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Pavlas, Richardson to give opponents double trouble

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Of The Battalion Staff

For the first time since the days of Kevin Murray and Craig Stump, Texas A&M appears to hold a loaded deck at quarterback.

Seldom does a football team possess a quarterback who can lead its offense to accomplish great things almost at will. Even less often does a team have two quarterbacks with that power.

Last year's starter, senior Lance Pavlas, is joined by junior Bucky Richardson, who sat out last year as a medical redshirt after suffering a knee injury in the 1988 finale against Texas.

Pavlas finished last season with the second best completion percentage in A&M history with 59 percent and led the Aggies to an 8-4 record and a berth in the John Hancock Bowl.

Despite suffering bruised ribs in the first quarter, Pavlas returned to rally A&M from a 24-10 deficit to a 28-24 lead before Pittsburgh staged some last minute heroics to win the game.

Perhaps best remembered for his hard-nosed running style, Richardson also is known for his ability to leap over defenders to avoid being tackled.

Richardson started most of the 1988 season, when A&M was ineligible for a bowl appearance because of NCAA sanctions, before going down with the knee injury.

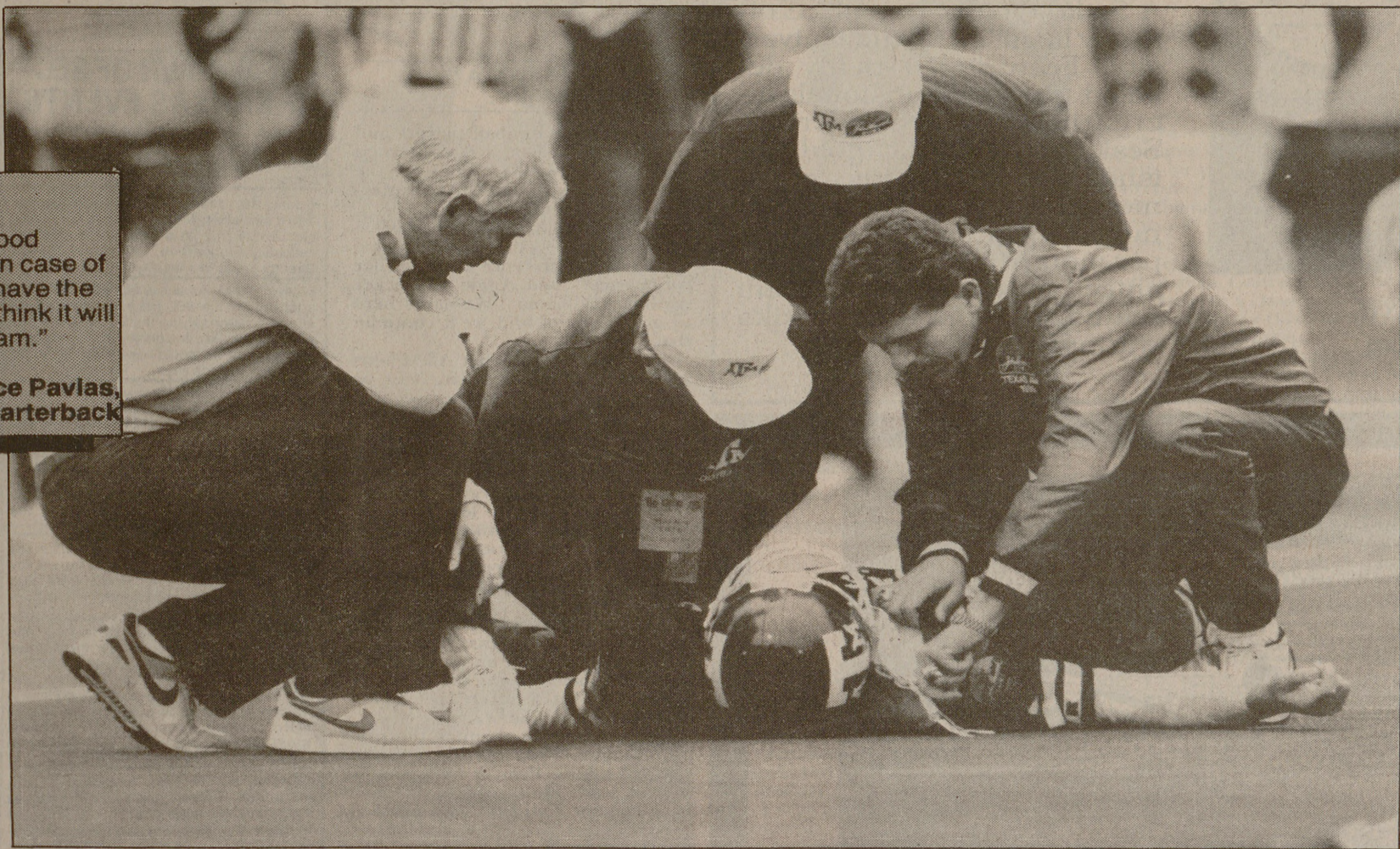
He ended the year second to Darren Lewis in total offense and led the team with an average of 5.6 yards a play.

However, it was as a true freshman in 1987 when he was the motivating force behind A&M's drive to the Cotton Bowl.

Richardson started five games

"It's (having two quarterbacks) a good situation to be in, in case of injuries. We both have the same goals and I think it will be good for the team."

—Lance Pavlas, A&M quarterback



Battalion file photo by M. Mulvey

A&M quarterback Lance Pavlas returned from a first quarter injury to lead the Aggies to three second-half touchdowns in the 31-28

loss to Pittsburgh. Pavlas is the starter for 1990, but former starter Bucky Richardson also returns to give the team quality depth.

and led the Aggies to a 35-10 victory over Notre Dame in the Cotton Bowl where he was named the game's Outstanding Offensive Player, rushing for 96 yards and two touchdowns.

With two proven quarterbacks there's been some speculation in the media of a quarterback controversy,

but head coach R.C. Slocum said nothing's further from the truth.

"People have mentioned that there's a possibility of a developing quarterback controversy," Slocum said. "But I don't see that happening at all."

"I'm delighted that we have two experienced quarterbacks and I

think that's a very positive thing for us."

Slocum said he's not going to make a big deal about who the starting quarterback is.

"Lance is the starter and I'll use Bucky strictly on a feel basis," he said. "Bucky's been out of football for a year and he's behind Lance as

far as the mental aspect of the offense is concerned.

"As he improves and comes along we will play both as the situation dictates."

Richardson showed no adverse affects from knee surgery last spring and Slocum said he's going at full strength now with no problems.

"Bucky's as healthy as he's ever been," Slocum said. "In the spring we purposely put him through full contact drills to see how the knee would react. I couldn't have been more pleased. He was scrambling and showed the same mobility he'd always had."

A week before practice started, Slocum said he spoke with the two quarterbacks and offensive coordinator Bob Toledo to discuss the situation.

"They are both unselfish people and team players," Slocum said. "Both of them understand what's going on. They are not competing against each other—they are competing against themselves to make the team better."

Pavlas said he's not worried about who will play and when.

"That's a coach's decision," Pavlas said. "My goal is to get us back into the Cotton Bowl. I'm going to do whatever it takes to accomplish that goal and work on getting better each week."

Richardson said he still needs some work with the new offense but mentally he's ready to play.

"I'm not going to worry about it," Richardson said. "I'll be playing whenever Coach Slocum feels he needs me, so I have to go into each game expecting to play at any time."

"I'll get my opportunities to play and I'll be happy as long as we win."

Slocum tabbed Pavlas the starter because he started all last year and has experience in Toledo's offense.

"Lance has dramatically improved over where he was last year," he said. "He's now assured of himself and everybody's developed confidence in his abilities—both the coaching staff and his teammates."

Last year Pavlas took his lumps both on the field and from critics, throwing two more interceptions (12) than touchdowns (10).

"That's where I need to improve the most over last year," Pavlas said. "I need to learn not to try to make the big play all the time and let the offense work like it's supposed to. I've got to know when to go ahead and take the sack."

"I want to improve on what we started last year. I think we have a

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