

Friday, August 11, 1989

Slocum feeling no added pressure in first year as Ag football coach

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

R.C. Slocum scoffs at the idea he'll be faced with more pressure now that he is Texas A&M's head football coach instead of the Aggies' defensive coordinator.

"When it's fourth and goal and Bo Jackson is carrying the ball in the Cotton Bowl and I'm calling the play on defense, I don't know how you can get more pressure than that," Slocum said.

"When you're a defensive coordinator, you don't say to yourself 'I'm under pressure now but I'm saving 30 percent so when I get to be a head coach, I can really be under pressure.'"

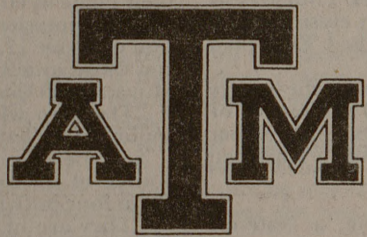
The Aggies went on to beat Auburn and Jackson, the Heisman Trophy winner in the 1986 Cotton Bowl. Slocum survived the pressure and now he's starting his first year as head coach.

Jackie Sherrill resigned last December during an NCAA investigation of the school's athletic program.

Slocum, an A&M assistant 16 of the past 17 years, got the job of keeping the Aggies in contention for the Southwest Conference title.

Three-fourths of one of the best college linebacking corps in the country is gone but linebacker Aaron Wallace and safety Gary Jones are back.

Wide receiver-returner Rod Harris is gone, taking with him eight school records. Running back Dar-



ren Lewis, the No. 2 rusher in the nation last season, is back.

So what does it all add up to for the 1989 Texas Aggies?

It means they'll once again figure in the SWC title race.

Slocum has designated Lance Pavlas as the starting quarterback and brought in Bob Toledo as offensive coordinator to give the Aggies a more balanced attack.

"I believe in a balanced multiple offense with numerous formations and motions," Toledo said. "I want to be able to run the ball efficiently with power and misdirection with an occasional trap, draw or option."

I also want to have the ability to throw quick passes, dropback passes, screens, sprints and bootlegs," Toledo said.

Slocum expects to be a successful replacement for Sherrill and he expects Pavlas to run the offense.

"Jackie did an outstanding job at A&M, there's a legacy there to live up to," Slocum said. "But the school will go on and all I can do is be R.C. Slocum."

Darren Lewis will still be the big threat in the Aggie backfield, but Slocum wants the passing game to be more effective.

That's where he hopes Pavlas, less than spectacular in his two previous seasons, can help.

He started against Alabama in last season's final game, completing 10 of 21 passes for 102 yards.

As a freshman, Pavlas played in nine games, including the Aggies' 35-10 defeat of Notre Dame in the 1987 Cotton Bowl.

Overall, he completed 41 of 83 passes for 451 yards and two touchdowns in his first season.

Pavlas will get the starting nod over injured Bucky Richardson, who will red-shirt this season. Pavlas will be backed up by Chris Osgood.

Osgood started four games for A&M in 1988, and is the team's top returning passer, completing 54-of-112 for 656 yards.

"He (Pavlas) reminds me of (Gary) Kubiak (former Aggie quarterback)," Slocum said. "There were times I wondered if he'd ever even played high school football but he became good football player and he's still playing for the Denver Broncos."

"Lance has similarities to Kubiak and I feel he's going to really help us this season. The offense doesn't depend solely on him making the play every time."

"He does have some help."

Lewis set or tied 13 school records last season and gained 1,672 yards, accounting for 38 percent of A&M's offense.

Lewis was second in the nation in rushing to Oklahoma State's Barry Sanders, the Heisman Trophy winner.

He already ranks seventh on A&M's career rushing list and owns eight school and two Southwest Conference records.

The Aggies lost linebackers John Roper, Dana Bastiste and Adam Bob, but a strong secondary, headed by Jones and cornerback Mickey Washington, should help pick up the slack.

Wallace finished third on the team in total tackles with 85, while posting 14½ sacks. He needs six sacks to break Jacob Green's record of 37.

Washington, entering his second season as a full-time starter, lead the team with four interceptions in 1988 and was second in the SWC with 10 passes broken up.

Jones is regarded as one of the hardest hitters in the conference, a title earned after knocking out Arkansas' Quinn Grovey and TCU's Scott Ankrum in consecutive games.

He was the team's No. 7 tackler in 1988 as a junior with 62, including 48 solo stops.

The Aggies have non-conference games against Louisiana State in College Station and at Washington before opening SWC play Sept. 16 against Texas Christian.

Dravecky completes comeback with win

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Dave Dravecky made it all the way back Thursday.

The left-hander, back from cancer surgery last October, took a one-hit shutout into the eighth inning as San Francisco hung on to beat Cincinnati 4-3.

Dravecky even reached base twice on walks.

The man who was told less than a year ago he would never pitch again got standing ovations as he walked onto the field, warmed up and was introduced at Candlestick Park. He thanked the crowd each time with a tip of his cap.

The start against Cincinnati was his first major league appearance since May 1988 and one that only Dravecky believed he could make.

After retiring the side in order on nine pitches, he strode off to another ovation and was in complete command until the eighth, giving up only a double to Joel Youngblood in the second and a two-out walk to Joe Oliver in the fifth.

In the eighth, Dravecky gave up four hits, including a three-run homer to Luis Quinones, walked one and struck out five.

"It's a special event," said Giants reliever Steve Bedrosian. "It's David's day. We're all pulling for him, but whatever he does is OK. It's remarkable what he's done."

Even the opposition thought so.

"You have to appreciate what he's done, physically and mentally," said Reds Manager Pete Rose. "You have to pat him on the back — and hope he gets beat today."

That was before Dravecky's performance, which earned him two thunderous curtain calls after was removed for Bedrosian in the ninth.

Dravecky said for a while he believed doctors who said his career was over after they removed a huge chunk of cancerous muscle from his left bicep.

"I remember laying on my couch thinking that maybe I wasn't going to pitch ever again," Dravecky said.

"I remember watching the last out of the World Series, and I saw Orel Hershiser take that moment to give thanks to the Lord, and then the celebration. And I thought for the first time that I might never get the opportunity to do that again."

"That was an extremely vulnerable time for me," he said. "But from that moment on, my wife, Jan, and I took the attitude that we were going to work as hard as we possibly could to come back."

Immediately following the surgery near his native Youngstown, Ohio, rehabilitation was painfully slow.

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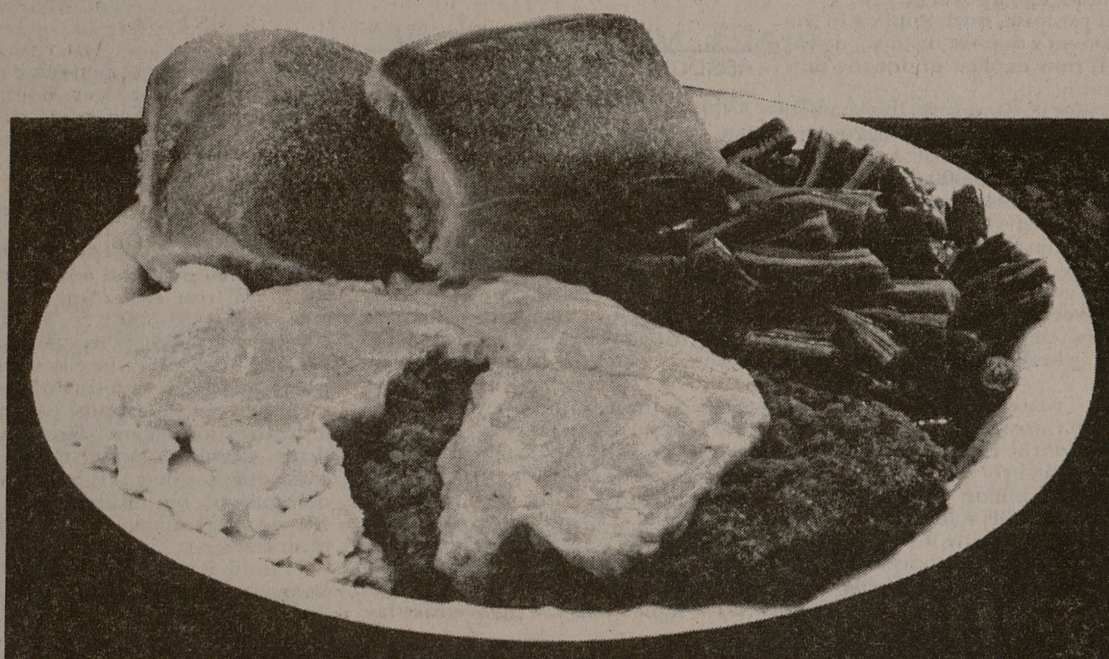
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