

Dem Cajuns talkin' football in Baton Rouge

This past summer, while working in the restaurant of a hotel, I had the pleasure of meeting a gentleman from New Orleans named Phil LeCompte.

Ruly Medrano
Sports Writer

Phil was the most diehard Louisiana State football fan I've ever met. Actually, he's the only LSU football fan I've ever met. Call me deprived.

As I await tomorrow's A&M-LSU clash in Bayouland, I can't help remember a heart-to-heart conversation I had in mid-August with my anti-Aggie buddy.

"Hey daddy," he calls everyone 'daddy.' "When you headdin' on back to school?" "Couple days," I said, not expecting the verbal sparring we were about to start.

"Your boys gotta go out to Baton Rouge dis time," he said, obviously not forgetting the ribbing I gave him over last season's 45-7 A&M win over his 'Tiguhs.' "How's about a little wayjah there, daddy?"

"What you got in mind?" I said. Never been much of a betting guy, but I was curious.

"I was thinkin' along the lines of a couple of cold beahs. Ya know dat's all I'd feel good takin' from you seeing you're gonna be bent outta shape aftah your boys get it takin' to 'em by 20 or so."

"Thinking like that, Phil, I don't think you need anymore cold ones," I cracked. Not Don Rickles caliber, I know. But he caught me off guard.

"Let me tell you somethin' dad," I knew he was getting serious because now I was just 'dad.'

"I know ovah in Aggieland, you guys take your football somethin'"

See Medrano/Page 9

TEXAS A&M VS. LSU

Son of a gun, big fun on the Bayou

Aggies, Tigers continue heated rivalry Saturday

By K. LEE DAVIS

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

Texas A&M will face Louisiana State on Saturday at 2:37 p.m. in Baton Rouge to continue a rivalry that dates back to the turn of the century.

A&M will enter into an unfriendly territory known as "Death Valley." Most people think that it is a desert in California, but for those who have stepped onto a football field in southern Louisiana, there can be little doubt that Tiger Stadium, on the campus of LSU, is hell on earth.

The Tigers have a career record of 284-108-18 in Death Valley, where a crowd of over 80,000 people are expected to see LSU's home opener.

"It's an exciting place to play," said A&M head coach R. C. Slocum. "We really haven't played well down there, but I know we can win there."

Slocum and his seventh-ranked Aggies will be playing their second game of the season, having squeaked by Stanford, 10-7 on August 26, with more expectations than perhaps any other team in school history.

A&M was put through some long workouts this week as a result of the narrow victory over Stanford.

"We have got to get, obviously, some of the rough edges off of our offense," Slocum said.

He said that having to play at LSU's home opener will not make their task any easier.

"This is their opening ballgame, they're opening at home, and it's a new season with new excitement," he said.

With a victory over the Tigers, A&M

THE LEGEND OF DEATH VALLEY

By DON NORWOOD

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

Fans of almost every university in the nation with even a moderately successful football program like to boast of the atmosphere of their respective home stadiums. Some of these schools do, in fact, feature a more distinct home field advantage due simply to the aura and tradition surrounding their stadiums.

Some of the more celebrated cases, like Michigan's 101,000-seat showcase, Syracuse's deafening Carrier Dome, and Georgia's Sanford Stadium, have reputations as concrete beasts that chew up visiting teams and spit them out as shells of their former selves.

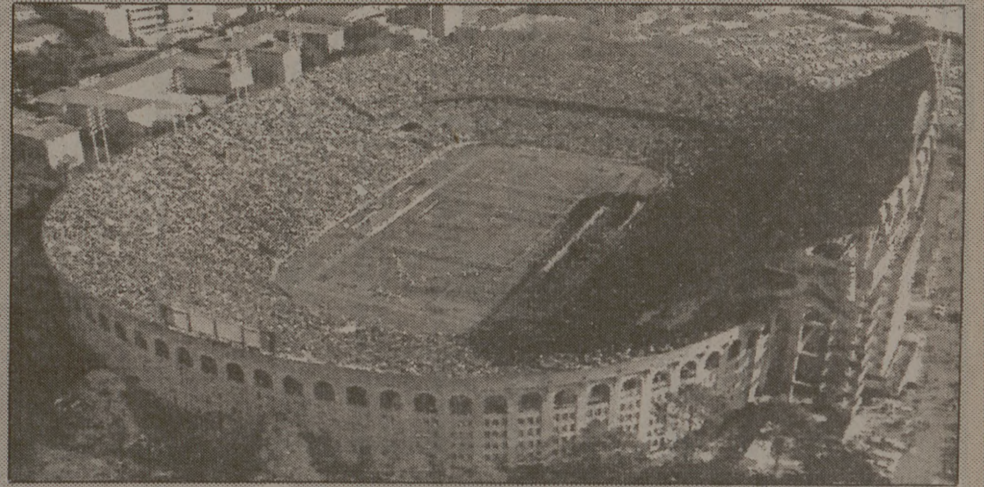
But there are a few stadiums that simply speak for themselves, leaving excessive hyperbole unnecessary. One of those arenas is Louisiana State's Tiger Stadium, better known as "Death Valley."

Although Clemson has made a pretty good case in their use of the term, many coaches and players around the nation would be quick to admit that the true Death Valley is in Baton Rouge. The Tigers have enjoyed a .715 winning percentage in Tiger Stadium since 1924 and an average attendance of 67,958 since 1957. On the surface, those are impressive numbers.

But mere numbers leave out the near-hostility that visiting teams receive when they step on the field. Mike V, LSU's live Bengal tiger mascot, is strategically

could be poised for a national championship run as the most difficult part of the schedule would seemingly be behind them. The Aggies take on Tulsa at home and Missouri on the road before starting Southwest Conference play.

Texas A&M's record at the Baton



LSU File Photo

Louisiana State's Tiger Stadium, more commonly known as "Death Valley," has haunted the Aggies over the years. A&M has not won there since 1975.

placed at the visitor's entrance, having received several shots from a water gun to provoke roars.

The official seating capacity is virtually ignored, as the Tiger faithful take the attitude that quantity equals quality. The fans themselves are, to say the least, colorful, with periodic sing-alongs to "Hold That Tiger" 80,000 voices strong. And the intimacy of the sidelines to the bleachers insures that the more vocal LSU patrons leave opposing players' ears burning.

If it sounds intimidating, that's just

how Tiger fans planned it.

"The people here love their football," Texas A&M alumnus and current LSU head coach Curley Hallman said. "They get excited about their Tigers."

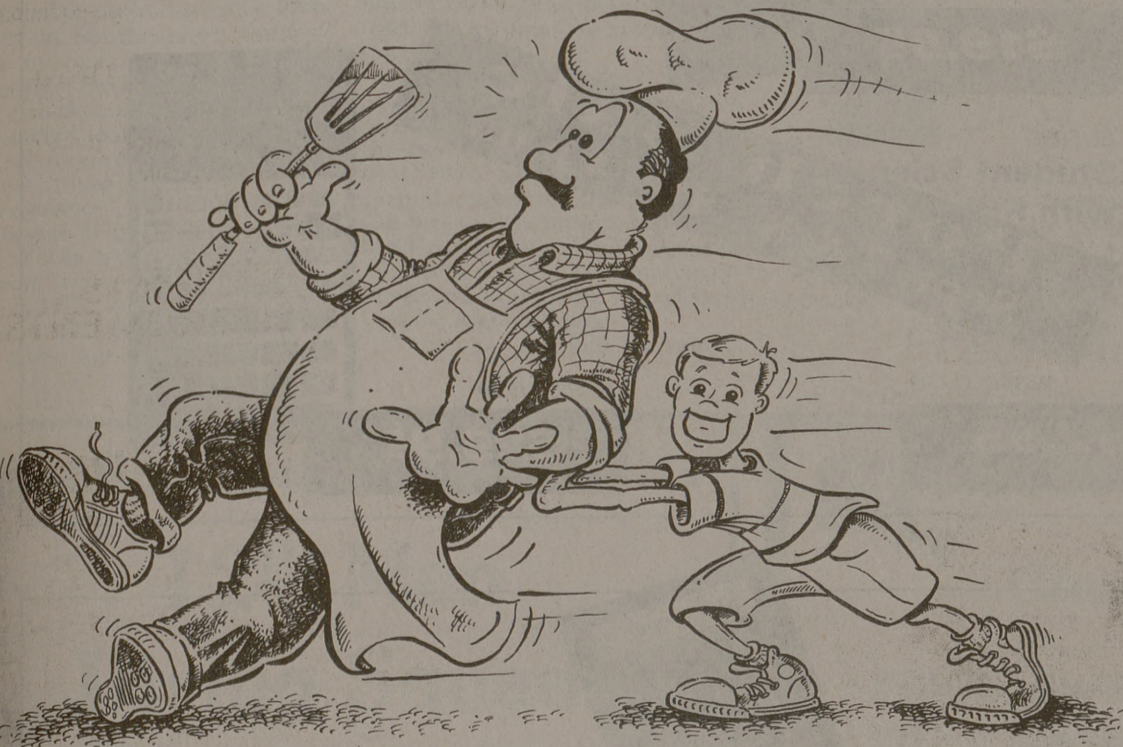
Hallman is enjoying life on the other side after enduring the hostile Death Valley environment several times as a defensive back and assistant coach at A&M. And while he was somewhat prepared for the traditional onslaught from the fans, Hallman said the Saturday

See Death Valley/Page 9

A highly regarded A&M team was soundly defeated, 17-8 in 1990, after then star Aggie tailback Darren Lewis was ejected from the game in the first quarter for unsportsmanlike conduct.

See LSU/ Page 9

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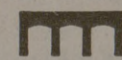
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