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## Dronett key to 'Horns success

That rambling about wanting Texas to leave the conference and having Houston follow still holds, but there's a chance for redemption.

Texas plays No. 15 Austin at Memorial Stadium in Austin Saturday.

But whatever the Longhorns do against Auburn this weekend, they still seem about as inspired to play hard-hitting football as graduating seniors are to study for finals.

Oh no, it's not that I don't respect the faithful from Austin. I respect them like Bevo's horns pointed at my back.

It's just that if the Longhorns of present are ever going to be like the Longhorns of old, they need to realize one thing.

Texas head coach David McWilliams won't lead them to a national championship. He'll only coach them to one.

The players need to find a leader amongst themselves. One that will throw chairs in the locker room when it's needed and one that will be understanding when that form of leadership is needed.

Do the Longhorns have that type of leader now?

They have him, it's just not quarterback Peter Gardere. The UT quarterback, who never seems to have a hair out of place, can't lead players that weigh more than mobile homes.

Someone on the sidelines needs to run up to Gardere and mess his hair up. Do you think he'd cry?

Bucky's hair looks nice in pictures but during games it loses its hold. He even breaks a sweat.

So, where are the 'Horns left?

They're left dragging on the Memorial Stadium turf, holding on to the untucked jersey of defensive end Shane Dronett.

At 6'6", 260 pounds, Dronett is rated the No. 1 defensive end in the country by the Sporting News and has found his way onto a number of preseason All-America lists.

And for good reason. He's the type of good-spirited fellow that finds solace in an Ozzy Osbourne concert, or a snack of slightly spiced raw meat, or scaring young children.

Last season Dronett recorded 10 sacks and 73 tackles in the Longhorns' trek back to the Cotton Bowl. All of that was accomplished as a sophomore.

Dronett opened his junior season two weeks ago in ordinary fashion. If he could have been able to hold on to Mississippi State quarterback Greg Plump it would have been grand fashion.

Dronett, on five different occasions, had his arms around Plump and just couldn't hold on. He should have finished the game with five sacks. Instead he walked away with one.

His problem wasn't beating the offensive linemen of Mississippi State - it was tackling.

Don't expect that to happen this weekend against Auburn.

Dronett will show up to play and I expect the rest of the Longhorns to show up, too. And hopefully, for the sake of the conference, Dronett's teammates will show up to play, not to be cheerleaders.

There's one thing the Longhorns need to remember before kickoff on Saturday.

Having home field advantage isn't going to win them the game. True, 78,000 Sixth Street derelicts can make a ruckus.

But Texas should put itself in Auburn's position and play at LSU, Alabama, Florida and Tennessee every year. These opponents put hair on players' chests.

But Texas can do it. They can bring pride back to the conference, back to the state and back to their school. It's pride that has been missing from the burnt orange for a long time.

Some Aggie fans may not want to see the Longhorns move back into the national spotlight, but it's the best thing.

When the Aggies play Texas on Thanksgiving, it would be a lot more interesting if it were for the national title, than for conference bragging rights.

## Young Aggies ready for Tulsa surprises

By Scott Wudel  
The Battalion

Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum is prepared for the worst.

The Aggies (1-0) face the Tulsa Golden Hurricane (2-1) this Saturday at Skelly Stadium in Tulsa, Okla. at 12 p.m.

Slocum and his young but potent Aggies know they can't underestimate the Golden Hurricane even after A&M's stroll over Louisiana State University 45-7 last Saturday.

"We've got a test to see if we can come back and put our feet on the ground and work hard, and put this week behind us," Slocum said earlier this week. "And not have to learn the lessons you see every week."

Those lessons are what teams like the University of Southern California and Michigan State have already learned this year.

The Trojans were upset by Central Michigan, and the Spartans were defeated by Memphis State.

"That's the nature of college football," he said. "If you're not prepared and ready to play, anybody on a given day can beat any one else."

"There will be some teams like A&M that will lose to Tulsa this weekend. And hopefully that's not us."

Tulsa's two wins this season came against Southwest Missouri State and Oklahoma State. Tulsa is led by quarterback T.J. Rubley, who had his 19th 200-yard or better passing game in the Hurricane's 23-17 loss to Kansas last week.

Tulsa's junior tailback Ron Jackson has rushed for 349 yards in three games, 320 in the Hurricane's first two games.

Slocum said he didn't expect to be entering this Saturday's game with as young a lineup as he has.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Jeff Granger will start the game for the Aggies, with a backfield made up of redshirt freshman tailback Greg Hill and true freshman fullback Cliff Groce.

Slocum said he will not play senior quarterback Bucky Richardson in the Tulsa game if he's not 100 percent healthy. Doug Carter is also not expected to play after spraining his ankle against

the Tigers.

Greg Hill will try to keep stride after last Saturday's 212-yard, record-breaking performance.

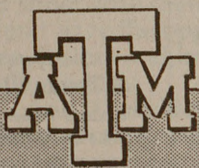
The revolving backfield will also include Groce at fullback and Randy Simmons and Rodney Thomas alternating at tailback and fullback.

The Aggies played nine true freshmen, 15 redshirt freshmen and five sophomores against the Tigers.

But the young Aggie offense amassed 524 total yards against LSU, and the tough A&M defense only allowed 10 first downs and 197 total yards in the game.

This will be A&M's first trip to Skelly Stadium.

The last time the Aggies played in the state of Oklahoma was 1988, when A&M dropped a 52-15 decision to Oklahoma State in Stillwater.



Texas A&M vs. Tulsa



## Three steps forward...

### Venetoulias headed in right direction as Aggies' placekicker

By Scott Wudel  
The Battalion

Terry Venetoulias is back on his feet again.

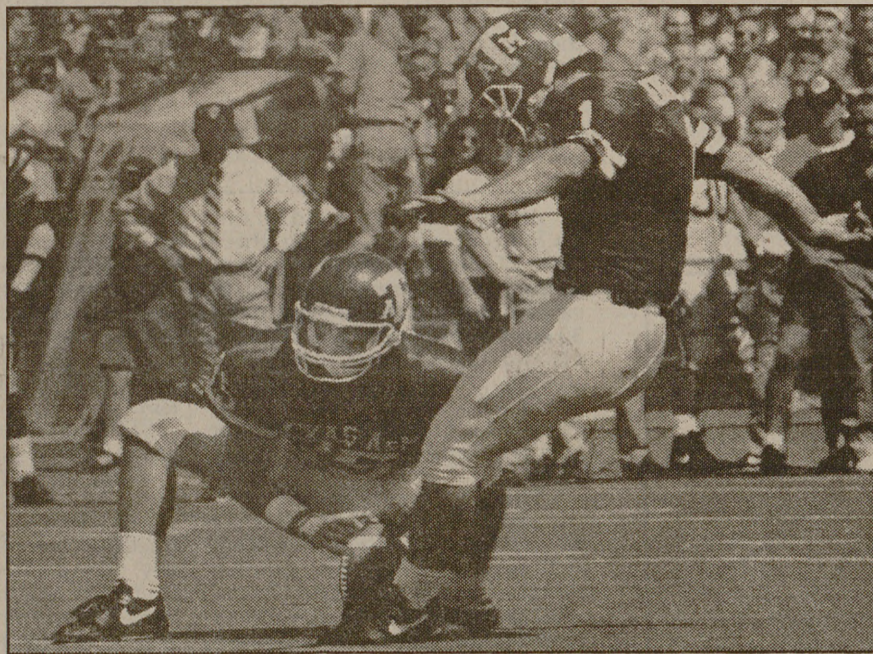
Last year, A&M's backup placekicker spent the season struggling to regain his old form. His sole job was to handle kickoff chores for the Aggies, and he responded by kicking line-drives down the field while A&M kickoff teams struggled to tackle their opponents before they crossed midfield.

Venetoulias was in a rut, A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum said - walking a thin line until the end of the season.

Doubts were cast on who would be the Aggies' kicker in 1991 with the departure of senior Layne Talbot. Last February, A&M ran after and successfully recruited one of the nation's top high school kickers. Venetoulias had to sit down and come up with some answers.

"I was kind of scared," he admitted. "I didn't know what to think or what to do."

"It kind of put a little fire in me. I said, 'hey, now is the time you get your act together.' I should have done that a long time ago."



RICHARD S. JAMES/ The Battalion

Texas A&M placekicker Terry Venetoulias is beginning to reach his goals with the

Aggies. The kicker hopes his newfound success can transfer into points for A&M.

A long time ago was 1989. Venetoulias, one of Texas' top-rated kickers in high school, came to A&M overweight, to the displeasure of the A&M coaching staff. After spending his freshman year as a redshirt, the kicker was asked to take a step forward when Talbot pulled a muscle during fall drills - but he wasn't mentally prepared for the task at hand.

"If you have something that works, you don't change it," he explained. "It's that old philosophy that if it isn't broken, don't fix it."

"I tried to change my style and form, and it just screwed everything up. I should have just put the ball down like I did in high school, take my steps back, run at it and knock the tar out of it."

Venetoulias is putting that simple wisdom to work now. His performance

since last spring compared to last season has been like night and day, said A&M kicking coach John Pearce.

"I was really impressed with how far he had advanced, and more importantly how much he had matured," Pearce said. "The ability was always there."

The kicker is reaching new heights everyday. Since spring Venetoulias has been "knocking the tar" out of the football and consistently placing kickoffs in the end zone. Last Saturday's performance against LSU was no exception.

"I was really nervous," Venetoulias said. "I kicked last year and you'd say I shouldn't be nervous."

"But one thing I wanted to do was go out there and prove to coach Slocum, coach Pearce, and the whole coaching staff, the student body and the whole community, that that was the real me. That I can do the job."

Venetoulias admits he is glad to be able to stand solidly on two feet this year.

"My first goal at the beginning of the year was to be a starter," he explained.

"I'm not going to try to break every NCAA record. I never tried to do that in high school and I'm not going to try to do it now. I just want to go out there and every time I get up there to kick, I want to do my job. All that other stuff comes with it."

No task remains to big or too distant now that Venetoulias has put the past behind him. The kicker firmly admits they all look the same - a 40-yard field goal isn't much different than a 20-yard field goal.

But haven't the goal posts been moved closer together this year?

"I just go at it like nothing ever changed. I'm still aiming straight down the middle."

Another step in the right direction.

## Hang time

By Anthony Andro  
The Battalion

Texas A&M punter David Davis has become a booming success after his first college game.

But the success has had its share of hardships.

Davis came to A&M from Loop, Texas, located 60 miles southeast of Lubbock.

In Loop, there is not enough players for an 11-man football team, so they play six-man football.

Davis was all-district his senior year after playing defensive end, fullback, placekicker and of course, punter.

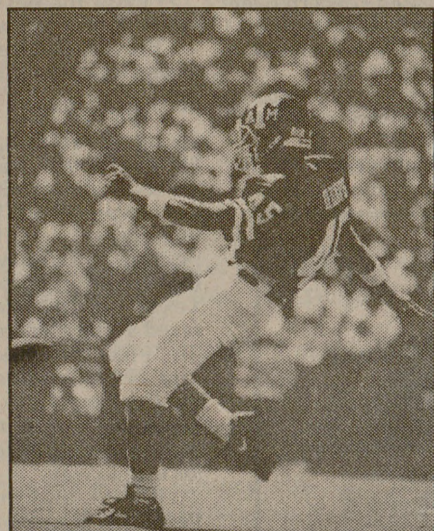
But college scouts don't usually recruit in six-man football, so Davis came to A&M as a walk-on.

Davis starting punting for the Aggies in the spring of 1989, but he was still behind starter Sean Wilson, and second-teamer Kevin Ellis on the depth chart and did not have a chance to play.

Last year, Davis was listed on the roster but still did not receive a varsity letter.

Finally, this year, the junior beat out freshman Sean Terry and was the opening day punter for the Aggies against Louisiana State University.

Davis responded in his first test by punting six times for a 43.2 yard average. Davis was admittedly nervous be-



HUY NGUYEN/ The Battalion

David Davis has hung in long enough with the Aggies to earn a scholarship and become A&M's starting punter.

"Before the game I was a little tense," Davis said. "I've had plenty of time to think about it over three years."

"During the game, I wasn't that nervous because it happened so fast I didn't have time to think about it."

Overall, Davis said he was happy

with his game and composure on Saturday.

"I was real pleased at how I did Saturday," he said. "After the first punt, I wasn't worried about shanking one because in practice I have been real consistent."

As the game progressed, Davis gained more confidence in himself.

"I'm to the point now that I'm really comfortable back there and confident I can get the job done."

But Davis is quick to give praise where it belongs.

"One of the best things I've got going for me is that I have a great line and a great deep snapper," he said. "There are also super athletes on the punt team who hem the returners in and don't give them a chance at a return."

One thing that made Davis work harder was the fact that he was a walk-on. But that status changed earlier this week when A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum awarded Davis a scholarship.

Davis won't lose his edge now that his education is paid for.

"It makes you work harder (being a walk-on)," he said. "But, now that I'm on scholarship, I'm not going to let up."

"I'm just going to keep doing those same things that got me here."

After all that he's had to endure to get to this point, punting should be a snap for Davis.

## Texas World Speedway revs up for first race

By Richard S. James  
The Battalion

After a long absence, race cars will replace the construction equipment on the high banks of Texas World Speedway this weekend.

The speedway will reopen this weekend, featuring the Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) Permatex Super Car Series Texas 500k stock car race on Sunday.

"We're ready," said Slick Johnson, marketing and promotions director for the speedway. "The track's been finished since the middle of last week and 90 percent of the construction is done."

The track was originally scheduled to open the first weekend in July with Sports Car Club of America races, but the races were cancelled due to heavy rains which caused construction delays.

This weekend's racing will feature the ARCA Permatex Super Car Series for full-bodied stock cars. Also scheduled to compete are the Texas International Drivers' Association (TIDA) Pro Sedans and Late Models and Pro Vee open-wheel race cars.

Johnson said response from the

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