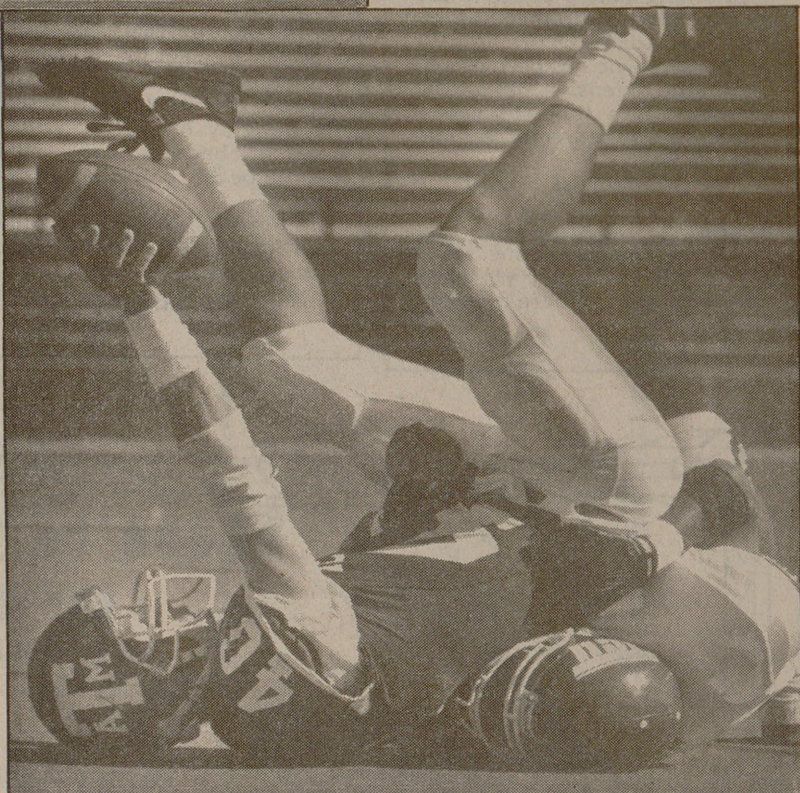
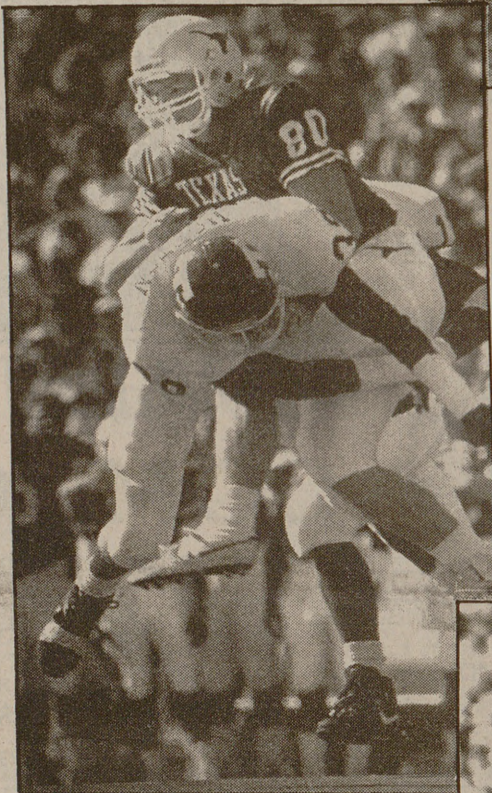
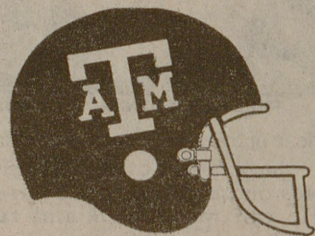
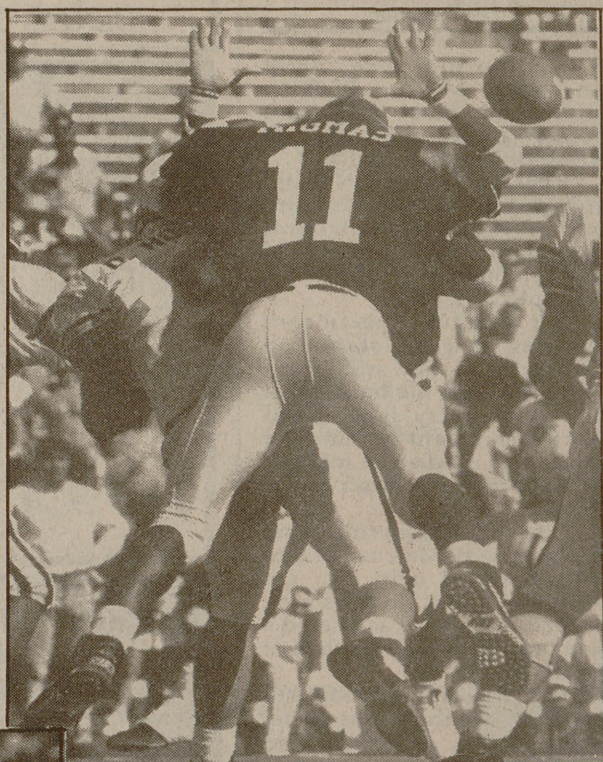


# That was then . . .



**Top:** Someone will have to step forward to make the impact former A&M linebacker William Thomas did.

**Left:** Former safety Larry Horton wasn't afraid to hit. The Aggies won't miss a beat with sophomore safety Patrick Bates.

**Right:** Linebacker Anthony Williams was lost to academics. Sophomore Jason Atkinson is now thrust into the spotlight.

**Middle:** Former A&M linebacker and all-time SWC leading rusher Darren Lewis is in the NFL now. Who will step forward to fill his shoes?

**Bottom:** Former wide receiver Gary Oliver has graduated. The Aggies are young at the split end. Will Richardson have someone to throw to?

## No Questions

### Richardson may be the answer to the Aggies' questions

Richard Tijerina  
Special to the Battalion

Bucky Richardson is used to the questions by now. Is the pressure of being Texas A&M's starting quarterback too much? Can the Aggies find the road back to Dallas? Can he throw the ball?

The answers are always the same: No. Yes. Yes. However, now Richardson is fielding questions he thought he never would have to. As one of two returning starters on offense, Richardson, like it or not, has become the Aggies' elder statesman and younger players look to him for answers. It's a scenario he's seen before.

"They ask me questions about what I did in certain situations," Richardson said. "I was asking the seniors the same questions when I was a freshman. I think it's a cycle that all players go through. It does feel weird that I'm being asked the questions now. It seems like I just got here."

Richardson arrived at A&M in 1987 as an unknown recruit but established himself as the starter midway through the season. Since then, he has compiled a 14-5-1 record as a starter and enters 1991 as the steadying force on a young squad.

Darren Lewis is a Chicago Bear. Robert Wilson is a Tampa Bay Buccaneer. The only returning receiver with any game experience has caught a grand total of five passes in an Aggie uniform. Mike Arthur has left. So too has most of last year's offensive line.

Only Richardson remains. Head coach R.C. Slocum wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'd much rather prefer to do it the way we're doing it - with a green offensive line but an experienced quarterback - than the other way around," Slocum said. "Bucky's one of those guys that makes everyone around him better. Because of that, they play better than maybe they should. That really helps. Our whole gameplan undergoes quite a change if something happens to Bucky."

What is Slocum's worst nightmare? Try a repeat of Nov. 24, 1988 when Richardson's world shattered along with his knee on the turf of Austin's Memorial Stadium. The injury came on a routine option run, but Richardson spent the next year in rehabilitation and, of course, answering the questions.

Would he be able to run again? Would there be a place for him in Offensive Coordinator Bob Toledo's passing attack? Would Bucky Richardson ever be the same again?

Too many questions. Richardson knew the answers would take care of themselves.

"When Coach Toledo got here, people asked me where I was going to transfer, that he wasn't going to let me run the ball. But I had enough confidence in him, and I hoped to gain his confidence to where he would let me run the ball. It's worked out great for me.

"The people that really matter to me - the coaches and my teammates - have never told me what I'm not able to do. It's outsiders looking in saying Bucky can't do this and Bucky can't do that. I've never paid any attention to it."

The Southwest Conference has been paying plenty of attention to Richardson since 1987. Former coach Jackie Sherrill, in an attempt to breathe life into a sagging A&M offense, rolled the dice and inserted him into the Southern Mississippi game. Richardson responded with an 82-yard touchdown run.

Three games later, Richardson had entrenched himself as the starter and ended up the offensive Most Valuable Player in the Cotton Bowl. He picked up his second MVP trophy last December in the 65-14 rout of Brigham Young in the Sea World Holiday Bowl. Both those bowl games were against Heisman Trophy winners - Notre Dame flanker Tim Brown and BYU quarterback Ty

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