

The Battalion Sports

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It's showtime

A&M seniors hope to show national TV audience a preview of what's to come

by Bob Caster
Battalion Staff

The Aggies have a lot at stake this week as they prepare to challenge the No. 2-ranked Texas Longhorns Saturday. To the fans, a capacity home crowd, a nationwide television audience and a winning record may be commonplace. But the 5-4-1 Aggies have not enjoyed all those luxuries the same time in quite a while.

That could be a big factor in Saturday's game. The Aggies look to have survived the lean years and are on the verge of becoming a potential conference powerhouse. For the seniors on the team though, there is no next year — this is it.

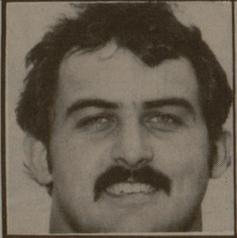
Senior offensive lineman Tommy Robison has mixed emotions about his tenure with the Aggies.

"I haven't been real pleased with the way everything's gone since I've been here," he said. "But the program is growing and it's getting better. This year we're starting to solidify and I think I've had a small part in it."

But Robison has no mixed emotions about beating the Horns.

"This is my last game in Kyle Field, it's on national TV and they humiliated us last year," he said. "I don't know how much more incentive it takes."

The Aggie seniors haven't played under the best conditions over the last four years and only now is the team showing signs of promise. The Texas game will be the last chance for the seniors to take out their frustrations against an Aggie foe. And after four years, a lot of frustration can build up.



I haven't been real pleased with the way everything's gone since I've been here. But the program is growing and it's getting better. This year we're starting to solidify and I think I've had a small part in it. — Aggies' lineman Tommy Robison on playing his last game for Texas A&M.

"We've had our ups and downs in four years," punter Kyle Stuard said. "We've been like a roller coaster but it's neat to see the team heading upward. I kind of wish I could be here another year to play."

Stuard said he feels the seniors have had an impact on the team this year despite the large amount

of playing time put in by underclassmen.

"What we do next year has already started," he said. "It will be great for them to go into the next season with a win over the No. 2 team under their belt. We have great freshmen and sophomores — we couldn't have done it without them and they couldn't

have done it without us."

The seniors, more than anyone else including the coaching staff, have been able to look at the team from the inside over the past few years and they are perhaps the most qualified to make a judgement on the direction the team has taken.

They have been through the

bad times, the coaching problems, the bad publicity and they have been the target of more than their share of criticism. But linebacker Jeff Fuller thinks they've come a long way.

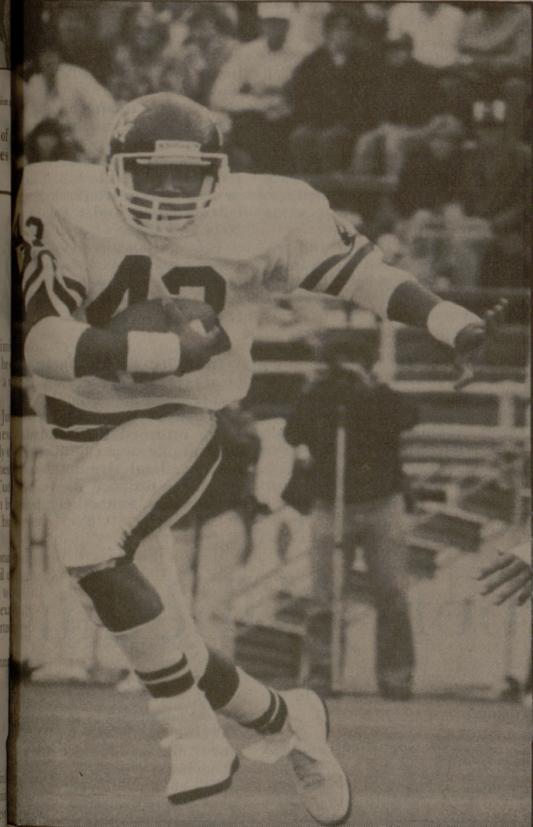
"This year has developed a lot of friendships," he said. "I think it shows in the way we are playing this year — our young players have shown very good attitudes."

"The atmosphere has changed in the athletic department," he said. "We've been through a whole lot, but we've accomplished what we wanted."

"The Texas game is the culmination of a lot of hard work and fun. It has to be emotional for the seniors, it's probably the last game a lot of us will ever play in."

But is Paine ready to check in the pads or would he like to stick around for another season?

"The thought crosses your mind every once in awhile," he said. "But I'm ready to get on with the rest of my life."



Texas A&M running back Roger Vick has averaged almost five yards a carry for A&M this year to lead all Aggie rushers.

Confident Vick leads Ag runners

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff

Texas A&M's Roger Vick was sitting on a bench in the locker-room after he just slashed through the TCU defense for 110 yards in the Aggies' 20-10 win over the Horned Frogs last week.

He was grinning.

Even while the freshman from Tomball was fielding tough questions about the Aggies' next opponent — No. 2-ranked Texas — the grin was still firmly in place.

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It wasn't so much that Vick didn't respect Texas' powerful defense, he was just feeling good — real good.

After all, two years ago Vick was a wimpy wide receiver for Tomball and the last place he expected to be was in the Aggies' starting backfield. Much less, did he expect to be the leading ball carrier for Texas A&M with a 4.8 yard average.

But he is. And his sparkling performance against the Frogs marked the first time an A&M runner has rushed more than 100 yards since Jackie Sherrill was hired almost two years ago. But Vick doesn't seem to know any better.

He doesn't know that since he's only been a running back for two years, he shouldn't be able to make opposing defenders tackle

air. And he also doesn't seem to know that most freshmen sit the bench or play special teams at least until they're sophomores.

"That's just the way he's always been," Vick's high school coach, Lynn Etheridge said. "When he was a junior, he was about 6-2 and weighed about 160 pounds so we had him at wide receiver."

"Then the next year he came in and really worked the weights and came in at about 6-3, 200 pounds. And we lost our running backs that year so we moved him to running back and he got his first real experience as a runner."

But run he did. As a senior at Tomball, Vick led all 4A and 5A Greater Houston runners with 1,465 yards rushing on 222 attempts for a 6.6 yard average. Obviously, Vick's numbers impressed Etheridge and Southwest Conference recruiters.

"After his senior season I knew he was going to be a good college football player, but I didn't think he could do it his first year. But he told me from the time he got up to A&M that he thought he could be the starter."

Apparently, nobody told Vick that freshmen from small towns don't go to major-college football programs and become starters. And nobody has told him that the Longhorns' defense is supposed to bottle up the Texas A&M rushing attack Saturday.

"I'm confident," Vick said. "I would like nothing better than having Texas come to Kyle Field

and we knock them off. Their defense is tough, but I think we can do some things against them."

The Aggies are expected to have a tough time running against Texas' stingy defense, but if any runner taps the Longhorns for big

yardage, it will likely be Vick — just ask Etheridge.

"I'm going to this game," Etheridge said. "I want to see what happens because I know what he can do with a football. His future's all ahead of him because

he's learned in two years what a lot of backs take years to learn. It should be interesting to see what he does Saturday."

True, especially since Vick doesn't know that he shouldn't be able to do a thing.

Aggies slip by N. Texas 78-64

The Texas A&M women's basketball team upped their record to 2-1 Tuesday night with a 78-64 win over North Texas State University.

The Aggies were led by Lisa Langston who burned the nets for 20 points against the Mean Green.

Texas A&M head coach Cherri Rapp also cited freshman Beth Young as a big contributor to the Aggies' win. Young scored 14 points while chalking up four steals and three assists.

Rapp said women's basketball rejuvenated this year and has a chance to do well within the Southwest Conference.

"I feel we have a real bright future," she said.

In past years, the Aggies have been no threat to stronger teams like the University of Texas.

The Aggies' next game will be against St. Mary's University Nov. 28 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Rapp said this year's version of Texas A&M's women's basketball team is nothing like prior Aggie teams.

"I'd encourage people to come out and watch us play," Rapp said. "It's a lot more exciting this year."

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