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For More Info. call 260-2660 • All Classes \$3.50/Hr.

Scrimmage ends spring practice

Slocum won't make decision on starting QB until August

By Steve O'Brien
The Battalion

There were clear skies over Kyle Field on Wednesday afternoon as the Texas A&M football team concluded spring practice for 1992. The quarterback situation, however, remains cloudy.

"I would have liked for someone to jump out there and been able to say, 'This guy is dramatically better than the others,'" A&M head coach R. C. Slocum said. "No one did that."

"I thought they all performed the same. I thought they all showed improvement. I don't think anyone really put themselves out in front."

The four players fighting for the job are Kent Petty, Tommy Preston, Matt Miller and Steve Emerson. Petty will be a senior in the fall, Preston and Miller will be freshmen and Emerson a sophomore.

During an extended scrimmage on Wednesday, the quarterbacks combined for 67 yards passing on nine completions and two interceptions. The main offensive spark came from running backs Greg Hill and Rodney Thomas.

Thomas highlighted the practice with a 47-yard touchdown run, and Hill scored on a 10-yard dash as the A&M offense had 178 yards rushing.

"I thought our tailbacks did really well all spring," Slocum said. "Greg Hill and Rodney Thomas did all the running this spring. I was pleased with what they did."

Offensive coordinator Bob Toledo said one quarterback will eventually take over.

"When we do decide on the one, we'll let him get most of the reps, and I think he'll be a good quarterback," Toledo said. "At least of couple of weeks before (A&M's first game against Stanford on Aug. 26), we've got to get him on Aug. 26."

Throughout the three weeks of practice, the four quarterbacks each showed signs of brilliance and signs of inexperience.

Petty said off-season workouts will help decide who becomes quarterback.

"The summer is the key," Petty said. "Everybody made progress this spring. I was working on some finer things, while some of the other guys were getting the offense down. Whoever comes out and works hard and throws the ball a lot (over the summer) is going to be the one who comes out on top."

"After the first two weeks, I was headed in the right direction, but then the younger guys started getting some things done."

Whatever the situation on offense, the Aggie defense looks like it will continue to be one of the nation's best.

Defensive coordinator Bob Davie said a number of players stepped up to fill spots vacated by last year's seniors.

"You start off trying to find guys that want to play," Davie said. "I think we did that. We've got some good, young, hungry players."

Middle linebacker Coryatt, the 1991 Southwest Conference Defensive Player of the Year, All-America cornerback Kevin Smith and strong safety Chris Crooms were seniors and are expected to be drafted in Sunday's National Football League draft.

Two players have stepped up to take Coryatt's position, Davie said.

"Right now, we've got Reg Graham and Larry Jackson at that spot," Davie said. "They're probably going to alternate quite a bit. They're both great kids and they will be a good situation for those guys."

Graham and Jackson both had limited action last fall as redshirt freshmen.

In the secondary, Davie said a number of young guys have made bids for the open positions.

"I think (freshman) Steve Levey answered the question about Chris Crooms leaving," he said. "(Sophomore) Billy Mitchell came on well, and (freshman) Mickens has come on well (to take over for Smith)."

"We've also got (sophomore) Wilbert Biggins back there and (freshman) Junior White was there before he got hurt (twice his knee)."

"We've got some older, experienced guys, who have proved themselves," he said. "There are some young, hungry players who haven't gotten a chance to play. We'll see when we get out there against Stanford. It's going to be a lot different."

Longshots sit, watch for chance at the pros

Continued from Page 3

a pro team, no matter how they get there.

"Whether they go as late draft choices or middle draft choices or free agents, I think all of these guys have a chance to play," Slocum said.

Highly touted out of high school, Simmons suffered a string of injuries that limited his playing time. He wound up rushing for less than 1,000 yards in his college career after amassing more than 2,500 yards his senior year in high school.

Now, Simmons said some pro teams have contacted him about a possible late-round draft pick.

"I've worked out for quite a few teams, and right now I'm like everybody else, just waiting until Sunday to see what happens," Simmons said.

Simmons said one of the things going for him was the pro scouting combine held in Indianapolis. Since he sat out most of his senior season, the combine gave teams a chance to see what he can do.

"When I went out there, they had individual drills for you to



A&M's Keith McAfee and Mark Wheeler have a shot at the NFL.

do," Simmons said. "They gave you attention. They looked right at you to see what you could do. That helped me out a lot."

"I'm thankful they invited me to the combine because (otherwise) I don't think I would have had too much of a shot."

Offensive coordinator Bob Toledo said Simmons might have a difficult time getting picked because of his past injuries.

"I would think that someone's going to take a chance on him and give him a chance," Toledo said. "How high he gets drafted or if he gets drafted still remains to be seen. You never know what they're thinking."

One thing that the players "on

the bubble" have going for them, they are coming from a successful program that has produced great pro players in the past, including John Roper, Gary Kubiak, Richmond Webb, and others.

Bob Davie, A&M's defensive coordinator, said that might be the lesser-known players.

"The Quentin Coryatts and Kevin Simmons are pretty much going to take care of themselves," Davie said. "But a lot of the kids that may get overlooked in the rounds really benefit from the draft."

"When you've got five or six NFL head coaches visit your campus, you've got good credibility, and I think that helps everybody involved."

So Simmons will sit and watch the draft on television and hope that he gets what he's been striving for since he was young - a shot to the pros.

"I'd play for anybody. If I'm drafted by Green Bay, I'll go to Wisconsin. If I get drafted by Detroit, I'll go to Michigan. If I get drafted by a Canadian team, I'll go to Canada."

"I just want to play football. That's all."

Astros regain division lead after Giant win

HOUSTON (AP) - Chris Jones hit a two-run homer in the 12th inning as the Houston Astros beat the San Francisco Giants 3-1 Wednesday night to move into sole possession of first place in the NL West.

The Astros closed their 15-game homestand with a 9-6 record, winning seven of their last nine.

Xavier Hernandez (2-0) was the winner, pitching one hitless inning.

Eric Yelding had a one-out sin-

gle off loser Mike Jackson (0-1) and Jones then hit his first home run of the season, a drive to left field.

Jones, who was with Cincinnati last season, was signed to a minor-league contract by the Astros on Dec. 19.

The Astros were one out away from a 1-0 victory when Robby Thompson homered off reliever Doug Jones in the ninth.

Pete Harnisch pitched 6 2-3 shutout innings for the Astros and drove in a run with a fourth-inning double.

In Harnisch's last

start, a 3-1 win over San Diego, he drove in two runs with a double.

He gave up five hits, struck out five and walked one before leaving in the seventh.

Houston scored in the fourth on Kelly Ledford when Casey Daele laced off with a hard single that bounced off the glove of Thompson at second. Two outs later, Harnisch lined a double into the gap in left-center field.

Downs pitched five and two hits.

Foster

Continued from Page 3

bad thing was, at least for FSU, their defense didn't do much better. A&M coasted to a 9-1 victory and secured the tournament championship.

Just in case anyone's keeping score, that's two top 25 teams who have fallen to the Aggies' wrath. And, unlike A&M, both are still ranked and are probably guaranteed a regional bid. Florida State is 12th in both Baseball America and Collegiate Baseball, and the Bulldogs are 21st in the Collegiate Baseball poll.

Quality wins are supposed to be one of the measurements of tournament teams. If that's so, A&M should be as good as in. If the Aggies were in the Southeast Conference, they would be in.

Which brings us to the Aggies' conference affiliation. Of course, the Southeast, Big Eight and Pac 10 conferences are quality leagues that deserve to receive several regional bids. But whether or not us die-hard Ag-

gies want to admit it, any baseball conference that includes the University of Texas is, without a doubt, a tough conference as well.

No kidding, folks. At last glance, Texas was 35-10 overall and was among the top 10 teams in the nation. They have four national championships in the trophy case, and even with all that, Johnson gives them credit with hitting better than any team he's seen come out of Austin.

"This is the best Texas ball club I've ever seen hitting have," Johnson said after losing two-of-three to the Longhorns in Austin earlier this season. "They hit the ball well today, and if they keep on hitting like they are it's going to be hard for anyone to beat them."

Those are strong words concerning a team that produced hitters like Keith Moreland, who hit better than .400 during Texas' 1975 national championship season. But that statement is, apparently, accurate.

Entering this weekend, the

Longhorns are hitting .319 as a team. That's right, that's a team batting average. And believe me, as much as I or anyone else may hates t.u. and the attitude of their players, there's no denying they are one of the best teams in the nation.

The Aggies have proved they are a quality team by merely winning two of the six games this season against Texas. Anyone who was at the series in College Station could tell you that was a series the Aggies could have easily won. One more hit at the right time on Saturday, and A&M takes two-of-three from the Longhorns and the conference race is much closer.

So forget, if you can, some of the losses the Aggies shouldn't have had this season, like the series defeats from Texas Tech and Rice, and look at the wins they do have. After all, lest we forget, the Duke basketball team did lose to Wake Forest this season. Kind of makes you realize that during the regular season, anything can happen.