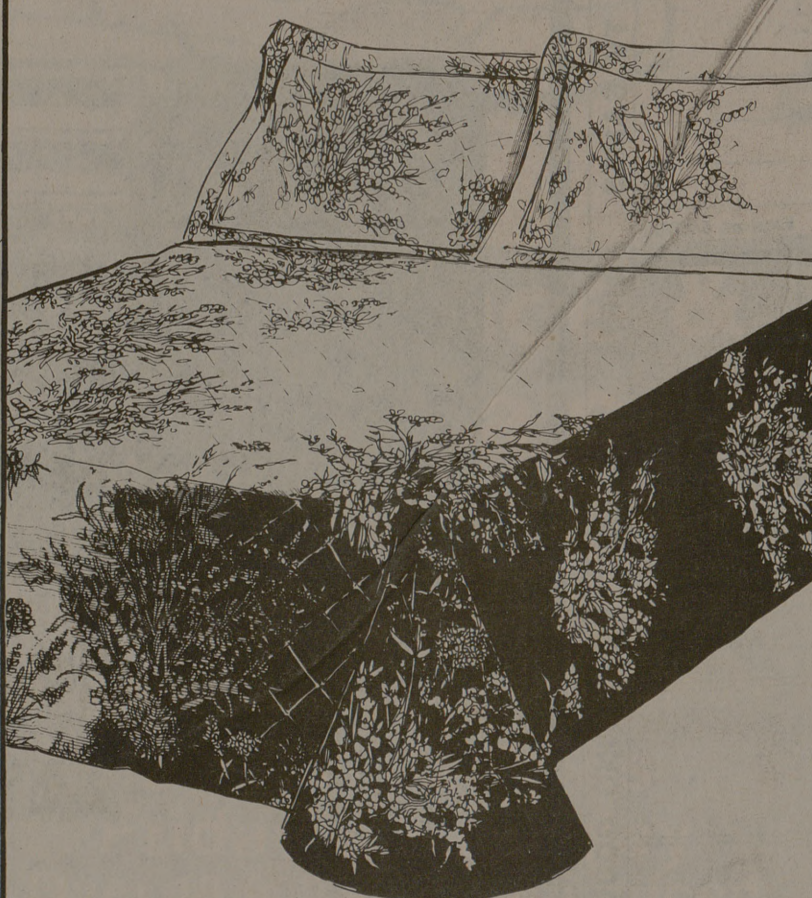
Dillard's AUGUST HOME SALE

big savings on famous maker linens



"Colorsettings" tablecloths by Springmaid®
7.99 all sizes

Reg. \$12-31. Spread a little cheer on your dining table with a colorful collection of tablecloths. Of completely machine washable polyester/cotton, in white, bone, peach, navy or yellow. It's easy to fit your table in 52x52", 52x70", 60x84", 70x104", 70" and 90" round sizes.



save \$10-\$40! machine washable bedspreads
29.99 all sizes

Reg. \$40-70. A luxurious, easy-care selection of machine-washable bedspreads to give your bedroom a boost. Includes the latest decorator prints and solids by such famous makers as Rex®, Springmaid®, more! Your choice of twin, full, queen or king sizes.
Not every size and color in every store.



save 50% and more! king or queen-size sheets
7.99 all sizes

Orig. \$18-22. Your choice! Queen or king! Choose from a select group of fashion prints on no-iron polyester/cotton by some of our most famous makers. Easy-care sheets stay fresh and cool while you sleep!
Pillowcases, orig. \$12-14. **7.99**