

A&M, Slocum not fretting over poll snubs

By RICHARD TIJERINA
Of The Battalion Staff

David McWilliams sits atop his throne in Austin, dreaming of national championships. Then there's R.C. Slocum, just waiting for respect.

The Aggies (8-2-1) are riding a four-game winning streak as they head into their two biggest games of the season: Saturday's showdown with No. 5 Texas (9-1) and a Dec. 29 Sea World Holiday Bowl matchup with No. 4 Brigham Young (10-1).

A&M, the preseason favorite to win the Southwest Conference, is trying to rebound from an October slump. After blowing through its first three games (in which the Aggies outscored its opponents 131-35), A&M ran into a month-long brick wall.

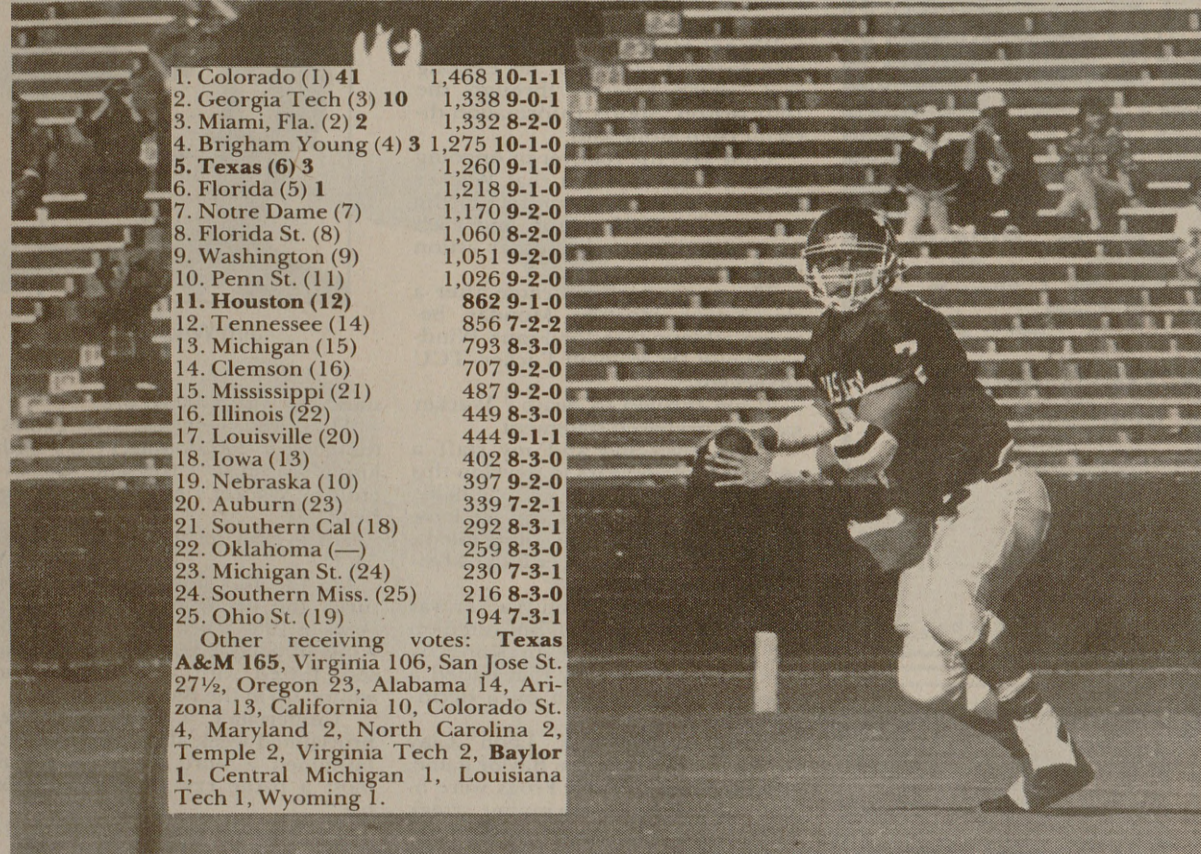
A 17-8 loss to Louisiana State. An unimpressive 28-24 win over Texas Tech. A 36-31 loss to Houston. A 20-20 tie with Baylor. The Aggies, once No. 11 in The Associated Press Top 25 College Football Poll, plummeted out of the national rankings.

A&M was No. 25 before its Oct. 20 tie with Baylor. It dropped out of the rankings the next week, and hasn't returned since.

"A lot of it is timing when you get beat and where you are at the time when you get into that top 25," Slocum said. "If you're in there, you reach a point where you shuffle a place or two, but you hang in there. If you don't lose two or three games in a row, you stay in. If you're not in, then it's hard to get in there."

The Aggies came in at No. 26 in Monday's poll. Ohio St., ranked No. 25, tallied 29 more votes than A&M. It is the second time in the last three weeks the Aggies have missed the Top 25 by one spot.

But the Aggies have the chance to finish the season ranked high. With games left against two top five teams, A&M can make a good impression in a hurry. Slocum said a win over the Longhorns would give the Aggies the boost they need to



HUY THANH NGUYEN/The Battalion

1. Colorado (1) 41	1,468 10-1-1
2. Georgia Tech (3) 10	1,338 9-0-1
3. Miami, Fla. (2) 2	1,332 8-2-0
4. Brigham Young (4) 3	1,275 10-1-0
5. Texas (6) 3	1,260 9-1-0
6. Florida (5) 1	1,218 9-1-0
7. Notre Dame (7)	1,170 9-2-0
8. Florida St. (8)	1,060 8-2-0
9. Washington (9)	1,051 9-2-0
10. Penn St. (11)	1,026 9-2-0
11. Houston (12)	862 9-1-0
12. Tennessee (14)	856 7-2-2
13. Michigan (15)	793 8-3-0
14. Clemson (16)	707 9-2-0
15. Mississippi (21)	487 9-2-0
16. Illinois (22)	449 8-3-0
17. Louisville (20)	444 9-1-1
18. Iowa (13)	402 8-3-0
19. Nebraska (10)	397 9-2-0
20. Auburn (23)	339 7-2-1
21. Southern Cal (18)	292 8-3-1
22. Oklahoma (—)	259 8-3-0
23. Michigan St. (24)	230 7-3-1
24. Southern Miss. (25)	216 8-3-0
25. Ohio St. (19)	194 7-3-1

Other receiving votes: Texas A&M 165, Virginia 106, San Jose St. 27½, Oregon 23, Alabama 14, Arizona 13, California 10, Colorado 2, Maryland 2, North Carolina 2, Temple 2, Virginia Tech 2, Baylor 1, Central Michigan 1, Louisiana Tech 1, Wyoming 1.

Since becoming the starting quarterback, Bucky Richardson has led the Aggies to a 5-1-1 record.

take on BYU and Ty Detmer, a leading Heisman Trophy candidate.

"It could be seven (wins over Texas) in a row for us," Slocum said. "We could finish on a positive note for our season. That would give us nine wins. We would move up in the rankings."

"If you beat Texas and BYU, then you have a chance to finish pretty high. We'd be 10-2-1, and having won six in a row. We'd get some pretty good recognition. There's a lot of opportunity for our team."

On the other side of the coin is

Texas. With a seven-point loss to No. 1 Colorado the only blemish on the Longhorns' record, the Cotton Bowl game against No. 2 Miami might have national championship implications.

But for that Jan. 1 game to have national importance, Texas must get by A&M. The Aggies have won the last six games against the Longhorns, but Texas head coach McWilliams isn't talking about revenge.

"I don't talk about payback," McWilliams said. "I'm not denying that certainly we want to beat A&M be-

cause they've beaten us in the past. I'm not going to sit here and say it's something that's not important because of that."

Slocum said playing the Longhorns will be enough motivation to stay focused, not look ahead to Detmer and Co.

"We're sitting here with an 8-2-1 record, and there's not a whole lot of teams in the country with a better one. If we beat Texas and go 9-2-1, I'd say anyone who doesn't recognize that as a pretty good season, I don't know about them."

McWilliams: Aggie offense outshines Buffs

AUSTIN (AP) — Coach David McWilliams of fifth-ranked Texas said Monday that the Southwest Conference championship victory over Baylor, which clinched a Cotton Bowl berth, was a game in which "every yard was a tough yard."

And this week's opponent, Texas A&M, has a better offense than No. 1 Colorado, he said.

Texas' 23-13 victory over Baylor may have been costly to the Longhorns, as leading rusher Butch Hadnot injured his ring finger and may miss the A&M game, set for Saturday on national television (CBS) with a 11:07 a.m., CST, kickoff.

McWilliams said Texas, 9-1, won the SWC title game with great individual performances by two kickers, goal line defense, and a 17-play drive into a wind that gusted as high as 35 mph, which was climaxed by Michael Pollak's 38-yard field goal.

That made the score 23-13 with 4:31 left in the game, and Baylor could get no closer. Pollak also kicked field goals of 56 and 43 yards.

Baylor settled for a field goal and 10-0 lead when Texas held after the Bears had first-and-goal at the 2-yard-line in the first quarter.

"That was a big turnaround. It slowed their offense down," said McWilliams, whose contract extension was announced by UT officials after Saturday's game.

"The 17-play drive into the wind was probably one of the biggest drives all year. When you talk about a championship drive, that was probably it right there," McWilliams told his weekly news conference.

The other individual play McWilliams singled out was by punter Alex Waits, who dodged a Baylor defender and, on the run, kicked 66 yards to the Baylor 15.

Owners say Astros may be up for sale

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Sports Association, owners of the Houston Astros baseball team, announced Monday it would consider selling the team.

Speculation that John McMullen, majority owner of HSA, has been planning to sell has been circulating for more than a year, mostly because of McMullen's advancing age and the increasing value of the team over the past two years.

McMullen, 71, said Monday in a prepared statement, "Having been so completely involved over 12 years with HSA and the Astros, the time has come for me to devote more of my time and energies to my family and my many other interests."

Sources have said HSA's current value could be as high as \$185 million to \$200 million. McMullen, a shipbuilder with offices in New York and Washington, D.C., controls more than 80 percent of the sports association.

HSA, founded by the late Roy Hofheinz, owns the Astros and holds the lease on the Astrodome and two other buildings in the same complex, the Astrohalls and Astroarena. It also owns properties in Florida and various cable television interests.

McMullen said he has notified the baseball commissioner's office of HSA's intent to sell the Astros. Major League Baseball must approve any change in ownership of one of its teams.

Last week, HSA pulled out of the Greater Houston Partnership, an economic development group, because the partnership's chairman, Robert Onstead, head of Randall's Food Markets, speculated on the Astros sale, saying it should go to local interests.

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