

Hog kicker named AP player-of-week

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (AP)—Right there on page two of the University of Arkansas football brochure, Coach Ken Hatfield uttered these prophetic words:

"For us to have a good year there are some major things that have to click. We have to be consistent in our field goal kicking with Kendall Trainor. We need to make at least 90 percent of our field goals from makable range."

Trainor is not quite up to 90 percent, but he has made 15 in a row and that's a big reason the Razorbacks are 4-0 in the Southwest Conference and only a step away from the Cotton Bowl. He was good from 29, 46, 23 and 49 yards on Saturday in a 26-21 victory over Houston.

For his performance, Trainor was named the Associated Press Offensive

Player of the Week in the Southwest Conference. The Defensive Player of the Week is Arkansas linebacker Kerry Owens, who played two positions against the Cougars and was in on 12 tackles.

Trainor has not missed since he flubbed a 25-yarder against Mississippi on Sept. 17. The streak started in the second half. The Razorbacks fell behind 13-12 in the third quarter, but Trainor kicked field goals of 31, 38 and 43 yards and Arkansas won, 21-13.

The following week, he made a school record five field goals in a 53-10 victory over Texas Christian University.

Then, against Texas Tech, Trainor made a 49-yarder in a 31-10 victory. A week later, in a 27-24 victory over Texas, Trainor kicked field goals of 41 and 28 yards. The latter gave Arkansas a 27-10 lead and proved to be the difference.

Hatfield was so emphatic about the need for solid kicking because three times in the past four years, missed field goals have cost the Razorbacks possible trips to the Cotton Bowl.

Ironically, on Monday before the Houston game, Trainor suffered a groin pull that affected his left leg — his plant leg.

"He's scored some important points for us," Hatfield said. "I don't recall a time this year when we forced a turnover on our opponent's end of the field and didn't score. Even if we didn't get a touchdown, we've been able to count on Kendall to make a field goal. He's been the difference in all our close games. Any time our opponent has gained momentum, he's kicked a field goal to give it back to us."

Arkansas led 13-0 when the Cougars scored a touchdown. On the next possession, Trainor upped the margin to nine. In the third quarter, the Cougars zipped 56 yards in five plays to cut the lead to 16-14. Arkansas came right back and Trainor was good from 49 yards for a 19-14 lead.

Gurley trying to come back Aggie fullback waits patiently for knee to heal

By Hal L. Hammons
Sports Editor

Profile of the Week Matt Gurley

He remembers the play as if it were yesterday:

"Bucky (Richardson) was scrambling. I was downfield. I was blocking LeRoy Etienne (Nebraska's All-Big 8 linebacker). I cut him, and Bucky cut behind me. I was on my knees on the way up, and (Etienne) caught me up inside my shoulder pads. My knee kind of went sideways, and he rolled over it. . . .

"I jogged off the field. I didn't think I had any ligament damage."

Matt Gurley had ligament damage. And for the past two months he has had ligament damage.

It was almost healed a few weeks ago, but he stepped off a parking-lot curb wrong — without his brace on — and undid two weeks worth of rehabilitation.

The word was he might not play again. Ever. Now word has it he might be ready next week against Louisiana Tech, at least to see some limited action and get back in the groove before the big showdown against Arkansas in Fayetteville the week after.

But for now, Matt Gurley is resigned to strapping his brace onto his left knee every morning, watching his teammates hit one another every afternoon, and laying in bed wondering every night.

It's getting old.

It's not just Gurley who thinks so, either. Despite the good play of freshmen Robert Wilson and Randy Simmons, missing the senior fullback hurts the Aggies. A lot.

If you doubt it, talk to Jackie Sherrill for a while. Gurley is a common subject of conversation at his weekly

Tuesday press luncheons.

After the Nebraska game the injury list was as long as a Cain Hall lunch line. It included Darren Lewis, Rod Harris and Gary Jones — all key starters. Guess which one Sherrill singled out as the most important. Gurley.

Pretty high praise for someone who wasn't a blue-chip recruit like Lewis or Simmons. Someone who wasn't even recruited as a running back — he was an outside linebacker.

"I switched, I guess, because I was a worthless outside linebacker," Gurley said with a smile Tuesday. Why not smile? It's worked out for him. And for A&M.

It can be pretty intimidating being a running back at Texas A&M. The list of pro players from Aggieland is long and illustrious: Earnest Jackson, Johnny Hector, Curtis Dickey, Keith Woodside. And playing in front of Gurley when he arrived were three future pro players — Roger Vick, Anthony Toney and Ira Valentine. Vick and Toney are still starters for the New York Jets and Philadelphia Eagles, respectively.

But Matt Gurley doesn't concern himself with comparisons.

"I'm not going to fill their shoes," he said. "If it happens, it happens. I'm just going to go out and do what I'm asked to do."

Not much rattles Gurley. He describes himself as someone who is "easy-going, trying not to make my-

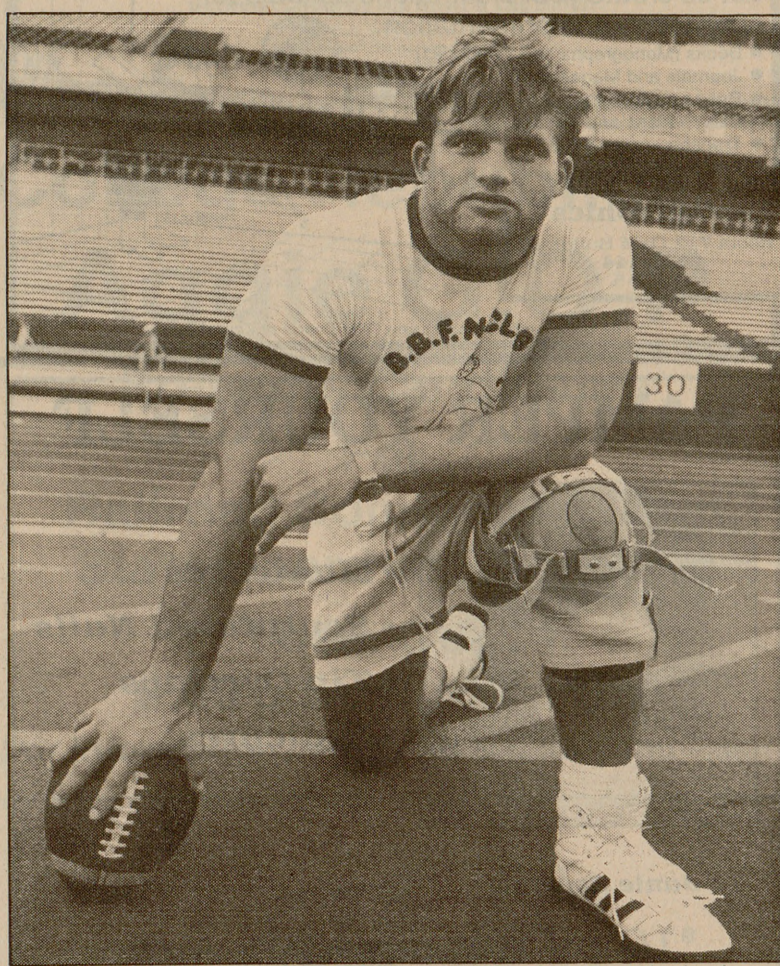


Photo by Jay Janner

All Matt Gurley can do these days at A&M football practice is watch. He's still being held out of contact drills because of his left knee, which he injured in the season opener against Nebraska.

See Gurley, page 8

Lady Ags to face UT for 1st place

Texas A&M's Lady Aggie volleyball team is gearing up for a match to-night against Texas tonight at 7:30 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The Lady Aggies are currently tied for second place in the Southwest Conference, but a win would put them alone in first, ousting the Longhorns from the top spot.

The Longhorns are 18-3 on the year (5-0 in SWC) and ranked fourth in the nation. A&M is 13-8 overall and 3-1 in the conference.

Texas holds a 25-9 lead in the series. Dominating the Lady Aggies in recent years, the Longhorns have not lost to A&M since 1982.

The Aggies only loss in the SWC was to Houston.

Football's secret isn't in the heart, it's in the shoes

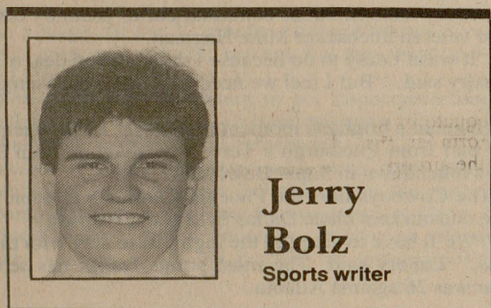
Have you ever noticed how much difference a team's uniform style can make in how it plays? In football, as in most sports, teams have several different-colored uniforms they use, depending on whether they are playing at home or away.

Some games a team plays great and the next game they come out and obviously are being held back by something.

Take the Dallas Cowboys. In past years, when the Cowboys were winning most of the time, you could count on their losses coming in games when they wore their dark blue jerseys.

I used to ask my Dad what color the opposing teams home jerseys were so I could figure in advance what Dallas would be wearing. That way I could figure out how good of a chance they had to win and I could brace myself early if it was a sure loss. I was probably one of the few 5-year-olds around that was thrilled when the Cowboys had a rare road game against a team with dark home jerseys.

Being an adamant Cowboy fan from that early age, I developed a keen awareness of the factors



Jerry Bolz
Sports writer

that controlled their won-loss record.

Playing in their home whites, and even playing on the road in white, Dallas was next to unbeatable. But put them in those top heavy, blue things, even Roger "The Dodger" Staubach rarely pulled 'em through.

The Cowboys moved like Dap on a cold day and scored about as much when wearing blue. I never quite figured out why, either.

I'm not superstitious at all, so my best guess is that it was because the dark blue absorbed more heat from the sun and wore the Cowboys down faster. That never explained the indoor or rainy-day games, though.

In college football, something besides the color of the jersey seems to play a big role in a team's success.

How about shoes?

Things really started going downhill in the 1970's when Billy "Whiteshoes" Johnson spaghetti-legged his way onto the National Football League scene with the Oilers. After that, everyone suddenly thought of the standard black cleats as outdated, and they had to have white shoes. From pro football to college and all the way to pee-wee league, the whiter the better.

The thing with white shoes on the football field is that they just remind me of the ones I had to wear as a little boy — the ones that matched my white three-prong belts. Come on, admit it. You had a pair too. They were just like your dad's.

And just when we get old enough to laugh about the goofy things we wore as youngsters, The NFL tosses out the good ol' sensible black cleats and falls for a fashion statement.

Fortunately, not everyone tossed the old blacks. At least at the college level, a few of the real classy teams held on to their integrity and stuck up for guys like ex-Bronco kicker Jim Turner who got out of pro football before he had to boot the ball with white shoes.

Teams like Southern Cal, Notre Dame, Michigan, Penn State and Alabama — the teams that win almost all the time — continued to wear black shoes. Ohio State nearly made the list but high-top red shoes don't quite match up with black, although it's a step in the right direction.

At first thought, you might be saying "This guy's gotta be joking." But take a look at the coaches these teams had when everyone else was tossing their players sparkling white shoes. USC's John Robinson — a consistently great

coach — battled it out every year with Notre Dames Ara Parseghian, who wasn't anyone to spit at.

Alabama had the greatest of all, Paul "Bear" Bryant, who led the Crimson Tide to six national titles in his tenure. Michigan has Bo Schemmeler and Penn State is lead by Joe Paterno, two more all-time greats.

These five led their squads onto the field every week ready to play football. And they looked like they were there to play ball, not to do a jig in the endzone.

Even though USC, Notre Dame and Alabama have different coaches now, the new ones have kept up the black shoe tradition and continue to win. All five are consistently in the Top 20, with Notre Dame and USC ranked No. 2 and No. 3, respectively, this season.

Sure, there are plenty of white-shoed teams that have spurts of greatness, with Miami and Oklahoma being the most notable.

Who knows, maybe the problem with the Southwest Conference is the color of their shoes.

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