

# Aggie Football '91

Monday, September 2, 1991

The Battalion

SECTION B

## Growing up is hard to do . . .

Youth and enthusiasm must come through for A&M in 1991

by Steve O'Brien  
The Battalion

Last year's A&M football team was looking for a Heisman Trophy, a trip to Dallas in January and a ranking at the top of the national football polls. This year's team is looking to prove the critics wrong.

The 1991 Aggies, picked by many to finish fourth in the Southwest Conference, don't carry the baggage of last year's team. But they will bring some of their own baggage along for the ride.

They will bring talent and enthusiasm to Kyle Field Sept. 14 when they open the fall campaign against Louisiana State University.

Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum will field a team he said is the most inexperienced he's ever coached.

"The players going into this season will be young and green, but I think with that comes a lot of enthusiasm," Slocum said. "I look forward to this team. I think it's going to be an exciting team."

I see us as having a sprinkling of experience, enough talent and a lot of enthusiasm."

Lost to graduation and the NFL draft are Darren Lewis and Robert Wilson, one of the most devastating offensive backfields in southwest conference history.

And gone too, are the days of 300 senior offensive linemen.

The 1991 Aggie offense must turn to senior quarterback Bucky



JAY JANNER/The Battalion

Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum leads a young roster into the 1991 football season. The Aggies are ranked No. 21 in the nation by the Associated Press, but are only expected to finish in the middle of the Southwest Conference regular season behind favorites Houston and Texas.

Richardson for guidance.

Richardson is the last remaining A&M offensive starter to have played on a Cotton Bowl team. He was the Most Valuable Offensive Player in the Aggies' 35-10 victory over Notre Dame in the 1988 Cotton Bowl.

Slocum has described his young team as unsettled—for good reason.

Richardson, also named the

game's MVP in last year's Holiday Bowl, and junior guard John Ellisor are the only two returning starters on offense.

Besides Ellisor, the offensive line is made up of three sophomores and senior Keith Alex.

At the receiver position, the Aggies may be as thin as anyone in the country. Wide receiver Tony Harrison is the only receiver who has seen playing time in a

regular season game. He has a total of five receptions.

Behind the young offensive line sits a running game that is poised to explode. Three players, seniors Randy Simmons and Keith McAfee, along with freshman sensation Greg Hill, will be fighting for the starting spot at tailback in the Aggies' running attack.

Slocum likes all three ball carriers.

"Our plan right now is to play all those backs," Slocum said. "I don't see us saying, 'this guy is our starter, and he's going to play the whole game.' We'll adjust to the situation."

The battle to put points on the board may be a hard fought one for the 1991 A&M offense. But the Aggie defense may be able to offset any lack of offensive firepower with a defensive flare of its own.

Although Slocum will start three seniors, three juniors and five sophomores on defense, it's a defense which garners the nation's No. 1 rated backfield, by The Sporting News.

Senior Kevin Smith needs one interception to break the all-time SWC record (19) and hard-hitting sophomore Patrick Bates, a transfer from UCLA, should make fans quickly forget the departure of free safety Larry Horton.

"I think he'll (Bates) be a great player," Slocum said. "He's a big physical guy, who works hard in practice and is intelligent."

"A guy with his size and speed — some of those little receivers that go through their should get hazardous duty pay."

The linebacking corps which was ranked as the fourth best in the country by The Sporting News, lost senior All-American candidate Anthony Williams to academics. Quentin Coryatt, rated as one of the best inside linebackers in college football, now will anchor the linebackers as the only senior. Sophomore Jason Atkinson will start in place of Williams.

And for the Aggies, there's no room for mistakes. On paper, the Southwest Conference looks stronger than it has in years and promises to be one of the most competitive conferences in the country.

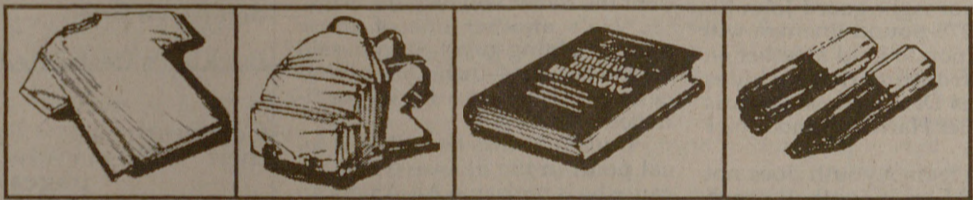
One positive for the Aggies is that two key games against Top 20 opponents are played at Kyle Field, where the Aggies have lost only one conference game in four years.

The Houston Cougars and Heisman candidate David Klingler come to Kyle Field on Oct. 26 for a conference showdown.

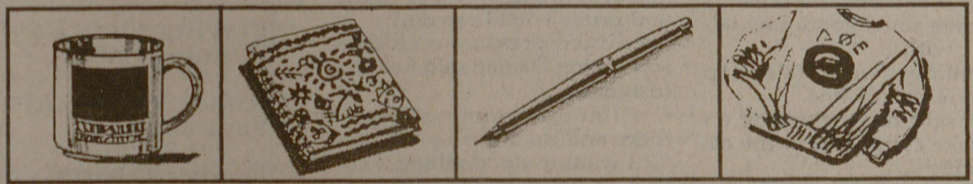
And on Nov. 28, A&M welcomes the University of Texas as its Thanksgiving guest.

The Aggies hope to avenge last year's one-point loss to the Longhorns on the way to another SWC title and a much-awaited return trip to the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Day.

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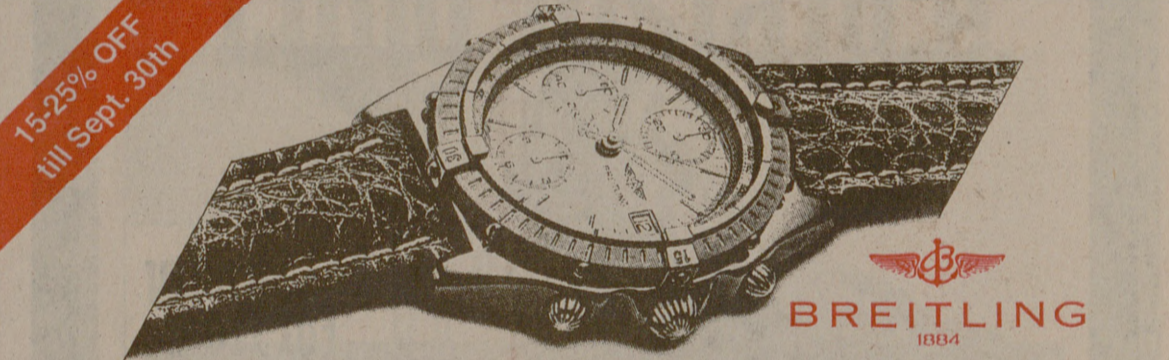
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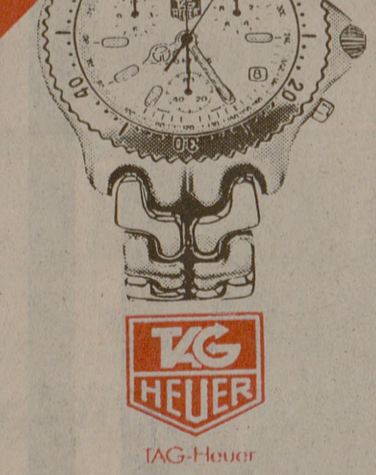
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