

Richardson

son said. "I'll never forget that. Everytime I go home, the coaches put that tape in. I hate watching that. It stays with me."

Two things have stayed with Richardson in his four years at Texas A&M: the competitive fire that fuels the Aggie offense, and his Baton Rouge roots. Both come into play Saturday when A&M hosts Louisiana State.

LSU split end Todd Kinchen, who broke the Aggies' backs in last year's 17-8 loss in Baton Rouge, has known Richardson since high school, when he once considered transferring to Broadmoor.

"Bucky wants to be the best at what he does," Kinchen said. "He wants to help his team because that is a big challenge - to help your team night in and night out, play after play. What comes from being competitive is just trying to be the best. Bucky wants to do that."

Richardson arrived in College Station as an anonymous recruit in former coach Jackie Sherrill's banner 1987 class. Running backs Darren Lewis and Randy Simmons grabbed the national headlines. All Richardson did was claim the starting quarterback job when he wasn't supposed to.

He found himself the third string signal caller at the start of the season behind senior Craig Stump and heralded redshirt freshman Lance Pavlas. But Sherrill rolled the dice in the third game of the season and Richardson, who had been told he would redshirt his freshman year, responded. He broke an 82-yard touchdown run against Southern Mississippi and was

the starter by the sixth game.

He quickly made an impression on the Southwest Conference. Richardson led the Aggies to the SWC championship in 1987 and has gone on to establish a 14-5-1 record as a starter. A&M is 25-8-1 in games he's played in. He also has become known as one of the SWC's most dangerous quarterbacks.

"Bucky is a great competitor," UT head coach David McWilliams said. "He came off knee surgery a year ago and it was not sure how well he'd play, or even if he'd play again - especially in an option offense."

"He'll jump back at you if he's down. We had (A&M) down a couple of times last year in Austin and he kept coming back. He just won't die. He's a tough, tough competitor."

Richardson may be known more for his style than his accomplishments. Opponents have said he plays quarterback with a linebacker's attitude. Teammate Kevin Smith says tackling Richardson is like trying to tackle a truck. It boils down to toughness, and Richardson will get his yards - whether that means running around a tackler or over him. It's something Richardson says does not go unnoticed. "When I'm out there, they believe

in me and I believe in them," he said. "They see me doing everything I can. I don't run out of bounds. I don't hook slide. I don't do things that a quarterback is supposed to do. I just don't believe in doing that stuff."

"People say, 'Well, the older you get, the smarter you'll get.' It aggravates me when people tell me that. I don't think I'll ever quit doing that. I don't care if I play until I'm 90. The way I approach the game is very aggressive."

The Aggies return only two offensive starters, and he said having a young player look up to Richardson in the huddle - and know what the senior has accomplished - is crucial.

"Your linemen are out there diving around and butting heads every single play to protect you," Richardson said. "The least I can do is respect them and do everything I can to move the ball and get in the endzone. They realize that.

When they see me doing everything I can for them, in turn they do it for me. We just end up patting each other on the back."

Richardson already owns the A&M record for career rushing yardage for a quarterback (1,647 yards). Considered the SWC's second best quarterback behind Houston's David Klingler, Richardson's fierce competitiveness

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I don't like to lose. I don't do something just to do it. I try to be the best I can at it, and hopefully that's good enough to win. It all comes back to being confident in yourself.

-Bucky Richardson on winning and losing

Sports

A&M opens season with Louisiana State

Youth springs eternal for 1991

by Steve O'Brien
Battalion Gameday

Last October, the Aggies strolled into Death Valley the eleventh ranked team in the country. Hours later, they limped home to College Station with a 17-8 defeat at the hands of Louisiana State University.

The loss, played at LSU's Tiger Stadium, is almost a year old, but head coach R.C. Slocum remembers it well.

"Last year's game was pretty much an even ball game," Slocum said. "With 11 minutes to go it was 3-0, and we were playing without Darren (Lewis)."

Lewis, an all-American tailback, was ejected from the game for throwing an elbow to the head of an LSU player.

"The series he got kicked out we had driven down and had second and five on the 25 yard line," Slocum said. "He was ejected from the game, and it put us back on the 40. Then it was second and 20. We threw an interception on the next play."

When the Aggies and Tigers face off Saturday, there will be some major differences from last year's

game.

The game will be played at Kyle Field, where the Aggies have lost only three games in five seasons. And this time the Aggies' know who their leader is and have built the offense around him.

Last year, A&M quarterback Bucky Richardson was coming off a year of knee rehabilitation, so the Aggies were forced to play Lance Pavlas, limiting their ability to run the option with one of the Southwest Conference's best backfield tandems.

After faltering against LSU and then Texas Tech and Baylor, Pavlas was replaced by Richardson, who went on to start the next seven games.

Now, Pavlas is gone to graduation and Richardson is a year older.

"It's quite a bit different," Slocum said. "I wished we would have changed earlier last year too. We were caught in a situation where we had Lance, and he had won eight games with him."

"We were coming back and had a young man Bucky who had been out for a year and you didn't know how his knee would hold up. He couldn't go through contact in the spring."

At the time, the quarterback to use was Pavlas. Now it's time for Richardson.

"Looking back last year I was kind of sitting back in the wings waiting to get a chance," Richardson said. "It's a whole different concept when you know you're going in and they're counting on you to do the job. I'm ready. I've been waiting for a long time."

Another difference from last is the experience factor.

Last season it was A&M who had all the seniors and returning starters. On Saturday, the Aggies will field two returning offensive starters, including Richardson, and five on defense. The Tigers return 20 starters, including nine on offense and their entire defensive unit.

The younger players need to go out and have fun and not worry about making mistakes, Slocum said.

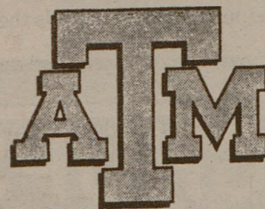
"You would like for them to come off the field and things go good and start getting a little confidence going on the field," Slocum said. "We've spent some time talking to the younger guys about just going out and playing and not putting a big burden on themselves to try and make it all happen at one time."

Freshman Greg Hill will be the Aggies' starting tailback and freshmen wide receivers Wilbert Biggins and Ryan Mathews should see extensive playing time.

But Slocum said he's not going to be conservative because of his young team.

"We're going to do some things for down the road and we're going to start building a team," he said. "We're going to play young guys and after they play they'll be better after this week. They'll be more experienced and better next week."

"A young player needs to go out and get his feet wet."



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Richardson knew people thought he would transfer. He knew people thought Toledo would not let him run the option. He knew people thought the A&M coaches might try to convert him into a safety when he returned from his injury.

And he knew he didn't care what people - outsiders, he calls them now - thought.

Losing is never an option. Nor a memory.

Leesville 8, Broadmoor 7: "I'll never forget that. They were a lot bigger than us, but we weren't scared. It stays with me."

Teammate Derrick Frazier beats him one day at ping pong: "I might have to go out and get me a ping pong coach. And there were other people watching, so that made it worse."

Baylor plays A&M to a 20-20 tie last year at Kyle Field: "We felt sick. They were happy with the tie. I know if it had been us visiting somewhere else, we would have tried to win the game. If you don't get that 'W', you feel empty."

When he loses, he remembers. "I don't like to lose. I don't do something just to do it," Richardson said. "I try to be the best I can at it, and hopefully that's good enough to win. I've always been competitive. It's a good thing. It all comes back to being confident in yourself. I've never been scared to do things that a lot of people think I'm not capable of."