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The Twelfth Man kick-off team, shown here conferring with Coach Curley Hallman against UTEP last year, is alive and well in Aggie-debut Sept. 21 against Northeast Louisiana on Kyle Field.

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## Twelfth Man team gets kick out of hitting Ag opponents

## **By DOUG HALL** Sports Writer

Two years ago, it was called a publicity stunt that would backfire in Jackie Sherrill's face.

Despite such skepticism, the Twelfth Man kickoff squad has allowed less than 15-yards a return since its beginning in the '83 football season. A&M graduate assistant coach Roy Kokemoor, who is working with

the kickoff team this year, said the Aggies have no plans to increase that statistic in '85

"Our main goal is no long runbacks," Kokemoor said. "Our second-ary goal is to keep the ball inside the 20 (yard-line)." Those goals won't be easy to achieve, since the 10-man squad has only

three starters returning and three more that saw limited action last year. Bobby Middleton, a junior from Hillsboro, said the team expects to turn in a good performance, despite its lack of experience.

"We have a lot of guys who have been doing this for awhile," said Middleton, one of the Aggies' returning starters.

"They might not have played, but everyone works hard in practice." Sherrill came up with the Twelfth Man idea in the Fall of '82, while helping the A&M student body build bonfire. Sherrill figured that if students put forth that much effort for bonfire, they could easily wreak havoc on opposing teams

Enter the Twelfth Man team, a group of non-scholarship athletes who play on the Aggies' special teams and cover home game kickoffs. From the more than 150 students who tried out last spring, Kokemoor asked 33 back to fall workouts. Today, however, Kokemoor must cut the squad down to 22 in preparation for the home opener against Northeast Louisiana Sept 21.

"They are just so dadgummed equal," Kokemoor said. "You hate to

deprive anyone the opportunity to be on the Twelfth Man." Kokemoor said each member practices at their individual position like other walk-ons and plays on scout team offense and defense. In addition, the Twelfth Man squad arrives to practice 30-minutes early to work on kickoff coverages and usually stays after practice to work even more with the kickers.

"Individually," Kokemoor said, "they might not have as much ability as the scholarship athletes. They are just a bunch of guys who go out there and do a heck of a job. They exemplify the team unit."

Chad Burke, a junior marketing major from Deer Park, said being a

Twelfth Man player isn't as easy as it looks. "It's kind of tough," Burke said. "But you just remember why you're out there and that keeps you going." Burke also said the squad receives positive feed-back from the Ag-gies' scholarship players, as well as the A&M student body. "They know that when it comes our time to play, the whole team is riding on us, so they support us," Burke said. Kokemoor said the Twelfth Man idea could only be found at a school with as much pride and tradition as A&M

with as much pride and tradition as A&M.

"I don't think you could have it any other place," Kokemoor said. "It is a unique place with the Twelfth Man tradition. It (the kick-off squad) is a carry-over from that tradition."

Sooners slip below No. 1 Tigers **Associated Press** 

Oklahoma Coach Barry Switzer wasn't surprised that the Sooners lost their No. 1 ranking in the Asso-ciated Press poll Tuesday. "It's kind of what I anticipated," Switzer told the AP.

"We got all the publicity in the eseason," said Switzer, whose

'It's nice to be No. 1, but I really don't want to talk about it now. I'll talk about it in January,"

Southern Cal rose from sixth to fourth with six first-place ballots and 970 points on the strength of a 20-10 triumph over Illinois, which had been No. 11 but fell to 19th. Iowa, which has not yet played a game, slipped from fourth to fifth with five first-place votes and 911 points. Sixth-place SMU received the other two first-place ballots and 908 points.





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preseason," Sooners were No. 1 in the preseason and first regular-season polls, "but we don't play our first game until Sept. 28 and I knew people would forget about us." While Oklahoma slipped from

No. 1 to No. 2, Auburn jumped from No. 2 to No. 1, just two points ahead of the Sooners, by routing Southwestern Louisiana 49-7 behind Bo Jackson's 290 yards rushing and four touchdons.

"It's nice to be No. 1, but I really don't want to talk about it now. I'll talk about it in January," said Auburn Coach Pat Dye.

"I'm more concerned with facing the No. 1 defense in the nation this weekend.

That's Southern Mississippi, which allowed only 138 yards in blanking Louisiana Tech 28-0.

Auburn received 16 first-place votes to Oklahoma's 28 from a nationwide panel of 60 sports writers and sportscasters. But the Tigers,

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-Auburn Coach Pat Dye.

who totaled 1,118 of a possible 1,200 points, received 25 second-place votes and were not rated lower than seventh on any ballot while two voters placed Oklahoma in the Second Ten, nullifying the Sooners' edge in first-place votes. Oklahoma received 1,116 points.

There was considerable shuffling from last week's rankings but the only team to drop out of the Top Twenty was No. 12 Washington, which lost to Oklahoma State 31-17. The Huskies were replaced by Ala-bama, which made the Top 20 for the first time since the second week of the 1984 season.

Florida, a 35-23 winner over Mi-ami, jumped from fifth to third with three first-place votes and 974 points. The Gators replaced Southern Methodist, which had problems before defeating Texas-El Paso 35-23 and slipped to sixth.

Florida State vaulted from 17th to seventh with 755 points by upsetting No. 10 Nebraska 17-13 and Oklahoma State went from 16th to eighth with 741 points by trouncing Washington

Ohio State, which gets under way this weekend, remained in ninth place with 686 points will le UCLA shot from 20th to 10th with 612 points by beating BYU and drop-ping the Cougars from eighth to 16th. Maryland, which had been No. 7, lost to Penn State 20-18 and skidded to 17th. The victory boosted moved the Nittany Lions from 19th to 11th.

Rounding out the Second Ten are LSU, Notre Dame, Arkansas, South Carolina, BYU, Maryland, Ne-braska, Illinois and Alabama.

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