

Childress stands out, win or lose

By **JEFF GRAUNKE**
Sports Writer

The chips are definitely down for Texas A&M after three straight Southwest Conference losses, but there's one blue-chipper who still manages to stand out — Ray Childress.

Despite the rainy weather, the Aggies' mediocre record and all the criticism of Head Coach Jackie Sherrill, Childress, a senior defensive end, still performs at peak level every week.

Going into this weekend's cellar battle with Rice, the 6-foot-7, 280 pound Richardson Pearce High School product has made 62 tackles — 40 unassisted. The preseason All-America candidate also has two fumble recoveries and five quarterback sacks.

With statistics like that, it's easy to see why Childress and the Aggies have ascended to the top of the SWC in total defense.

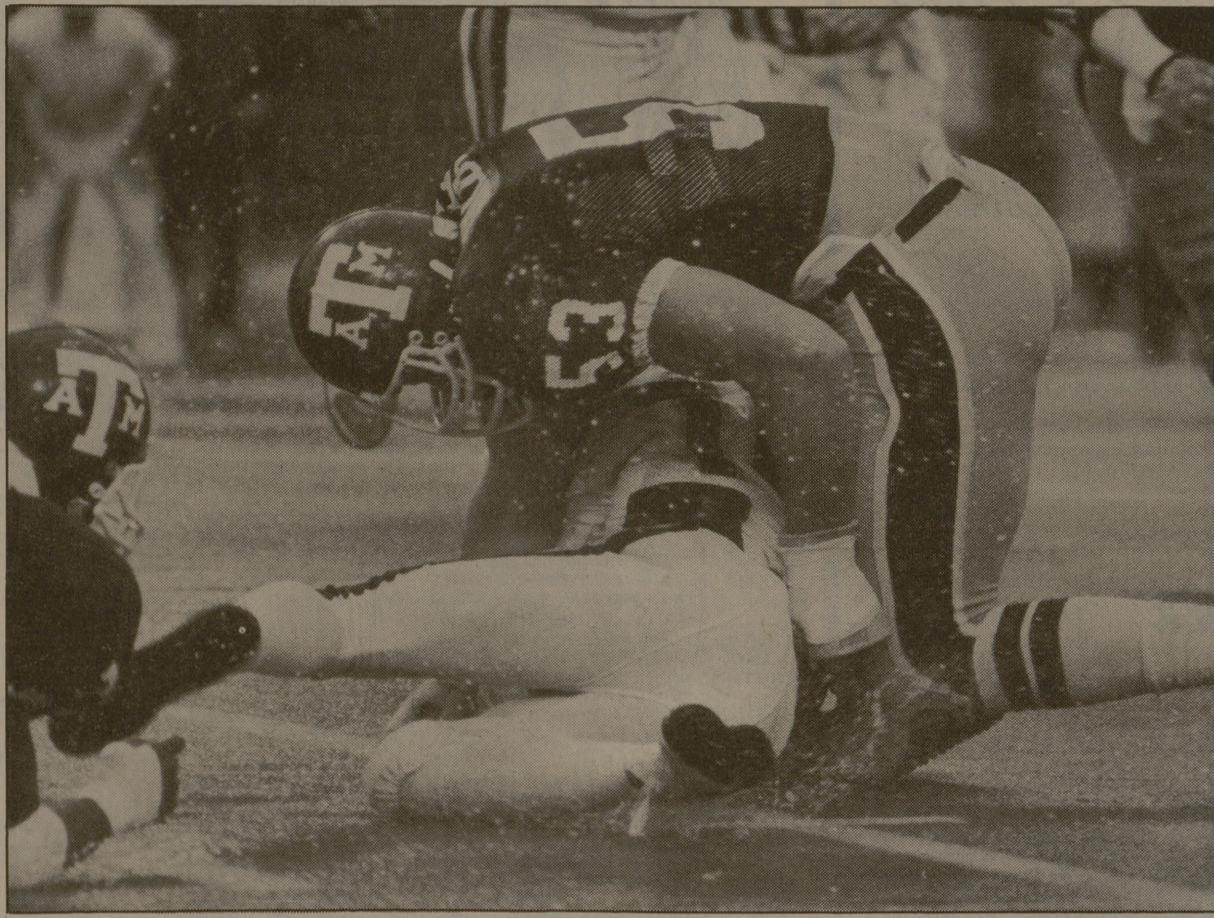
"Childress played very well (against Baylor)," Sherrill said. "The overall performance of the defense is getting better every week."

Childress agrees. "I think the strength of the team right now is the defense," Childress said. "Actually, I'm the only senior on the defensive line, so we just have a young defensive line."

"I think we've had better players since I've been here. Last year we had Keith Guthrie. He's playing for the San Diego Chargers. When I was a freshman we had Keith Baldwin. He's playing for the Cleveland Browns."

Even though Childress and the rest of the defense are playing well, winning is more important to him.

"You win as a team," Childress said. "That's our weakness right now, as a team we're just not playing well enough to win. I think the defense is playing well, but we're not winning. I just take care of my position and do everything I possibly can to help the team. I try for the best part of my game to be consistency. I like to play consistently well every play, every game, every week."



Texas A&M defensive end Ray Childress smothers Baylor quarterback Tom Muecke

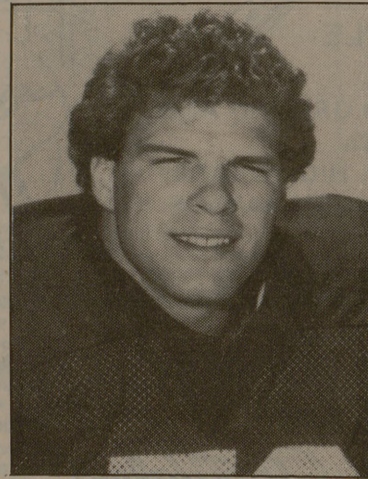
during last weekend's 20-16 loss to the Bears. A&M hosts Rice at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Photo by **PETER ROCHA**

Motivation could be a weakness for me right now, I think. This is my last year, which is something that can motivate me. It might be harder for

me to get excited as I once did to go out and play on Saturday, but the better the team plays, the better I get excited and want to play."

So far, Childress hasn't shown a lack of motivation. He consistently dominates the defensive front every week. He's constantly double-tea-



A&M's Ray Childress

med and no one runs right at him.

What makes Childress one of the best defensive linemen in the SWC?

"Ability, size, experience and a combination of those things," Childress said. "I feel that I am a great player. Hopefully if I go to the NFL, I'm sure the first two weeks I'm there just being around experienced NFL players I'm going to learn a whole lot about the game. Hopefully the young players on the team (Aggies) can do the same (and learn from me)."

Childress learned his football a long time ago in Memphis, Tennessee.

"Well, I played YMCA football in the fourth grade," he said with a big grin. "That was a long time ago. I was on the YMCA football All-Star team. I just had a lot of size and ability."

Thanks to the A&M coaching staff, Childress believes he has developed to his potential.

"They've helped me vastly," he said. "(Defensive line) Coach (Paul) Register knows my position, and he's done a fine job of coaching me. We've always gotten along. It's important. I think we respect each other, Coach Register and I. He's

just helped me along from the day I got here."

Evaluating the rest of the teams in the SWC, Childress said:

"I think this year is a weak year for the Southwest Conference, period, both players and teams," Childress said. "This would be a great year to win the Southwest Conference. Lets face it, there's not that many strong teams in it."

The Aggies (3-3) host Rice (1-5) Saturday. When it's over, one team will be at the bottom of the conference standings.

"Offensively they (Rice) throw the ball a lot, so we're getting prepared for the pass," Childress said. "Rice spreads their offense out all along the line of scrimmage."

Does that offensive alignment help Childress get to the quarterback quicker?

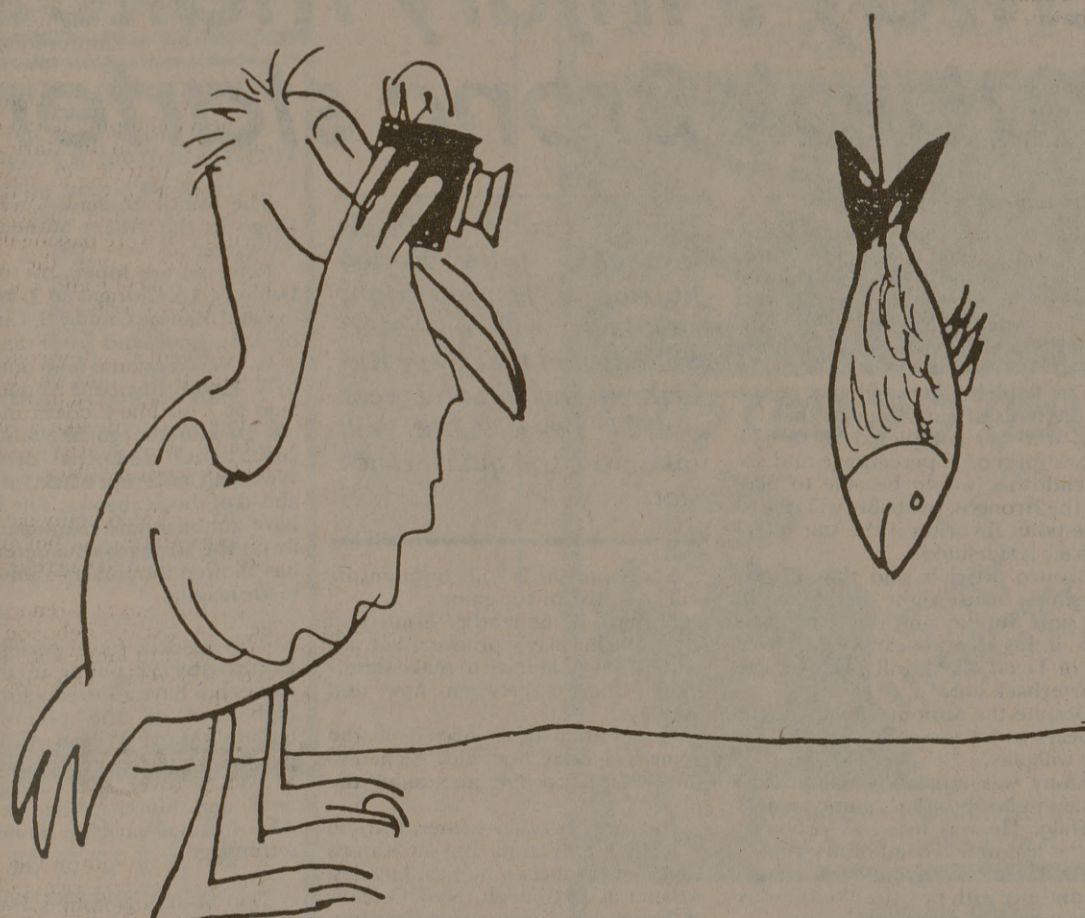
"In a way it does and in a way it doesn't," he said. "There will be less guys blocking, but they throw the ball quicker that way. He (Rice quarterback Mark Comalander) just drops back and throws to one of his receivers."

How does Childress rate the Owls' offensive line?

"It won't be one of the better lines we face," Childress said. "They'll be competent and everything, but naturally they won't be one of the better lines in the conference."

There has been speculation as to whether or not Childress is a legitimate first round pick in the next NFL draft. Childress said he hopes to be drafted, but doesn't lose any sleep over it.

"Right now I'd like to go out and win some ball games (with A&M)," he said. "The better I play in college, the better off I'll be for the pros. I'm just concentrating on playing in college right now."



**THIS IS ABSOLUTELY IT!
TODAY IS THE
LAST DAY(!)
for FRESHMEN
and
SOPHOMORES**

**to get pictured in the 1985 AGGIELAND
Class pictures are being taken at the
Pavilion from 8.30 to 12 and from 1 to 4:30.
TODAY**