

SPORTS

Aggies' Ford: getting drafted Job 1

By PETE HERNDON
Sports Writer

Hitting fast and hitting hard is former A&M linebacker Ken Ford's trademark.

For the last two years Ford's primary responsibility on defense was to destroy anyone who found a way to make it past All-America defensive end Ray Childress.

Moving to inside linebacker did not come easy for the versatile 6-foot-1, 206-pound junior college All-America, but the Aggies needed help at linebacker and, with only two years of eligibility left, Ford needed the playing time.

"I was used to getting a running start at a 220-pound tight end or running back," Ford said. "Then, all of the sudden, I was lining up against 260 to 280-pound tackles three yards away. I had some problems adjusting to the weight disadvantage until I learned to use my speed to get around them."

The hard work and hard knocks paid off last year when Ford was named to the Houston Chronicle's All-Southwest Conference defensive team. But the Chronicle was not the only one to recognize Ford's talents. Several NFL teams are ready to give him a shot at his old position — strong safety.

Although it is too early to tell where he will end up in the NFL college draft, Ford said the New York Jets, Pittsburgh Steelers and Washington Redskins have all expressed a possible interest in drafting him in the fifth or sixth round.

Ford is ready to get a chance to go back to the secondary.

"I was out of place at linebacker because I was so small," Ford said, "but the coaches kept working with me and (A&M teammate) Johnny (Holland) and that took a lot of the pressure off."

Playing linebacker may have been a blessing in disguise, Ford said, because it probably got him some extra attention from pro scouts.

"The scouts saw that I was holding my own," Ford said, "by



Photo by DEAN SAITO

Texas A&M's Ken Ford (far left) hopes to be diving for fumbles on National Football League fields rather than Kyle

playing out of position with people bigger than myself. For the last two years I've been a small man in the land of the giants, but I'm hoping it'll help me be a giant in the land of the small."

Now Ford is going to get a shot at his dream of playing in the NFL, but it has been a long road for him to get to the draft. He has played several different levels of amateur football and stepping up from each one was a challenge.

"The biggest adjustment I had to make coming out of high school was with the intensity of the workouts," Ford said. "In high school they pushed you a little, but basically, if you were good, you played. In JUCO (junior college) ball there are others that are as good as you are, and everyone's looking for a shot to play at a major college. If you sat on the bench, you would never get the chance."

Playing for a junior college did have some advantages though, Ford said.

"When I got to A&M, I already knew how to study," he said. "So the academic adjustment wasn't too bad. The biggest problem I had was getting used to the size of the classes. In junior college I never had more than about 25 people in a class."

Getting adjusted to the crowd was a problem he had on the football field also.

"I was used to playing in front of 300 people," he said. "Then, all of the sudden, there were 40,000 to 50,000 people in the stands and TV cameras everywhere."

"You get excited at all the attention, but then you also get scared. I was really conscious of the crowds the first couple of games."

Field next season. Ford, a senior linebacker, looks to be drafted in the fifth or sixth round of the NFL draft Tuesday.

The biggest adjustment to make going into the pros will be maturity, Ford said.

"Here at A&M everything is arranged for you," he said. "They provide your place to live, your food and all the other necessities. It will be a growing experience going into the pros because I'll be looking to put my own meal on the table, just like the guys I'm trying to beat."

Ford gave a lot of the credit for his success to his teammates and coaches at A&M. Defensive Coordinator R.C. Slocum was responsible for making him a good linebacker, Ford said.

"Coach Slocum stayed with me," Ford said. "He knows his coaching. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be where I am today."

The relationship between Ford and his coach is one of mutual admiration.

Slocum said that Ford will be missed by the Aggie defense.

"Ken Ford is going to be hard to replace," Slocum said. "He had developed into one of the strong points of our defense by the end of the season. He would be an asset to just about any pro secondary."

Ford said the thing he will remember most about A&M is the traditional atmosphere and the close-knit student body. He said when he first looked at the A&M campus he found that the "Spirit of Aggieland" was real and not just a recruiting campaign invented by the Athletic Department.

"You always have a family here," Ford said. "I like the way that Aggies stick up for Aggies. You know, this is my school, my family, my world and I'm proud to be an Aggie."

Reds halt Astros' win streak at 4

Ryan loses no-hitter in seventh inning

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Dave Concepcion and Duane Walker belted home runs and Eric Davis used his speed to break a 3-3 ninth inning tie as the Cincinnati Reds overcame Nolan Ryan's bid for his sixth career no-hitter and beat the Houston Astros 8-3 Wednesday.

Ryan, who has a record five no-hitters, had another with one out in the seventh when Dave Parker singled to center. Then Walker hit his first homer over the rightfield wall and Esasky later scored on an error by Garner gave the Reds a 3-1 lead.

The Astros, who had scored in the fifth on back-to-back doubles by Phil Garner and Alan Ashby, tied it in the eighth on Jose Cruz' two-out, two-run single before the Reds won it with five in the ninth.

Orioles 2, Rangers 1

ARLINGTON — Mike Young hit a two-run homer and Mike Boddicker scattered six hits in 8 1/3 innings Wednesday night to lead the Baltimore Orioles to a 2-1 victory over the Texas Rangers.

Boddicker, 2-1, was relieved by Tippy Martinez after walking Larry Parrish with one out in the ninth inning. The victory was his second against the Rangers this year and he is 6-0 against Texas in his career. Martinez recorded his second save of the season.

The Orioles took a 2-0 lead in the second inning. Fred Lynn led off with a single and was forced at second by Larry Sheets. Young followed with his second home run of the season.

Joe Nolan singled after Young's homer and loser Dave Rozema, 1-3, then retired 15 batters in a row before Sheets' infield single with one out in the seventh.

The Rangers got their run in the sixth inning when Toby Harrah led off with a double and one out later scored on Buddy Bell's single.

APOLLO HAS IT! Now—at last... **TOTAL HAIR RESTORATION**
MINOXIDIL -DERMA -VACUUM -HAIR PROGRESSION

Before Step 1, 2 months. After Step 1, 2 months.

Yes! Please send me your free information at no obligation!
Name _____ Age _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

Step 2, 3 months. Step 3, 6 months.

PUT CONFIDENCE BACK INTO YOUR LIFE
CALL APOLLO 846-4080 1842 GREENFIELD PLAZA
BRYAN, TEXAS
Hours By Appointment

HAPPY HOUR
2 P.M. TO 6 P.M.

2 FOR \$13 SALE
ON ANY \$8.98 or \$9.49 CASSETTE or LP

FREE DRINKS AND GOOD TIMES!
EVERY FRIDAY

hastings
books • records • video

CULPEPPER PLAZA

Sell it in Battalion Classified
845-2611

GET YOUR CAREER OFF THE GROUND.

Launch hour. Throttles are at full power as a supersonic roar sweeps across the flight deck. And you're the pilot.

The catapult fires and G forces slam you back into your seat. Seconds later, you're punching a hole in the clouds and looking good. Nothing beats the excitement of Navy flying. And no other job can match the kind of management responsibility you get so quickly in the Navy.

The rewards are there, too. Around-the-world travel opportunities with a great starting salary of \$19,200. As much as \$33,600 after four years with promotions and pay increases.

Take off for tomorrow in the Navy. With top-level training to help you build technical and managerial skills you'll use for a lifetime. Don't just settle into a job; launch a career. See your Navy Recruiter or **CALL 800-327-NAVY.**

NAVY OFFICERS GET RESPONSIBILITY FAST.