

Continued from page 13)

Pavlas

ason, a 30-10 Aggie loss to Ala-

ma. Finally having the coaching staff's confidence in him has given Pavlas, who has been criticized in the past by the press for lacking confidence in himself, a new lease on his playing life.

"It's a great opportunity for me and it gives me a lot of confidence that they gave me the starting job going into the first game," Pavlas said Tuesday. "I know the players and coaches believe that I can get the job done. I'm ready to go, ready for the challenge and ready to get the job done."

Pavlas, who said he has had his ups and downs in his career but has learned from them, sees the LSU game as almost crucial.

"This first game is very important for both me and the team," he said. "We've been known in the past as a slow-starting team, not winning the first opening games. But we have a new coaching staff now and we'd like to start a new tradition and win that first game."

Winning that first game is something the Aggies haven't been able to do this decade. Since former coach Jackie Sherrill arrived at A&M in 1982, the school's record in season openers is 1-6, including back-to-back losses to LSU in 1986 and 1987.

In three games this decade, A&M has been outscored by LSU 79-20.

"It's hard to explain why we've had the problems we've had," Pavlas said. "You can make excuses, but I think we didn't perform on the same days. We worked really hard in the spring and in the summer. We're prepared for a good game and we'll have one."

Good games are something many believe Pavlas needs plenty of this season to keep his job. Reports out of two-a-day practices in August had coaches saying Richardson was recovering from reconstructive knee surgery sooner than expected, and that he may return by midseason.

Pavlas isn't worried of the possibility of Richardson's return or the pressure of having to perform well this season.

"I'm not really looking at the long-term approach like that," he said. "I'm just taking it one week at a time. My goals are the same as our team goals. If we're back in the Cotton Bowl this year, if I'm the quarterback and if I'm consistent and have played well during the season, I'm going to be happy."

Being happy will be easier this year than seasons past. Pavlas married his high school sweetheart in July and now lives off campus. He said he has to budget his time more now than in the past but is enjoying marriage, with one exception.

"It's hard living off campus, especially with the parking situation," Pavlas said. "Parking (on campus) is a tough way to start your day off right there."

A&M's switch to a pass-oriented offense might hurt junior running back Darren Lewis' Heisman Trophy chances. The 6-foot, 222-pound Lewis is the nation's top returning rusher, who was second last year only to Heisman winner Barry Sanders. Pavlas, however, thinks the new offensive scheme might just help him win the award.

"We're still going to be a run-oriented team," Pavlas said. "With a great back like Darren Lewis I think it would be smart to utilize the running game. We're going to open up even more running holes with the use of the pass. We're going to use more possession-type passes and we're also going to use more of Darren's receiving skills."

"We'll get the ball to him many different ways to show his different talents. (The new offense) will only enhance his chances for the Heisman."

That new offense undoubtedly will also set Pavlas up for unfavorable comparisons with A&M's last great passing quarterback. The two-time All-SWC quarterback who holds nine school passing records — Kevin Murray.

"You can make comparisons, but I try not to worry about that anymore," Pavlas said. "I have to be my own quarterback. I'm concerned about going out there, being consis-



Photo by Jay Janner

Starting quarterback Lance Pavlas will attempt to lead the Aggies into the Top 25. A&M opens Saturday against LSU.

(Continued from page 13)

LSU

has opened past seasons playing powerhouses such as LSU, Nebraska and Oklahoma State. This year's schedule won't be any easier as the Aggies open against LSU and then travel to Seattle, Wash. to play the University of Washington, the Pac-10's choice for conference champions this year.

"These tough non-conference games will help prepare us for the Southwest Conference," Slocum said in his weekly press conference Tuesday. "We'll be tested early and I think it has helped our teams the past few seasons."

"We won't build up any false illusions by whipping easy opponents."

Pegging the LSU contest as a tough non-conference game is no exaggeration. LSU comes to Kyle Field ranked seventh in the Associated Press' preseason Top 25 Poll. The Aggies, though picked by the Southwest Conference sportswriters

McEnroe upset by virtual unknown at U.S. Open

NEW YORK (AP) — Paul Haarhuis, ranked 115th and forced to win three matches just to qualify for his first U.S. Open, sent four-time champion and fourth-seeded John McEnroe out in the second round Wednesday night in a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 shocker.

Haarhuis' victory capped a day of splendid tennis at the Open as three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker struggled to survive a five-set match and top-seeded Ivan Lendl won his first match.

"It's one thing if the guy plays really well," said an annoyed McEnroe. "It's harder to take if I play as

and broadcasters to finish in the top spot in the SWC and return to the Cotton Bowl, failed to crack the polls.

To add insult to injury, Arkansas will enter the season ranked tenth while Houston is 21st.

Slocum, concerned by A&M's slow starts of past seasons, has instituted certain changes in the Aggies' practice schedule to try and keep the team physically and mentally fresh at the season opener.

Instead of continuing former coach Sherrill's strict regimen of practice, a quick dinner and then a long, cumbersome team meetings, Slocum has allowed his players to spend a little more time relaxing and unwinding between practice and meetings.

He hopes this will add to the Aggies' performance in the first half of the season and in their opener against LSU.

Overall, the Aggies are 66-25-3 in openers despite dropping their last four season openers.

Slocum hopes to reverse that trend and get the Aggies back

poorly as I did. This is a tough one to take."

McEnroe, who lost in the semifinals at Wimbledon and hoped to crown a year of hard work by coming back to full strength at the Open, was plainly disgusted with himself.

"I worked to get to No. 4 in the world, then to lose to a guy I hadn't seen play before is pretty bad," he said. "I expected more from myself."

Haarhuis, 22, who is ranked third in the Netherlands and didn't even qualify for his country's Davis Cup team, was elated to be playing here at all, much less to beat McEnroe on his home turf.

Rangers blow 3-1 lead, Twins roll on to victory

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — It was one of those innings the Minnesota Twins will long remember but one Texas relief ace Jeff Russell would just as soon forget.

"Innings like that don't happen very often against a guy like Russell," said Kirby Puckett, whose two-run single in the bottom of the eighth keyed a six-run inning en route to a 7-3 victory Wednesday night.

Puckett's single, his second hit of the night, erased a 3-1 Rangers lead and was the first of four hits off Russell, who was seeking his 31st save.

TEXAS Rangers

Brian Harper followed with a single to score Puckett with the go-ahead run and pinch-hitter John Moses doubled home two more as the inning crumbled for Russell.

"I didn't have it tonight," said Russell, who took over for loser Mike Jeffcoat, 7-6, with two on and outs in the eighth. "For some reason I didn't feel good today, I don't know why. It wasn't in the horizon. I came to the ballpark and forgot my wallet. It was just one of those days."

For Russell it was only his sixth save opportunity in 36 chances.

"Every night can't be your night," said Puckett, who also doubled in the fourth for his 59th multi-hit game, tops in the majors. "He'll probably come out tomorrow night and be a old self."

"Anytime you come back against a

guy like Russell you've got to feel real fortunate," added Twins' manager Tom Kelly. "It was a nice inning, and an exciting game."

Rangers starter Mike Jeffcoat took a 3-1 lead into the inning, but gave up a double to rookie Chip Hale and a single to Al Newman before leaving in favor of Russell.

Hale and Newman advanced on a Dan Gladden sacrifice and Puckett then singled off Russell to tie the score 3-3.

Brian Harper followed with a single to score Puckett with the go-ahead run. Russell then intentionally walked Kent Hrbek, and got the next batter on a groundout. But Moses, hitting for Carmello Castillo, doubled to the right-center field gap to score Harper and Hrbek.

Greg Gagne followed with an infield single, his third hit of the game, to score Moses and chase Russell, who was replaced by Ken Rogers.

The win went to rookie Mike Dyer, 3-3, who pitched the first eight innings, allowing eight hits and striking out six. Juan Berenguer and Jeff Reardon finished up, with Reardon recording his 27th save.

Dyer was a last-minute starter, replacing Allan Anderson, who became ill before the game.

Geno Petralli, who had just two hits in 14 at-bats in his previous six games, knocked in all three Texas runs with a bases-loaded double in the fourth inning off Dyer.

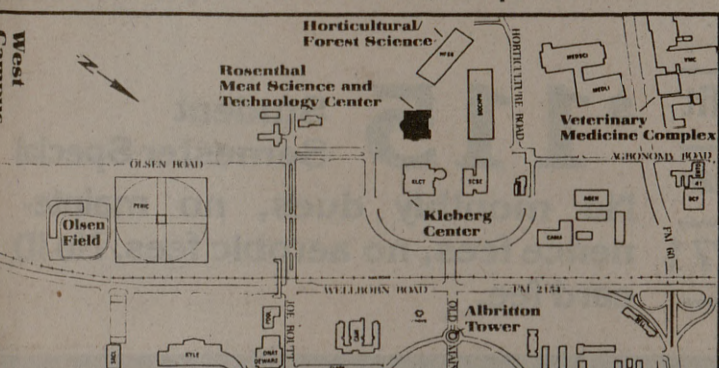
With one out, Ruben Sierra singled and took third on a double by Julio Franco, his second double of the game. Rick Leach was hit by a pitch and after Dyer struck out Pete Incaviglia, Petralli doubled to give the Rangers a 3-0 lead.

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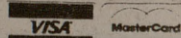
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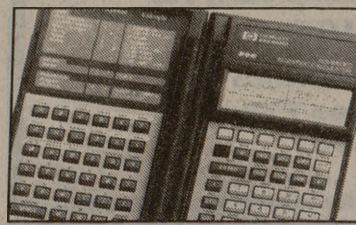


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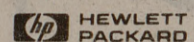


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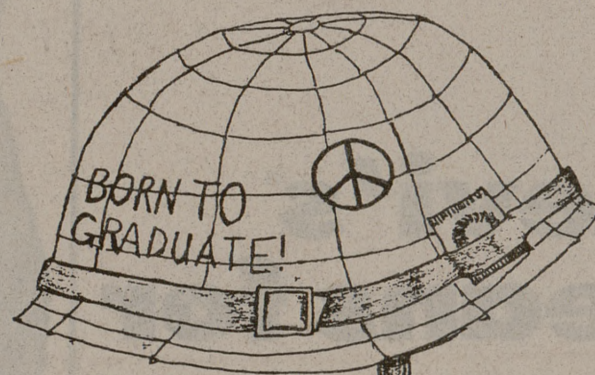
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