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Sports Writer

Deja vu?

This year's Ags may mirror 1987

Historians and coaches will tell you history repeats itself. Wait a minute. Coaches say that too? Texas A&M Coach R.C. Slocum does, anyway. He sees the events of 1987 occurring again this year.

Two years ago, A&M was a preseason Southwest Conference favorite, coming off its second straight Cotton Bowl appearance. Early in the season, the Aggies were 2-1 under Coach Jackie Sherrill and were confident after back-to-back wins against Washington and Southern Mississippi.

Everything looked bright heading into the Texas Tech game in Lubbock. Coming out was a different story. The Red Raiders dominated the Aggies in a 27-21 upset.

Then defensive coordinator, Slocum recalls meeting his 12-year-old son, John Harvey, at the airport after the game. "I got off the plane and John met me at the airport," Slocum said. "He was all hurt and depressed."

John was upset not only at A&M's first conference loss, but the Aggies dropped out of the polls and could ill-afford a second SWC loss. The conference race was predicted to be tight. More than one loss would decide who could go to the Cotton Bowl.

"I told him the only thing the team could do is to go back to work and try to improve," Slocum said.

Work hard and improve was just what the Aggies did. A&M won its seven final games and earned its third consecutive Cotton Bowl trip.

And where are the parallels between 1987 and 1989?

This year A&M and Arkansas were both preseason SWC favorites. The Aggies tore through their opening schedule, winning three of their first four games, and winning them big.

A&M beat Texas Christian 44-7 and Southern Mississippi 31-14.

But once again, the Aggies had to march through Lubbock and Texas Tech on their way to a winning season.

And once again, the Red Raiders pulled off the unthinkable, upsetting the Aggies 27-24.

"We had to live that all over again, which is something that happens all through life," Slocum said. "Those stories keep repeating themselves."

"After the Tech loss this year, we just said, 'Boy, have we got a tough time ahead of us.' You have no choice but to go to work and not feel sorry for yourself."

A&M did just that, working hard to stay in an ever-tightening conference race. After the loss to Tech, the Aggies bounced back and upset nationally ranked Houston, 17-13. They have won four straight games and must at least tie

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Reserve Frazier reserved about starting role

Backup cornerback must fill big shoes when he plays for injured Washington

By Richard Tijerina
Of The Battalion Staff

Reserve cornerback Derrick Frazier may find himself in a strange position Friday night — starting at left cornerback for injured senior Mickey Washington. But it'll be an all too familiar one for Texas A&M.

Washington, a first-team All-Southwest Conference selection in 1988 by the Dallas Morning News, fractured his scapula in the third quarter of the Southern Methodist game while returning a punt.

Arkansas at A&M

- Site: Kyle Field (72,387 cap.)
- Kickoff: 1:30 p.m.
- Ranking: A&M (14th), Ark. (9th)
- Records: A&M (7-2), Ark. (8-1)
- TV/Radio: The game will be nationally televised by CBS-TV; KTAM (AM 1240)

Washington is third in team tackles in 1989 with 52. He has one interception and four quarterback sacks.

Now, with A&M's last two crucial games against Arkansas and Texas left, Washington will be on the sidelines and Frazier will be starting for the first time.

"Mickey will still be on the field," Frazier said. "He'll just be a leader off the field Friday night. He'll be on the sideline helping out. He's been trying to make me become a better player so I can play a better game."

But crucial injuries at cornerback are nothing new to the Aggies.

In the last game of the 1987 season, senior cornerback Chet Brooks broke his ankle against Texas. He missed the Cotton Bowl game against Notre Dame, and the injury was considered a devastating one to the Aggies.

Brooks, a consensus All-SWC selection and an 11th-round draft choice of the San Francisco 49ers, was charged with covering Notre Dame's Heisman Trophy winner — wide receiver Tim Brown.

With the injury, Brown was expected to burn the Aggies throughout the game, but reserve cornerback Gary Jones, now A&M's starting safety, came in and shut down Brown in the Aggies' 35-10 victory — the last time the Fighting Irish lost a game.

Now, it's Frazier's turn to step into the spotlight.

"Derrick's played nine games, so he's not a freshman anymore," A&M left cornerback Kevin Smith said. "He's really like a sophomore anyway because he redshirted last year. When this season's over, he'll be finished with his second year."

Frazier has been Smith's back-up all season. He has 21 tackles and two interceptions — only Smith has more pickoffs with seven.

"They might try to come to me early in the game to test me," Frazier said. "They might put (flanker Derek) Russell on me one-on-one to go deep to see what I can do. "It's for all the marbles."

Russell ranks ninth in career receiving yardage at Arkansas, and his 20.8 yards per catch average is the second best in school history.

The winner of Friday's game most likely is headed for the conference championship and a Cotton Bowl berth. Frazier said the Aggies would receive a big lift from playing at home. A&M has won 19 consecutive SWC games at Kyle Field, dating back to the 1984 season.

"You'd rather play at home," Frazier said. "Our crowd really gets us up to play at home. We have one of the best home crowds in the nation, and it helps the team." Smith said the Aggies benefit from good depth on the bench in the secondary, and Washington's injury won't affect them.

"It'll hurt us not having Mickey — he's a leader," Smith said. "But we have some guys below who can replace the starters. With Derrick and Steve Lofton, we can go two or three deep. It won't hurt us."

Frazier said the key for the A&M defense is to stop Arkansas' long drives. The Razorbacks have the reputation of eating up large amounts of the clock.

"My main responsibility is to play the pass first," Frazier said. "We have to concentrate on not giving them the big play and making them earn what they get to drive down the field."

It'll be a tall task for Frazier. "You have to concentrate on every play of the game," he said. "When you don't, that's the play you get beat on."

Washington will be missed more for his leadership in the secondary, Smith said.

"We haven't played without Mickey, but we still have Gary Jones and (safety) Larry Horton out there," Smith said. "We all have



Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

A&M cornerback Derrick Frazier (3) starts for injured senior Mickey Washington Friday night in a key SWC showdown with Arkansas.

responsibilities and we expect things out of one another.

"Mickey was the one who tied it all together. Mickey's leadership will be missed, but I don't think it'll slow us down at all."

Frazier said he's ready to step in and take Washington's place in A&M's most impor-

tant game of the year. The winner takes all, the players are saying — the winner of the game will go on to the Cotton Bowl. But Frazier's just hoping for a good game.

"Every player wants to start," he said. "I just hope I can contribute to the game. I'm not nervous."

Ags at No. 14; No. 1 Irish lay top rank on the line

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

Texas A&M will get its chance Friday night to knock off its third Top Ten-ranked team of the year when they host No. 9 Arkansas.

A&M beat former No. 7 LSU and No. 8 Houston earlier in the year.

The Aggies, ranked 14th in Monday's Associated Press Top 25 College Football Poll, play the Razorbacks in a nationally televised game from Kyle Field. The Aggies haven't lost a Southwest Conference game since 1984 — a 19-game winning streak.

But Slocum was quick to downplay Monday the significance of A&M's win streak at Kyle Field.

"Our players aren't concerned about the winning streak here," Slocum said. "That's all been played up by the students, in stories and by the fans. But we're not overly concerned with it."

The winner of Friday's game most likely will win the SWC championship and a trip to the Mobil Cotton Bowl Classic Jan. 1. It would be A&M Coach R.C. Slocum's first conference championship and the Aggies' fourth Cotton Bowl appearance in five years.

The Razorbacks would be returning to the Cotton Bowl for the second consecutive year. Last season, Arkansas lost to UCLA 17-3.

The Aggies need victories over Arkansas

and Texas on Dec. 2 to claim the championship. The Razorbacks need to beat the Aggies Friday and then defeat Southern Methodist in their last regular season game.

The winner of the SWC probably will face Southeastern Conference runner-up Tennessee, ranked eighth in the nation, in the Cotton Bowl. The loser of Friday's game most likely is headed toward an appearance in the John Hancock (formerly Sun) Bowl.

Elsewhere in the nation, Michigan State is back and Fresno State is out of the football poll, while Notre Dame remains on top for the 12th straight week.

The Fighting Irish, who beat Penn State

34-23 Saturday, received 57 of 60 first-place votes and 1,497 of a possible 1,500 points from a nationwide panel of sports writers and broadcasters.

Notre Dame puts its 23-game winning streak on the line Saturday at No. 7 Miami. Win or lose, the Irish are expected to return to the Orange Bowl for a New Year's battle against second-ranked Colorado.

Colorado, a 59-11 winner over Kansas State, received the other three first-place votes and 1,439 points Monday after completing an 11-0 regular season. The points for Notre Dame and Colorado were the

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\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Cold Study											
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Individual 18 years & older with active cold symptoms to participate in a 1 day Cold Study with an over-the-counter cold medication. No blood drawn. \$100. incentive for those chosen to participate.											
\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STUDY											
\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
Individuals with high blood pressure, either on or off blood pressure medication daily to participate in a high blood pressure study. \$300 incentive for those chosen to participate. BONUS: \$300 \$100 countdown incentive for patients chosen to participate and who complete study. (8 days left)											
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
FEVER STUDY											
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
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