The Battalion SPORTS

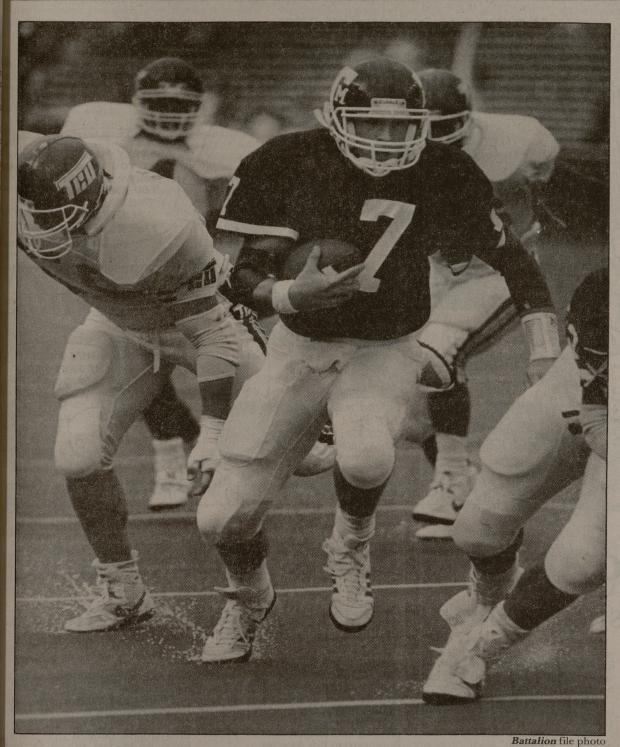
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Aggie quarterback Bucky Richardson hurdles a TCU defender in last year's game.

Richardson waiting... Aggie QB hopes to regain starting form

By Richard Tijerina

Of The Battalion Staff

PART TWO OF TWO

With Bucky Richardson as the starting quarterback, Texas A&M went 13-2, including a Southwest Conference championship and a Cotton Bowl victory.

Aggie fans held their breath at his style of play — often keeping the ball himself and either hurdling defenders or running through them on his way to the endzone. He was the proven winner and, for a short time, on top of the world.

But now he's A&M's forgotten quarterback.

Richardson suffered a severe left knee injury in the Texas game last November, and his resulting knee surgery caused A&M coaches to consider redshirting him for the 1989 season.

In the spring, Coach R.C. Slocum hired Offensive Coordinator Bob Toledo from Oregon. Toledo revamped the Aggie offense, eliminating last year's big-option attack in favor of a new, pass-oriented approach.

approach. Strong-armed junior Lance Pavlas was given the starting job in the spring and he has performed well this season — completing 60 percent of his passes for 496 yards and one touchdown. He has led the Aggies to a 2-1 record and the No. 21 ranking in the Associated Press' Top 25 Poll.

Last year, Richardson was looking forward to guiding A&M back to the Cotton Bowl in 1989. Now he's been forced to sit on the sidelines and watch his team play under a new coach.

During two-a-day practices in August, coaches were impressed with the progress Richardson had been making after surgery. They hinted he might be able to see playing time by mid-season. Richardson, who said that his

knee is about 80 percent recovered from surgery, said he is willing to sit and wait for now.

"There's a chance (that I'll come back)," Richardson said. "I'm going to do whatever Coach Slocum wants me to do. He's been around the game and around players longer than I have, so I'm going to leave it

up to him." However, Slocum has said that he doesn't want A&M to become an option team. He's going to stick with the pass this year. That leaves Richardson in a precarious position. He's known for his running, not passing.

"m going to do whatever Coach Slocum wants me to do. . . I'm going to leave it up to him."

- Bucky Richardson, Aggie quarterback

In his collegiate career, Richardson has completed 43 percent of his passes for 700 yards. He has thrown five interceptions and only two touchdowns. No one knows if Richardson would be able to step into the new pass-oriented offense.

new pass-oriented offense. "If I were to go in there I'm sure Coach Slocum would run more plays to suit my style," Richardson said. "I think I can throw the ball. I'm ready to accept the challenge of learning this new offense."

Toledo is A&M's third offensive coordinator in three years. The winds of change have swept across Aggieland in 1989, bringing in new coaches, players and techniques. No change from last year has been larger than A&M's new head coach. Jackie Sherrill resigned last December amid rumors of scandal in the athletic department. Slocum was immediately named his successor.

A&M was placed on probation by the NCAA last year, making it impossible for them to participate in any bowl games. The Aggies suffered through a disappointing 7-5 season, and Richardson said the controversy was a major factor in the team's performance. "There was so much turmoil last

"There was so much turmoil last year that everybody was thinking about everything else but football," he said. "We knew we couldn't go to the Cotton Bowl and that seems to take a little heart out of you. When it comes down to it, when you don't have the heart to get it done, you won't do it.

"But this year is a lot more concentrated on football and on winning. All the smoke's cleared and we're ready to go back to Dallas."

we're ready to go back to Dallas." Dallas. The Aggies have been to the Cotton Bowl three of the last four years, and if they make a return trip in 1989, they most likely will be led by Pavlas — not the injured Richardson.

Although Pavlas holds the position he had for the last year and a half, Richardson remains confident the junior can lead the team to victory.

"I think (Pavlas has) done real well," Richardson said. "He knows the offense and has been making the big plays. That's what a quarterback has to do to lead a team to a Cotton Bowl or a championship."

Bowl or a championship." Richardson should know — he's been involved in his fair share of big plays over the past two years. His two most memorable moments of his college career are the 82-yard touchdown run against Southern Mississippi in his first game

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When it's the Cowboys and the Redskins, anything's possible

Not so long ago, in a land not so far orth, vast bands of cowboys and indians ought bloody battles. Cowboys in white hat struggled with red-skinned savages for he truly important things in life. Pride and playoff spots. Forget about the Cowboy-Steeler Super

Forget about the Cowboy-Steeler Super owls. Forget about Chicago-Detroit. The Dallas vs. Washington rivalry is the

The Steeler Super Bowls were hyped more, but the Redskin matchups have been more numerous and just as intense. Dallas ruled the NFC in the 1970s. Their dominance was evidenced by their five Super Bowl appearances in the decade.



Tony Dorsett was the most successful NFC runner of the decade. Averaging almost five yards per carry, he ran around The Redskin blueprint for success was simple: Behind a line that was often mistaken for a mountain range, John Riggins ran over the defense. When Riggins occasionally failed to pick up the first down, the latest Redskins' quarterback got it via the airways.

Joe Theisman, Jay Schroeder, and Doug Williams took turns leading the Skins to the the playoffs in the 1980s. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the

the playoffs in the 1980s. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the winner of the Dallas-Washington wars usually decided who would represent the NFC East in the playoffs.

In 1982, they even met in the NFC

Championship game. Remember the 1983 season opener? The Skins grabbed a 23-3 halftime lead, but the Washington win, and the Skins went on to the Super Bowl.

the Super Bowl. But, there will be no such excitement this year. The game in Dallas this Sunday will decide who takes last place in the division, not first.

Both teams are 0-2, and the only consolation is that one team will leave the stadium with a 1-2 record.

Like all dynasties, those in Dallas and Washington crumbled. Last year the Skins' running game was nonexistant, and they didn't make the playoffs.

didn't make the playoffs. Dallas finally hit bottom with a 3-13 record, luckily losing enough games to get

Troy Aikman. But both teams have shown flashes of rushing performance by Gerald Riggs, and lost 42-37 to the Eagles. The first week of the season, Washington

lost a heartbreaker to the Giants on a lastsecond field goal.

The Skins have played well offensively, but have allowed 69 points in their two games. However, the Skins' opponents both had quality offenses. Dallas won't enjoy the same success.

The Skins are picked to win by four points, but it won't be that close.

Washington had success rushing against the Giants and Eagles. Dallas couldn't stop a tackling dummy

against New Orleans. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that

The Cowboys won in the air, on the ground, and with bruising defense. Roger Staubach picked defenses apart with pinpoint passes and led the Pokes to many miraculous comebacks. The Doomsday Defense crushed quarterbacks like Dixie cups.

almost five yards per carry, he ran around defenses with the moves of a cat and the speed of a rabbit.

Washington was almost as dominant in the 1980s. The Redskins won the Super Bowl twice in their three appearances. Skins grabbed a 23-3 halftime lead, but the Pokes came back to win 31-30. How about the 1987 "scab" game? Dallas

How about the 1987 "scab" game? Dallas played half of their starters against a Washington team made up completely of replacements. The result was a convincing competency this season. Dallas looked good in the first half last week against Atlanta, but blew a 21-10 lead.

Washington played well, but also blew a big halftime lead last week. After taking a 37-14 lead, the Skins wasted a 221-yard the Skins will shove the ball right down the Cowboys' throats. Unless Riggs breaks a leg and Aikman eludes Dexter Manley all day, it's gonna get ugly.

Still, it's the Cowboy-Redskin game. Expect the unexpected.

