

## Pigskin pressure off Aggies

ANAHEIM, Calif.—Throughout the summer, the pressure has mounted on Texas A&M.

Winning the Southwest Conference Championship, playing a respectable game in the Cotton Bowl in front of a national audience, amassing one of the best recruiting classes in the country this spring and filling a hole in the quarterback position has been enough to clench the 1992 SWC title for the most people. The race is already over.

There's no need in even playing the season out. Let's just give the Aggies the trophy and let them prepare for Miami on New Year's Day.

That's the kind of pressure that A&M has had to face. The media, the coaches and the experts all have said that it is the Aggies' championship to lose. Which is exactly why they might.

As history has proven over the last 100 or so years, the teams that the so-called "experts" have boldly touted in the preseason never realize the heavy expectations set upon them.

Take, for instance, Florida State.

The team that shattered A&M's dreams to begin 1992 had dreams of their own at the beginning of the 1991 season.

See Whitley/ Page 14



Chris Whitley  
Sports Editor

## Stanford ready for Aggie defense

By DOUG FOSTER

Sports Editor of THE BATTALION

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Members of the Stanford University offensive squad feel that they have one distinctive advantage in preparing for their season opener against Texas A&M.

They got to practice against a defense that plays just like the Aggies.

The Cardinal will open the 1992 college football season tonight against A&M in the Disneyland Pigskin Classic in Anaheim Stadium. Stanford is ranked 17th in the preseason Associated Press poll, and the Aggies are the seventh-ranked team.

With the attacking, aggressive speed-based defense used by the Aggies, Stanford offensive guard Chris Dalman said the preparation his squad received in spring practice against their own defense will prove vital to success in the opener.

"They have a defense that is very attacking," he said. "Both teams are very aggressive defensively, and what they might lose by gambling they can make up with several big defensive plays."

"Our defense plays much in the same way in that they come at you all of the time, and all spring they did that to us, which is exactly what A&M is going to try to do."

That style, which involves quite a bit of movement and action from the linebackers, will require more movement from both teams' offensive lines, and Dalman said he and his teammates are prepared for an athletic battle.

"Even though we may have a definite size advantage against their linebackers, they are very quick and can get around a guy that is big but might be slow," Dalman said. "When you play teams like this, you have to be

more of an athlete than a lineman and move around a lot. If we're not careful, we could get ourselves into a big mismatch speed-wise against those linebackers."

One of the fastest and most respected members of that A&M defense, senior Marcus Buckley, is not expected to play tonight after suffering through an illness the past week. Although that blow might seem heavy to the Aggie defense, Stanford guard Brian Cassidy said with a squad as talented as A&M's, losing one player wouldn't hurt them that much.

"No one can have the number one defense in the nation by just having one outstanding defensive player," Cassidy said. "It might hurt them a little having him out because from what we've seen on film he's a great player, and he brings their defense to a higher level."

"But we are sure the rest of the defense will do the best they can to make up for his absence."

Stanford will try to counter the defensive speed of A&M with the diversity of running back Glyn Milburn, a back that many have listed as a Heisman Trophy candidate.

Cassidy said Milburn's speed and ability to make cuts in the open field should be a plus against A&M's aggressive, pursuing defense.

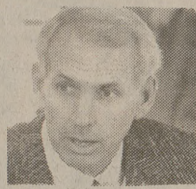
"Glyn gives everyone he plays problems, and our offense is focused around him," Cassidy said. "I know I wouldn't want to be a defensive player preparing for a game against Glyn."

Stanford head coach Bill Walsh said Milburn will be an integral part of his team's success, and that he was the kind of back that could turn the game their way.

"He runs a lot like Darren Nelson, who was another great back

See Stanford/ Page 14

Compiled by K. LEE DAVIS/Sports Writer of THE BATTALION



Slocum

## Pigskin Update

who: Texas A&M Aggies vs. Stanford Cardinal  
what: Disneyland Pigskin Classic III  
where/when: Anaheim, California  
Wednesday, 8:07 p.m. CDT  
line: A&M by 3

**FIRST SHOT AT STANFORD** Texas A&M and Stanford have never faced each other in a football contest, but the Aggies have played nine games in California, including the 1990 thrashing of Brigham Young at the Holiday Bowl in San Diego, to run the run the maroon and white's Golden State record to 9-2.

**A&M MILESTONE** The Aggies are embarking on their 98th season of organized football Wednesday, and have a 69-25-3 record in opening games. Aggie head coach R.C. Slocum is a perfect 3-0 in openers, and is 27-9-1 overall in his career since taking A&M's head coaching job in 1989.

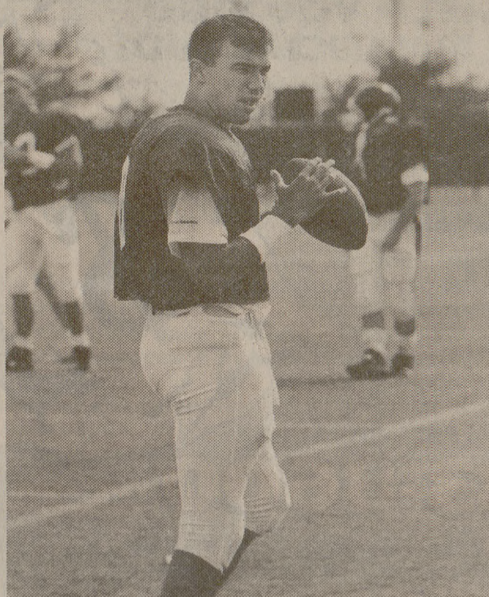
**EARLY BIRDS** Tonight's game will be the earliest ever played by a SWC school, eclipsing the old mark also set by the Aggies against Nebraska on August 27, 1988.

**KEY INJURY** Marcus Buckley, the A&M senior all-American hopeful at outside linebacker is feeling better according to Slocum, but not much. Slocum said that Buckley might feel well enough to play a few downs during the game but doesn't expect it. Buckley has not practiced for over two weeks and has walked with the help of a cane for much of that time after being stricken with a curious and as yet undiagnosed ailment that mimics rheumatoid arthritis.

**FRESHMAN PHENOM** True freshman quarterback Corey Pullig impressed coaches so much during two-a-day workouts that he not only moved up to second on the depth chart behind sophomore Jeff Granger, but also might get to play against Stanford.

**NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT** A&M is playing its eighth consecutive season opener before a nationally televised audience.

**A GRASSY SUBJECT** Wednesday's game will be played on the natural grass of Anaheim Stadium, a surface that over half of the Aggies have not played on during their college careers. The Aggies last played on grass against BYU in the 1990 Holiday Bowl.



Quarterback Jeff Granger

## Buckley likely to miss showdown

By MICHAEL PLUMMER

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

ANAHEIM, Calif.—After months of preparation, the start of Texas A&M's eagerly anticipated 1992 football campaign has arrived.

The Aggies, ranked as high as No. 2 in one preseason poll, open their defense of the 1991 Southwest Conference Championship against the Stanford Cardinal in the Disneyland Pigskin Classic tonight at 8:07 CDT.

Unfortunately for the Aggies, the defense has suffered a major setback as senior linebacker Marcus Buckley is doubtful for the game with a mysterious ailment causing swelling in his knees and ankles.

"Buckley is better, but if he plays it will be in a special situation," A&M head coach R.C. Slocum said. "I have tremendous respect for him, so if he says he can go I will let him play as much as he can."

Slocum said the Aggies have solid backups to compensate for Buckley's loss.

"Otis Nealy and Steve Solari will be the two starters at outside linebackers," Slocum said. "We lost one of our best players, but there are a bunch of other guys, and everyone else is going to have to play harder."

Free safety Patrick Bates also said other Aggie defenders have to step up and perform.

"Marcus Buckley is definitely going to be a drop off, with a player of his caliber out we will have to make some adjustments, but I think the coaching staff will do some things to turn it around," Bates said. "We will be all right."

Due to the early nature of the game and the return of Bill Walsh

See Buckley/ Page 12

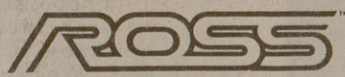
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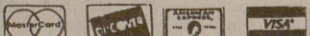
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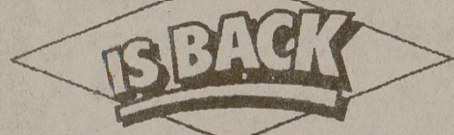


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