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For more information, contact Kevin 208 Pavilion


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Ag signee ready for challenge

Talbot hopes to bring order to kicking game

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS
Assistant Sports Editor

The Texas A&M football team had all the essential parts for a successful '85 campaign. The record-setting offense controlled the field, while the defense shut down All-America and Heisman Trophy running backs.

That was good enough for a Southwest Conference Championship and a Cotton Bowl victory over Auburn.

But the Aggies were a foot short for much of the season — that being an accurate, dependable field goal kicker.

Only once did the Aggies have to depend on a field goal in the last seconds to win a game. On that occasion, kicker Eric Franklin came through with a 48-yarder against SMU.

But on the whole, the only word to describe the Aggies' kicking game for most of the season was "sporadic."

So when recruiting time rolled around for A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill, a kicker was one of his top priorities.

Signed, sealed and all but delivered last Wednesday was Beaumont West Brook kicker Layne Talbot.

For his career, the 5-foot-11, 180-pounder booted 86-of-92 PAT's and 19-of-26 field goals.

Last season, Talbot was good on 27-of-29 PAT's and 9-of-10 field goals — his only miss coming from 50 yards out.

"I'm pretty happy with my high school career," Talbot said. "This year I should have had at least 20 more attempts. For some reason we kept going for it on fourth down instead of trying the field goal. That was kind of disappointing. I guess (West Brook) Coach (Leo Nolan) just never thought about kicking it."

But Talbot's season was good enough to earn him a first-team all-district spot in District 22-5A for the third straight season, and a first-team spot on the all-state squad.

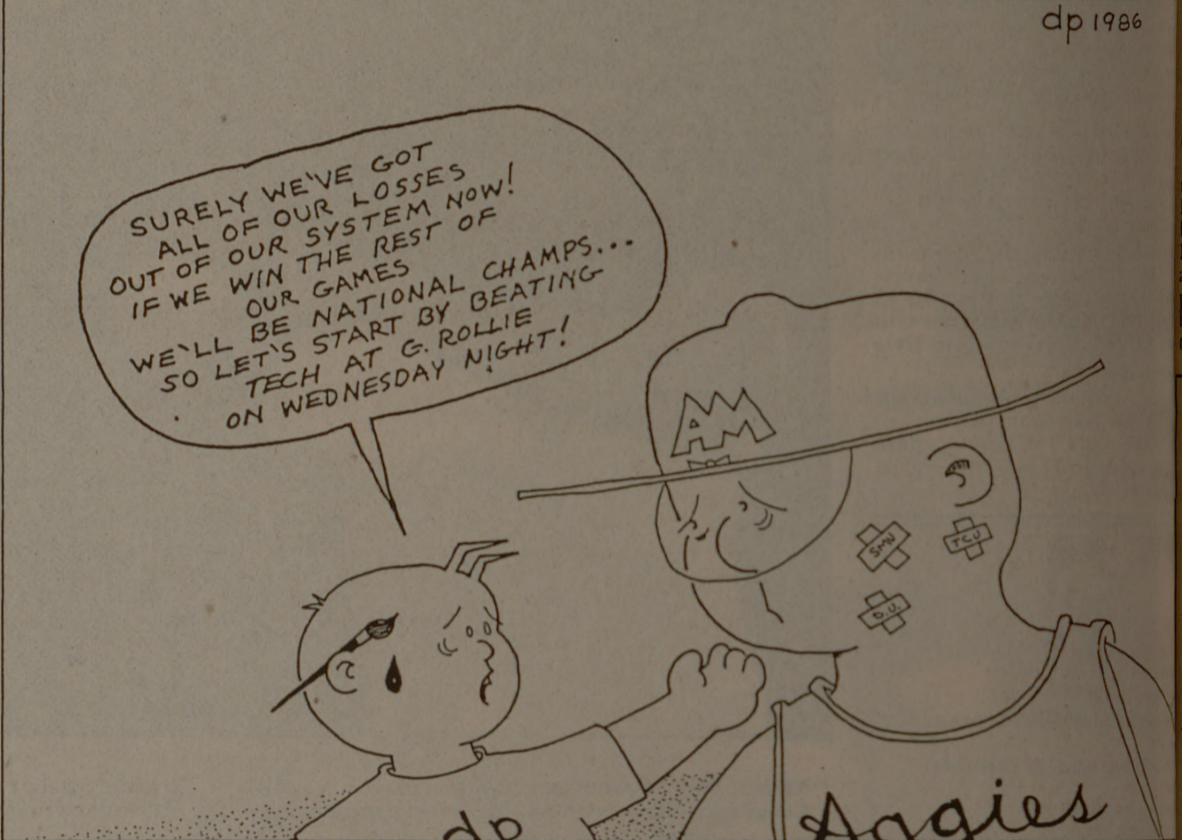
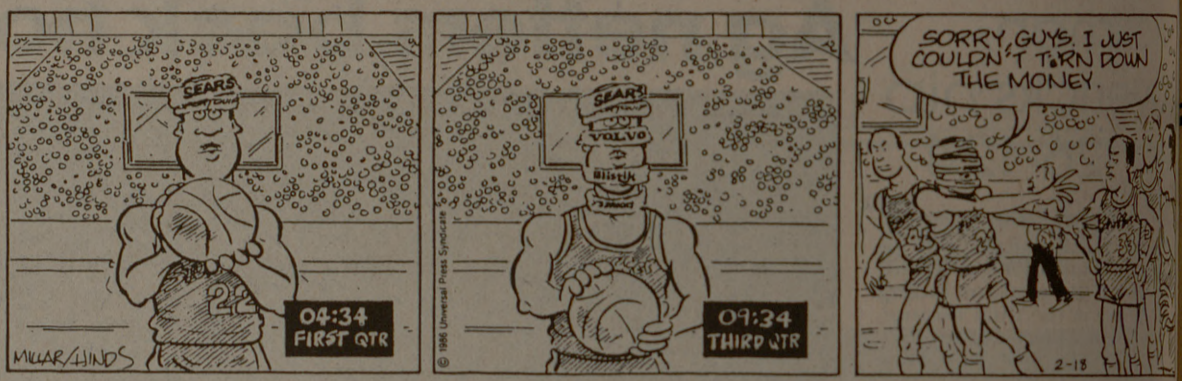
"I was surprised I made all-state because we didn't even make it to the playoffs," Talbot said. "I was hoping deep down, but I didn't give it much thought. You really can't worry about things like that."

Talbot has two 42-yarders as the longest field goals of his career.

"I'm confident from the 50 in," he

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



said. "I feel confident anytime I'm kicking from that range."

"I've worked on strengthening my legs and have added about five or 10 yards to my range in the last year. But I mainly concentrate on accuracy. That's what the coaches look for in a kicker."

West Brook's secondary coach, Chris Coleman, said that's exactly what the Aggies are getting — a consistent kicker.

"For three years he was consistent in his kicking, he was consistent in his behavior and he was just an outstanding leader," Coleman said. "His statistics have shown what he can do for you."

Talbot's from a family of die-hard Aggies. Brother Dean has already received his diploma from A&M and his other brother, Clint, will graduate in May.

So all the Aggies had to do was show interest and Talbot was theirs.

"At first I doubted A&M would sign a kicker," Talbot said. "I wasn't real sure about my chances. I knew Franklin would be back."

"I've always liked A&M a lot. I was interested in LSU also, but once I knew A&M wanted me, I didn't want to go anywhere else."

And Sherrill was glad to get Talbot.

"He had an outstanding year," Sherrill said. "He was the best kicker in the state."

The Aggies' inconsistent kicking game also played a part in Talbot's decision.


"It was a little part (of my deci-

sion)," Talbot said. "I knew we weren't satisfied with what they were doing. I would like to come in and help."

"I'm just going to go in and help next year and see what happens. It will be real good to have some other guys. I think it will make all three of us better kickers."

And Talbot, who watched West Brook win the 5A state championship in his freshman season, is more than a little excited about the Aggies' chances for a SWC Championship.

"Shoot yeah," Talbot said. "I want to start the season. I hope we can get the (SWC) championship ring. That would be pretty neat. My first season. And there's talk of national championship too."


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