

# Sports

## Aggies to experience LSU wildlife — Tigers, fans of 'Death Valley'

By Homer Jacobs  
Assistant Sports Editor

Picture the type of crowd that frequents Kyle Field for Midnight Yell practice, but drunker.

Picture Davis-Gary, Moses, Crocker and Puryear halls placed under the horseshoe at Kyle Field instead of on the north side of campus.

Picture a metal, bowl-like stadium dubbed "Death Valley" with 76,869 fanatics of a state that live for jambalaya, crawfish pie and Tiger football.

Picture a seventh-ranked team from Texas (heaven forbid) invading their holy turf on a Saturday night.

It's an ugly picture. It's Tiger Stadium, home of 1,500 Louisiana State students and the Tiger football team.

Texas A&M Offensive Coordinator Lynn Amedee has many memories of "Death Valley," as he played quarterback for the Tigers from 1960-1963.

"My britches were wet the first time I walked out there (Tiger Stadium)," he said.

Amedee said football, especially night football, is a way of life in Louisiana.

"It's the social event of the year," he said. "They get their tailgate parties going about Wednesday."

Although it sounds like the Aggies are sure to be made into seafood creole, Amedee said sometimes the intense noise and avid fans can be advantageous for an opposing team.

"Mentally, it helps you get ready for a football game," he said.

Amedee promises deafening crowd noise and a vicious LSU tiger mascot (Mike IV) strategically placed outside the visitor's locker room to greet the Aggies on the way out the tunnel.

Tiger Stadium's playing surface is natural grass — something the Aggies haven't set foot on since the 1981 Independence Bowl. The Aggies have been practicing on grass



Lynn Amedee

through two-a-days and regular practices.

Amedee said after last year's penalty-plagued game with Alabama that also involved a lot of noise, A&M dumped its audible system that quarterback Kevin Murray used when he stepped to the line of scrimmage.

"The snap count is now sounds instead of numbers," Amedee said.

If Murray and company can't hear these sounds, the game may become an encore of last year's A&M-Texas game.

Remember quarterback Bret Stafford's plea for silence from the Aggie faithful?

Amedee compares the noise of Tiger Stadium to that Thanksgiving night.

"I think the crowd noise at the Texas game was every bit as loud as it is in Baton Rouge," Amedee said.

Picture LSU fans waving Jack Daniels bottles when their kickoff team takes the field.

Grab the 12th Man towels, Aggies — at least, to serve as a bib.

Aggie notes... Head Yell Leader Marty Holmes said yell practice will be held for the LSU game at midnight at the state capitol building in Baton Rouge tonight.

## Ags to showcase 'real thing' Saturday

By Ken Sury  
Sports Editor

Well, we've heard enough about how great the 1986 Texas A&M football team is expected to be.

We'll see the truth Saturday night in Baton Rouge, La.

The Aggies, ranked seventh in the Associated Press poll, take on No. 14 Louisiana State University in Tiger Stadium at 6:45 p.m. in a nationally-

televised (ESPN) season opener which may be a barometer of the team's success for the year.

But don't look at past season openers with LSU to be an indicator of A&M success — there's only one disappointment. In eight season-opening contests with LSU, A&M has lost each time, including the '69 team, which was the defending Southwest Conference champions and '68 Cotton Bowl winners.

And those starting losses didn't bode well for the rest of the season as those A&M teams finished with losing records.

But that shouldn't happen to the '86 team, which returns with last year's SWC-leading defense nearly intact and an experienced group of players at the skills positions.

The Aggie defense returns its front seven linemen, which could possibly line up with the best college football has to offer.

Linebackers Larry Kelm and Johnny Holland should prove why they were the top two tacklers on the '85 squad, and Playboy preseason All-America Rod Saddler at left end are just three of the reasons LSU freshman redshirt quarterback Tom Hodson will want to sit on the bench.

The only concern defensively is in an inexperienced secondary. But the secondary is well-stocked with good athletes and free safety Kip Corrington does have some big-play experience, such as an interception return for a touchdown against Baylor and the key tackle of Arkansas' Bobby Joe Edmonds on a fourth-and-two deep in A&M

territory to preserve the Aggies' 10-6 win last year.

On offense, all-SWC quarterback Kevin Murray is the healthiest he's ever been for a season opener and his performance will dictate the success of the offense Saturday.

Murray says being injury-free to start the season has him more relaxed. A&M coaches say he's throwing the ball with more speed than ever.

But he won't be alone, as a strong backfield of Playboy preseason All-America fullback Roger Vick and tailback Keith Woodside will keep the Aggie ground game moving forward, while Murray has top receivers in Shea Walker, Rod Harris and Rod Bernstine when he needs to go to the air.

It remains to be seen if the offensive line can be as strong as last year, and also questionable is the kicking game. Eric Franklin is sidelined with a stress fracture and hasn't kicked since the Cotton Bowl. In his place will probably be Scott Slater, who walked on last year as the kickoff man, but filled in at placekicker in both the Texas and the Cotton Bowl.

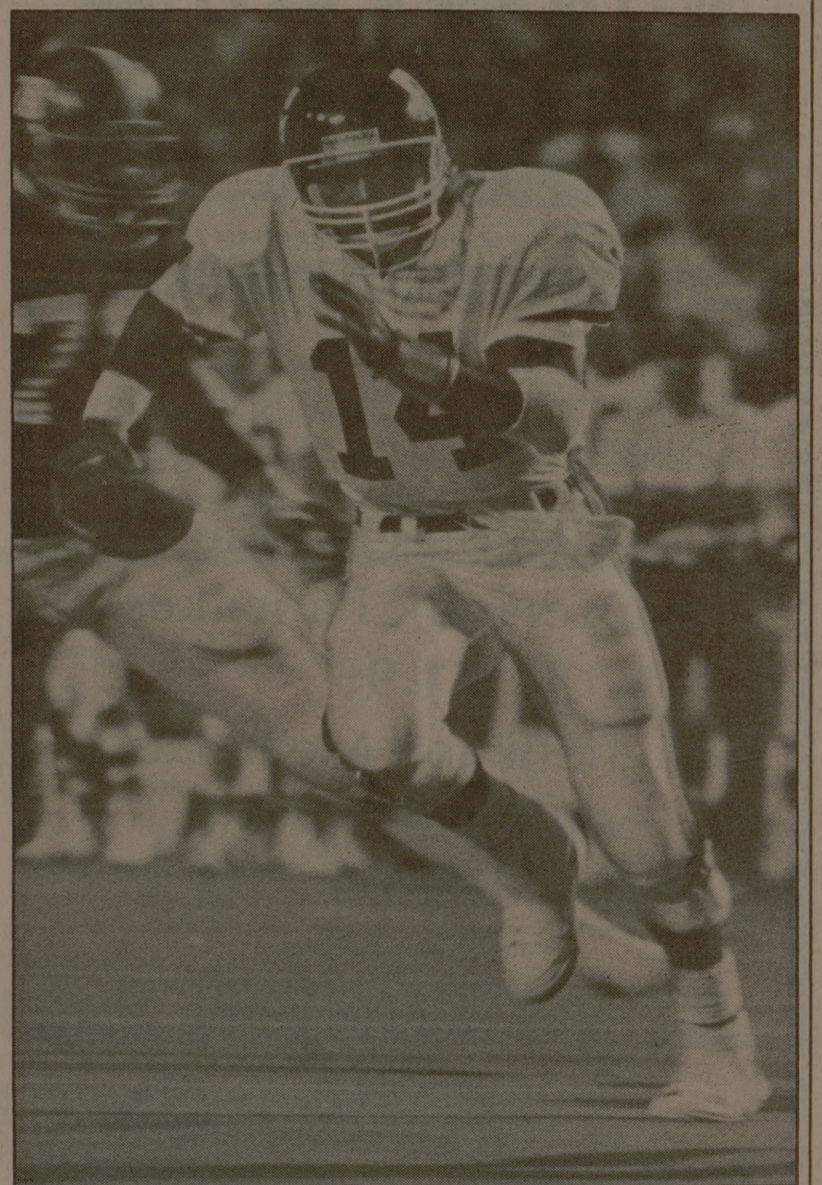
However, even with all the offensive firepower at the Aggies' disposal, the game probably will be a low-scoring affair. The Tigers return 10 defensive starters and are notorious for giving little ground to opposing teams in Tiger Stadium. Linebacker Michael Brooks earned All-America honors last year and Sherrill expects tough play from the LSU down linemen and secondary.

But offensively the Tigers are green at the skills positions. In addition to a young quarterback, the starting running backs, Victor Jones and Sam Martin, carried the ball only 42 times last year.

So put away all those preseason prediction football magazines and prepare for an all-out Bayou battle.

Those predictions look great on paper, but the real thing's played on grass Saturday night.

And A&M's the real thing.



Battalion File Photo

Quarterback Kevin Murray starts the 1986 season the healthiest he's been since his freshman year, and will be directing the Aggie offense when A&M faces LSU Saturday night in Baton Rouge, La.

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