

Wallace

(Continued from page 9)

made the big plays when needed. LSU was limited to just 204 yards of total offense: 168 yards passing on 17 completions and only 36 yards rushing on 31 carries — a 1.1 average.

Wallace was the Aggies' leading tackler, and his three sacks against Hodson have placed him just three away from being the school's all-time leader.

"It's an important accomplishment," he said. "I'd rather set it here, but I'll probably do it in Washington. I'll break it when it comes. I've got my own goals to set, and if I can reach those goals I'll be happy."

Wallace, who has 34.5 sacks in his career, said he wants at least 45 by the time he leaves A&M. If he doesn't break the record in Washington this weekend, he'd have an opportunity to do it next week in front of his family in Fort Worth.

Being defensive captain and pursuing career sack records at A&M was something Wallace, as a young linebacker at Dallas Roosevelt in 1984, never even dreamed about. In fact, he wound up at A&M almost by mistake.

A&M coaches were at a Roosevelt-Dallas Carter game only because they were recruiting 6-6, 245-pound defensive end Richmond Webb. During the game, however, they watched the young linebacker make a spectacular play that made a lasting impression.

Wallace hit the Carter quarterback just as he released the ball to former Aggie teammate receiver Rod Harris.

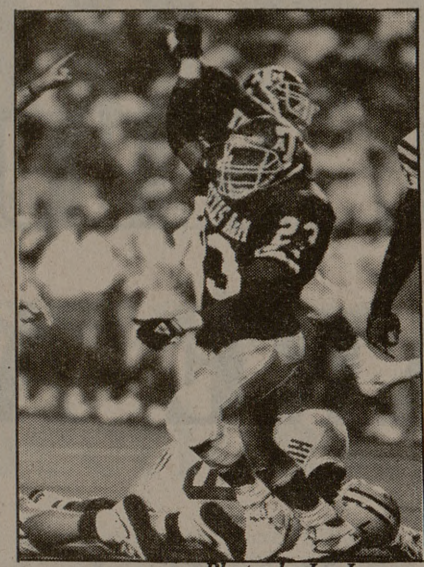
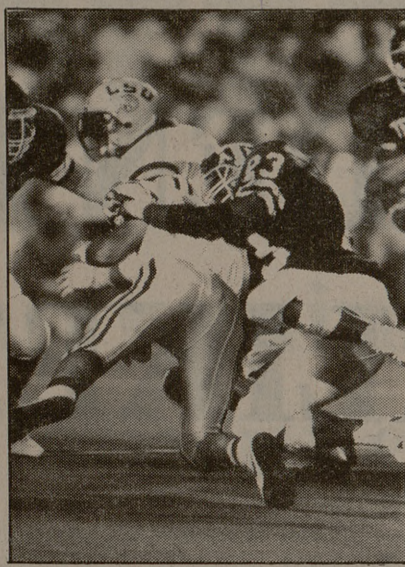
Harris had an open field in front of him and the end zone 60 yards away, but Wallace got up and chased him the length of the field, finally catching up with him close to the two-yard line.

Even after being recruited by A&M, Wallace still almost chose hometown Southern Methodist to play college football.

He didn't make his mind up until signing day, with an SMU recruiter



Aaron Wallace takes down QB Tommy Hodson for his second sack against LSU.



Photos by Jay Janner

in one office and then-Aggie Assistant Coach R.C. Slocum in another.

When he arrived at A&M, coaches were concerned about his lack of size and techniques, but Wallace has worked hard since then to become the team's top linebacker and have the reputation of making the big play at the right time.

In his first collegiate play from scrimmage in 1986, Wallace was inserted into a third-and-long situation, and responded with his first career sack — ironically against Hodson at LSU.

He hasn't looked back since. Wallace soon earned recognition as being half, along with linebacker John Roper, of the Blitz Brothers, a blitzing tandem who terrorized quarterbacks en route to leading defenses that were nationally ranked.

Roper, the 1987 Southwest Conference Defensive Player of the Year, dominated the headlines on the Aggie defense. He was louder, larger and flashier than Wallace, often hiding behind mirrored sunglasses and not afraid to speak his mind.

Wallace always was the quiet one. Roper and former A&M linebacker Dana Batiste used to tell him that he needed to show more emotion on the playing field, but that's not Wal-

lace's style. Consequently, he didn't get as much publicity as Roper.

But Roper's gone now, and Wallace is ready to emerge into his own as one of the best linebackers in the country.

Wallace's name has been mentioned as a candidate for the Butkus Award, an annual award given to the top linebacker or defensive end in the nation.

Wallace is in good company, as others being considered for the trophy are Percy Snow of Michigan State, Lamar Lathon of Houston, James Francis of Baylor, Terry Wooden of Syracuse and Darrick Brownlow of Illinois.

A certain high NFL draft choice, Wallace almost decided to forego his senior year and enter the professional ranks a year early. He decided to stay, but found it difficult to watch the rest of the other starting A&M linebackers from last year get drafted: Roper by Chicago, Batiste by Miami and Adam Bob by the New York Jets.

He now thinks he made the right choice to finish his degree, but he plays this season with one eye on opposing quarterbacks, the other on the 1990 NFL Draft. Wallace said he'd prefer to play on a team on the West Coast.

Professional careers and large contracts will have to wait, though, as Wallace's main goal this year is to guide A&M's young defense through the rough waters of the early season.

He remains hopeful for his inexperienced linebackers — seniors Jeroy Robinson and John Cooper and junior William Thomas — and is proud of their first performance against LSU.

"These guys this year have something to prove," Wallace said. "They're hungry, trying to make a name for themselves. If we just keep the same tempo from the way we played last week, we're going to be good."

"We're going to start doing a lot of work. We're just going to go out, get the game plan for this week and go to Washington with the same attitude."

One week at a time. That's all Wallace has done during his career at A&M. Linebackers come and go, but Wallace will be remembered as one of the greatest the school has had.

And when he begins to make his mark in the NFL next season, Wallace will leave his own legacy behind here — at least until some new face emerges from his shadow.

Cheeks confident young Spurs for real

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — With the shock of being traded from Philadelphia behind him, Maurice Cheeks said Tuesday he is looking ahead to his role as a leader with the young San Antonio Spurs.

Cheeks, a guard who holds the NBA career record in steals with 1,942 and is 11th in assists with 6,212, said he can adjust to a leadership role.

"I think the last couple of years I was the oldest one on the (76ers) team," Cheeks said after a news conference. "Now, maybe I have a few years on a few guys."

Along with guard David Wingate and center Chris Welp, Cheeks was traded last week for guard Johnny Dawkins and forward Jay Vincent.

The three new Spurs were to undergo physicals Wednesday. The trade is contingent on the players' passing the exams.

Cheeks, an 11-year veteran who

turns 33 on Friday, wouldn't guarantee a playoff appearance this season. But he said the roster — which includes just three returning players from last year — looked promising.

"I know they have a new team — a new nucleus," he said.

"After a couple of days of reviewing the personnel, I see good possibilities," Cheeks said, adding that it sometimes "takes a while for a team to gel."

Asked how many years he'll continue playing, Cheeks joked, "If you're on a winning team, you never know how long you can play." He added: "I have plenty of time left. I haven't set a timetable for retirement."

The Spurs and 76ers announced the trade Aug. 27 before Cheeks was told about it. But the four-time All-Star said he has no hard feelings for

Philadelphia or former coach Jim Lynam.

"I tried to sympathize with him (Lynam) after it all subsided," Cheeks said. "I was rather disappointed, to say the least, about the way it was handled."

Cheeks, Wingate and Welp join a Spurs squad that Coach Larry Brown has said is still too young.

Sean Elliott, David Robinson and Jens-Uwe Gordon are rookies, Zarko Paspalj will be playing his first year in the NBA and Vernon Maxwell, Willie Anderson and Welp are second-year players. Wingate is a third-year player.

Other Spurs changes in the off-season included the acquisition of center Caldwell Jones, 39, from the free agent market. The Spurs also acquired All-Star forward Terry Cummings, 28, from Milwaukee for Alvin Robertson and Greg Anderson.

Wingate, who appeared in only 33 games last season because of knee problems, said his injury is healing. He played in a California league this summer.

Welp also mentioned his play in California during the summer — against future teammate David Robinson. "Yes, he had 28 points in the first game," Welp said with a laugh.

Spurs chairman Red McCombs said Tuesday the team had been eyeing Wingate and Welp, but Cheeks was the key to the trade.

Assistant coach Gregg Popovich described Cheeks as a prototype point guard. "He's the head that we now have to go with the body," Popovich said.

Cheeks was the last remaining player from the 76ers' 1983 championship team. He averaged 12.2 points per game in 11 seasons with the 76ers.

Astros come from behind to beat Dodgers on Glenn Wilson's eighth inning single

HOUSTON (AP) — Glenn Wilson singled with two outs in the eighth inning for the winning run as Houston came from behind to beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 3-2 Tuesday night in a game critical to the Astros' chances in the National League West.

The victory, only the Astros' fourth in 14 games, enabled Houston to remain tied with San Diego for second place and to move within six games of division-leading San Francisco. The Giants lost to Cincinnati.

Trailing 2-0, Gerald Young started the rally when he reached on



Pennington, giving up two runs on three hits.

a force out. Craig Biggio doubled home Young and scored on a single by Glenn Davis, with Davis going to second on the throw to the plate. Wilson then lined his single to center against Alejandro Pena.

Juan Agosto, 4-5, was the winner with two innings of scoreless relief. Larry Andersen struck out the side in the ninth for his third save.

The win was Houston's 31st one-run victory. That figure leads the major leagues.

Pena, 3-3, went two-thirds of an

inning, giving up two runs on three hits.

Ramon Martinez pitched seven innings, giving up five hits, striking out four and walking three.

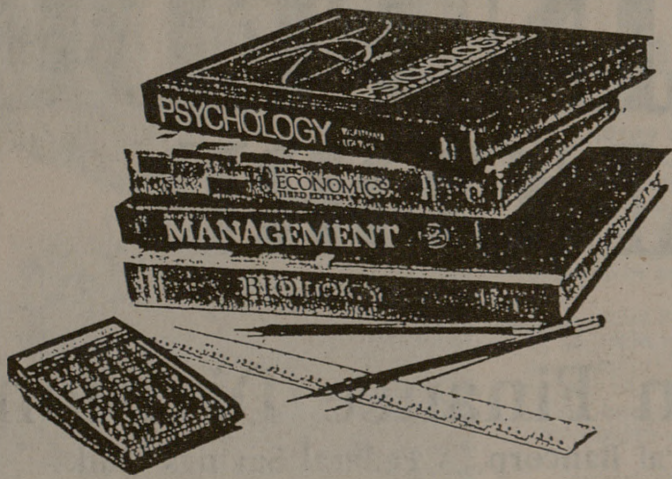
Rick Rhoden went six innings for Houston, giving up two runs on six hits while striking out two and walking one.

Los Angeles took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Willie Randolph led off with a double down the right field line. One out later, Mike Marshall singled to right, driving in Randolph.

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