

LSU resembles Slocum's A&M squad of '91

Listening to Louisiana State University coach Curley Hallman talk, one is reminded a lot of a man named R.C. Slocum before his 1991 season opener.

Doug Foster
Sports Editor

The Tigers are opening their season Saturday at home against the Texas A&M Aggies.

The Aggies opened their '91 season at home against the Tigers.

Sure, that seems meaningless. But the rest of the circumstances surrounding the two in the respective years are phenomenal.

The week before the Aggies' season opener against the Tigers in '91, LSU struggled offensively for four quarters against Georgia while A&M spent the week practicing.

The Aggies switched roles with the Tigers last week in "the happiest place on earth."

During that week of preparation in '91, Slocum told reporters all week that despite the immense amount of talent the Aggies had brought in with their recent recruiting classes, it was the most inexperienced team he had ever coached.

"This season we'll have some young and inexperienced faces in the lineup," Slocum said at the time. "We have some talented young players, but the lack of experience is a major concern. I do expect this team to compete each time they take the field."

Hear the echo coming from Baton Rouge a year later.

"Even though we have some experience at quarterback and in the offensive line, we have a lot of work to do at tailback," Hallman said. "We will be playing a lot of freshmen there, and we will probably use up to 22 freshmen overall this season."

1991. Texas A&M starts the season with three two freshman tailbacks and one freshman fullback. Starting to see the resemblance?

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LSU coach Hallman works around injuries, hurricane, youth in preparing for Aggies

By DON NORWOOD
Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

While Texas A&M was busy sweating out their 10-7 victory over Stanford a week ago, one might think that Louisiana State head football coach Curley Hallman would be sitting back and taking it all in, adding the finishing touches to a month of practicing and preparation.

But as Saturday's opener against the Aggies approaches, the second-year Baton Rouge boss is hesitant to take the confident approach with his Tigers, a group that is fresh but untested.

The Tigers enter the game without the benefit of playing under true game conditions, a fact that was not helped any last week when several practices had to be canceled due to Hurricane Andrew. And although the Aggies were hampered by injuries to Steve Kenney and Brian Mitchell against the Cardinal, LSU faces A&M with a long list of injuries to key players.

And if you throw in the 22 freshmen expected to see substantial playing time this year, it is not hard to see why Hallman is not taking anything for granted.

"I don't really see an advantage for us," Hallman said. "During that same time (of the A&M-Stanford game), we had a hurricane to deal with."

"If you can play a ball game and win it at the beginning of the season (like A&M), that's always a plus."

Hallman said he is particularly impressed by A&M quarterback Jeff



Louisiana State University head coach Curley Hallman discusses football with A&M head coach R.C. Slocum during his days as head coach

of Southern Mississippi. Hallman and his Tigers will host the 7th ranked Aggies in Baton Rouge Saturday at 2 p.m.

Granger, who shook off a disappointing first half to lead the Aggies to their win over Stanford.

"I think he's a good quarterback, and I think it showed in the second half," Hallman said. "He didn't appear to be affected by the layoff at all."

Although Hallman is probably no option in check, there is probably his other coach in the nation as familiar with A&M football. An A&M graduate himself, Hallman lettered as a defensive back from 1966 to 1968, and was an All-Southwest Conference selection in '68. He was

also named to the A&M All-Decade team for the '60s.

He returned to College Station in 1982 as an assistant coach, where he stayed until he took the head coaching job at Southern Mississippi in 1988.

Since leaving A&M for the second time, Hallman has coached against the Aggies twice, with Southern Miss losing 31-14 in 1989 and LSU being blown out 45-7 a year ago.

Those years of experience, however, might be of little use without a healthy lineup. The Tigers' top recruit, 6-6, 260-pound tight end David LaFleur, suffered a dislocated ankle in practice and is out for the season. And with minor injuries to free safety John Bell, fullback Germaine Williams, defensive tackle John Morgan, and receivers Sheddric Wilson and Clarence Lenton, Hallman is holding out hope that the healing waters will be running deep and fast.

"We've got some guys that are banged up," Hallman said. "Hopefully, we will get some of these guys back this week."

If LSU's walking wounded do recover, it might help smooth out the adjustment Hallman is making to so many newcomers in his lineup. The green freshmen seem to come in waves at different positions, with both the offensive and defensive backfields expected to feature many of the Tigers' kiddie corps.

But the inexperience is softened a bit by traditional LSU strengths - offensive

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Miami hoping for better national championship defense in '92

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI—Two years ago, top-ranked, defending national champion Miami opened its season on the road against a team with one game under its belt. The result: BYU 28, Miami 21.

While the opponent will be different Saturday, the circumstances will be almost identical when the Hurricanes play Iowa.

Once again, Miami is defending national champion, ranked No. 1 and starting its season on the road against a team

that already has played a game. The only difference is that Iowa lost its opener to North Carolina State in the Kickoff Classic, while BYU came into the game with a victory over Texas-El Paso.

Miami coach Dennis Erickson is aware of the striking similarities between the 1990 and 1992 openers.

"We've reminded our players of what happened last time we were in this situation," he said. "We know we can't afford to be overconfident."

Although Iowa was unimpressive against N.C. State, Miami has several rea-

sons to be concerned about its first game, including the loss of its top rusher and receiver.

Fullback Stephen McGuire will miss the game because he still hasn't recovered from knee surgery and receiver Lamar Thomas, recently indicted in a financial aid scandal, will sit out until his case is resolved.

And that's not all. Injuries have decimated Miami's offensive line and Hurricane Andrew forced the team to move its pregame practices to Vero Beach.

Still, the Hurricanes have too much

speed, too much talent and too much big-game experience for the Hawkeys. Quarterback Gino Torretta is back to direct the offense, while the defense is led by one of the best linebacking trios in the country.

Iowa has all-Big Ten center Mike Devlin and standout wide receiver Danan Hughes, whose two TD catches against N.C. State made him the Hawkeys' career leader in that category. But they won't be enough to beat the Hurricanes, a two-touchdown favorite whose 18-game winning streak is the nation's longest.



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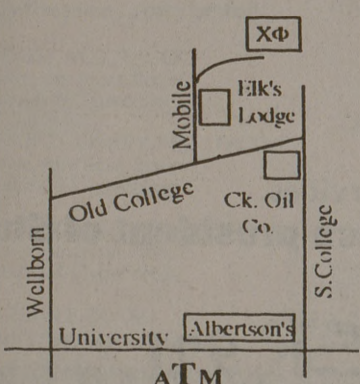
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