

Slocum wary of Cougars

Houston's Run-and-Shoot next for Ags

By Richard Tijerina

Of The Battalion Staff

Texas A&M Coach R.C. Slocum and his football team are playing the waiting game.

After last week's 27-24 loss to Texas Tech, A&M finds itself with a 1-1 Southwest Conference record and their backs against the wall. The team can ill afford to drop another conference game if it wants to stay in the race for the Cotton Bowl.

But on Saturday A&M must face No. 8 Houston, whose explosive offense has been scoring almost as many points this year as A&M running back Darren Lewis has been averaging rushing yards per game in 1989.

For Slocum, this week's game against the Cougars almost has been like waiting for a spanking.

"It's kind of like when you were a little kid and you go somewhere with your mother and you cut up or something, and she tells you when your father gets home you're going to get a spanking," Slocum said Tuesday at his weekly press conference. "You sit around two or three hours, just wishing he'd get home so you can get this thing over with."

"So we've been waiting here for a while and now we want to at least just find out how bad it's going to be."

If Houston's previous games this season are any indication, the game

this weekend at Kyle Field could be very bad.

The Cougars are averaging 59 points a game and allowing opposing teams an average of only six points. The Cougars have amassed over 2,500 yards of total offense this year.

In contrast, the Aggies are averaging 26.3 points a game in 1989, while their opponents are averaging 16.3 points. The Aggies have 1,830 total offensive yards in 1989.

UH has been walking, make that throwing, over its opponents all year. Andre Ware, Houston's quarterback and Heisman Trophy candidate, has yet to play in the fourth quarter of any game this season. Coaches take him out earlier because the games get out of reach so soon.

It is UH's explosive offense, called the Run-and-Shoot, that has Slocum worried.

"We're facing a tremendous task here this week and we have no time to build up any momentum," he said. "We'll be severely tested this weekend. Offensively, they look to me as possibly the most explosive team I've ever seen."

Ware will be the key on Saturday. A&M must pressure the quarterback like it did last year in the Aggies' 30-16 win in the Astrodome. If the defense can't confuse him, then it will be a long day for Slocum's team.

"None of these other (quarterbacks) we've played are as good as

Ware is," Slocum said. "He's an exceptional talent. Ware can avoid the pressure. He's a major threat when he's scrambling."

Last year, A&M had an experienced defense that revolved around a strong group of linebackers. However, this year's unit is young and inexperienced. And Slocum can't be encouraged any after seeing the game films from last week's UH-Baylor game, in which the Cougars humiliated Baylor's nationally top-ranked pass defense 66-10.

"Going into the season, without question you would've had to say Baylor's got a better defense than we have," Slocum said. "When they're demolished like they were last week, it's really a cause for concern to us."

Ware passed for 404 yards against the Bears.

Slocum knows what his young Aggie defense is in for.

"It's real scary," Slocum said. "They're (defense) going to have to grow up in a hurry. It's not one of those games where you're wondering how much they're going to throw. They're going to throw it just about every down."

"Just about everyone around expects us to get drilled this week, so it's one of those things where you just go in and say, 'We're going to find out.'"

One of the few things Slocum is See Slocum/Page 9

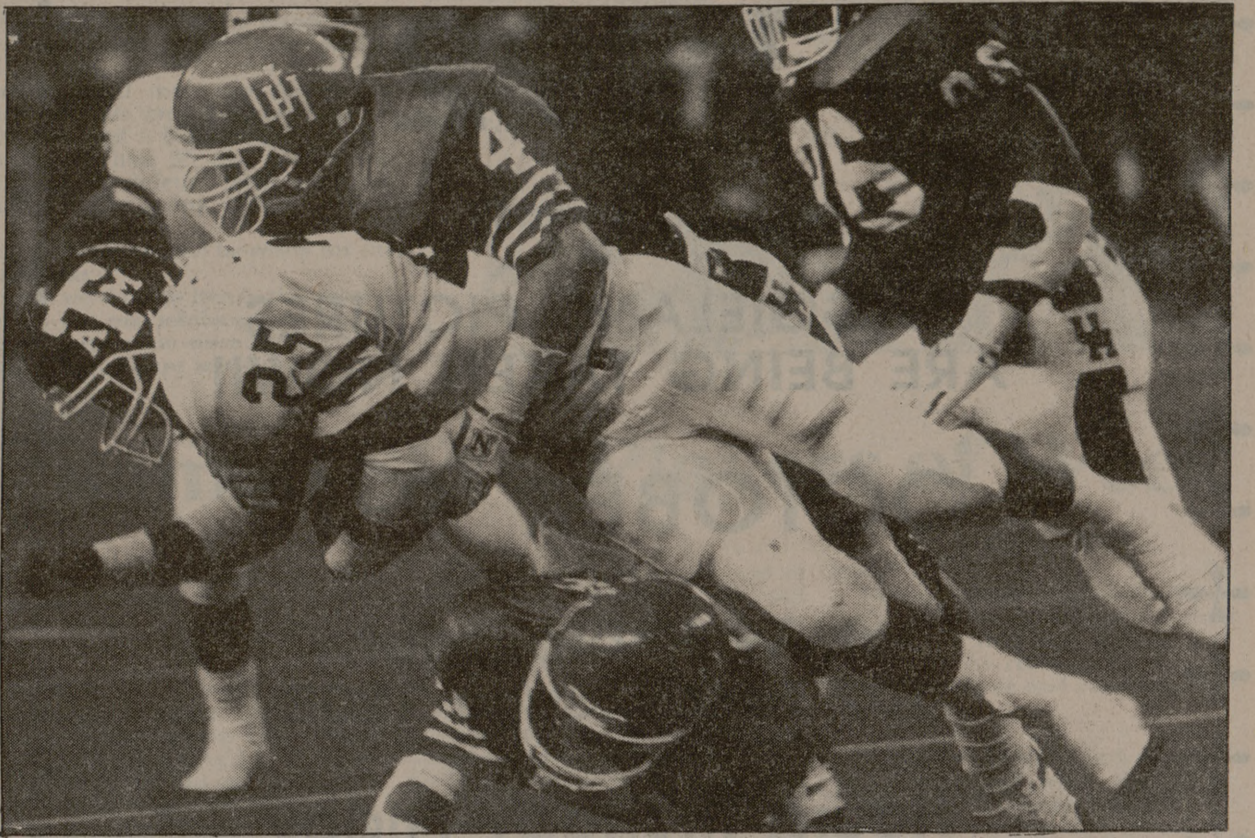


Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Darren Lewis will need to find the form he had last year against Houston if the Aggies hope to make a game of it this weekend. Last year

he gained 200 yards on 40 carries as Texas A&M downed the Cougars 30-16. The game is 2 p.m. Saturday at Kyle Field.

Jinxes, shminxes! Lucky charms work, but not t.u. lucky charms

Baseball players have unique and diverse rituals they undertake to keep their good luck flowing.

They wear the same clothes, deny themselves pleasures of the flesh, carry lucky charms and do just about anything to keep from deviating from the pattern they feel is part of keeping a streak alive.

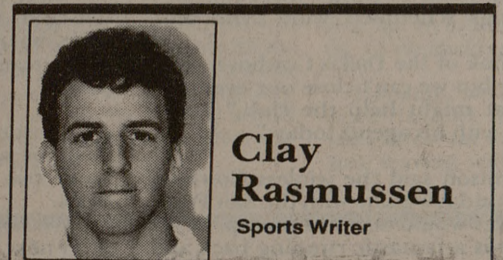
Football coaches and their teams are a little more subtle, but they too are guilty of relying a bit too much on superstition.

Andre Ware, quarterback for the Houston Cougars, wears the same shirt he has worn since his high-school playing days under his Cougar uniform.

College and pro teams swear that playing in some stadiums is bad luck.

Ask the Aggie football team if this is true about the "Black Hole" in Lubbock.

The Aggies have been unable to win in Jones Stadium since 1985 and the Houston Cougars have been unable to beat the Aggies on Kyle Field since 1979.



Clay Rasmussen
Sports Writer

Do you think the Cougs are worried? But by far, the most superstitious people are sports writers.

A group of us (loyal Aggie sports people) huddled around the television Sunday, intent on the game. I was aware of the hard times that had befallen the Aggies on numerous occasions at Jones Stadium and was well aware of what the Red Raiders were capable of there.

"Don't worry," the rest of the group said as the Aggies went up 7-0. "There's no way Tech is going to beat us."

I told them to hush and crossed myself. "You're getting all worked up for nothing," they said when the Aggies went into the half up 10-7. "There's no way Tech is going to beat us."

Angrily, I asked them if they knew what they were doing.

"You guys are jinxing the Aggies," I said. They accused me of being paranoid and pessimistic.

Non-sports people just don't understand. Going into the fourth quarter, the Aggies took a commanding 24-14 lead, but I was still being cautious. After all, there was still over 10 minutes left in the game.

"Quit worrying," they screamed. "You're such a worry wart! The Aggies have got it all sewn up. There's no way Tech's going to beat us!"

That's all it took.

A fumbled punt reception by A&M and a quick drive by Tech pulled the score closer. Tech was now just four points behind.

I looked right and left and saw concern. "There's only five minutes left," they said nervously. "I don't think there's any way Tech can beat us, is there?"

I shook my head. I knew it was too late. After a short punt, Tech got the ball and began to drive downfield. Then the sports rituals came into play.

"Sit on the floor, sit on the floor," one of our observers said. "My mother's a Texas fan and everytime the Longhorns are behind we all sit on the floor and they win."

I should have seen the problem with that logic right away.

After all, why would a proven t.u. luck device work for the Aggies?

I was superstitious and also panicky, so what the heck? We all sat on the floor. And I must admit, it seemed to work. The first play after we held our "Sit On

the Floor Vigil," the Aggies sacked Tech's quarterback and dislodged the ball. The fact that the officials ruled the play dead before the fumble was an ominous sign, but I still had faith in the floor sitting ritual.

On the next play, the Aggies again sacked Tech's quarterback and it looked like the curtain was about to drop on any Tech comeback.

"See, I told you," the t.u. legacy said. "It always works for the Longhorns."

I stood up. "Oh great! Do you know what you just did?" I screamed.

At that moment, fate and t.u. laughed (not to mention more than 50,000 Tech fans).

Tech threw a 28-yard pass and sealed A&M's fate.

Blame shifted to me for standing up, and I in turn blamed them for using a t.u. ritual for an Aggie save.

Notice that neither of us blamed A&M for missing the coverage?

Homestead Savings Assn. Plans Move to Shiloh Center

Homestead Savings Association of College Station has asked state regulatory authorities to authorize movement of its headquarters 1 6/10 miles south to the Shiloh Center.

President William F. Phillips Jr. announced the proposed move today, saying that the center will be renamed the Homestead Place if the request is approved.

"We will more than triple the floor space available for our headquarters," Phillips said. "At a time when our customer base is growing and our services are expanding, more space would be welcomed by our staff and customers."

Phillips noted that Homestead has outgrown the building it has occupied since 1977.

"We have known for some time that our present quarters were too small but we are committed to move very slowly to incur debt. That policy allowed us to make profits while other institutions with more elaborate facilities posted losses. We have waited for an opportunity time to make a move and the Shiloh deal fell into our lap."

Phillips explained that the out-of-state owners of the Shiloh Center allowed Homestead to assume title to

the property in a friendly repossession. The center is virtually filled with one exception: the cornerstone location adjacent to Texas Avenue.

"We now have the opportunity to anchor the center, support our solid tenants there and become our own landlord," he pointed out. "The location is very visible, it is in the heart of College Station and is very convenient for many of our customers. The extra parking, the extra space and the favorable timing make the move irresistible."

Homestead's present location directly across from the TAMU campus will continue to play a part in the future of the institution, he added.

"We own 60,000 square feet (1 1/3 acres) of the most desirable real estate in Brazos County," he said. "In the future, we may consider construction on this site — or we might entertain a sale to the right buyer. The property is prime for a major hotel or other business that would enjoy being in A&M's front yard."

Homestead is College Station's only locally owned savings and loan association. Phillips helped form the institution and is the only president to direct the 12-year-old banking business.

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