

Aggie Band helped tarnish school's image

What should have been a glowing, magical, epic achievement last Thursday night was ruined by events that took place before, during and after the football game between Texas A&M and the University of Texas.



K. LEE DAVIS
Sports Writer

The A&M football team is still 12-0 and one of the best three teams in major college football, and looks to be headed in the same direction next season.

The Aggies had never won back-to-back conference titles and gone undefeated in conference play until last week, and next year could make it three straight.

But the events that killed the glory of the night for this Aggie — and many others — were the conduct of the band before the game and at half-time and the antics of a few members of the football team after their great victory.

As I was driving into Austin to see the game, I tuned into one of the city's local stations to here some of the pregame show. Imagine my surprise when I found out the main topic of conversation during the program was an incident that some band members had instigated earlier in the afternoon.

As the report went, the Aggie band was lining up on the field for practice Thursday afternoon and some members were standing around the painted visage of UT's mascot, Bevo, at midfield, admiring the newly sewn-on

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Solari trying to fill shoes of former A&M greats

By **MICHAEL PLUMER**
Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

A string of excellent linebackers is a tradition that has developed at Texas A&M in the past 20 years as one linebacker after another has gone on to play in the National Football League.

Ed Simonini, Garth Ten Napel and Robert Jackson in the mid-1970s have passed the torch to a younger generation which included Johnny Holland, John Roper, Aaron Wallace and Quentin Coryatt. They carried the flames from the 1980s into the 1990s.

Senior outside linebacker Marcus Buckley has done his part to follow the tradition by posting 29 sacks in his A&M career. But his flame is starting to flicker as he prepares for his final game at A&M which will be in the Mobil Cotton Bowl Classic.

Into his spot, a quiet, unassuming 6-1, 225-pound linebacker is ready to assume Buckley's soon-to-be-vacated throne.

His name is Steve Solari.

"It pumps my ego when people say that, and I do look at the possibility of being the next linebacker who has a chance to shine," Solari said. "But there are a lot of others, like the freshmen from this year, who could push me. They will keep me on my toes, so it could be one of them next year."

"I have to work hard, and I hope that it will be me next year. Time will tell."

While there is speculation about the 1993 season, Solari is still pushing for this season to finish on a good note. With 61 tackles, the Sugar Land Willowridge High School product is fifth on the team in number of tackles. He has also posted three and a half sacks, placing him behind Buckley and defensive lineman Lance Teichelman in quarterback traps for the year.

By his own admission, the 1992 season started slowly for Solari. He picked up his play in the fourth game of the season against Missouri when he had eight tackles.

"Earlier in the season, I was not too happy with the way things were going, but my play has picked up as the season has gone along," Solari said. "I felt my play has been pretty much even in the last few games."

Although Solari has been happy with his play, he said he feels there is still room for improvement in the Cotton Bowl.

"I am always excited with my play, but I don't feel any satisfaction because there is always something that I can improve on."

After transferring from Purdue in 1990, Solari said he received tutelage from Buckley in learning A&M's defensive system. The time the two spent together helped him to adjust to not only a different program but also college life, he said.

"We are like brothers because we share and do a lot of things together," Solari said. "He helped me out a lot by teaching me the system and with him being there at the other linebacker spot has taken the pressure off of me."

Buckley said he expects Solari to blossom into the main man next year because of the intangibles he possesses.

"Steve is a really great guy, and we're good friends," Buckley said. "I know he'll be able to do the job next year because of the way he approaches the game."

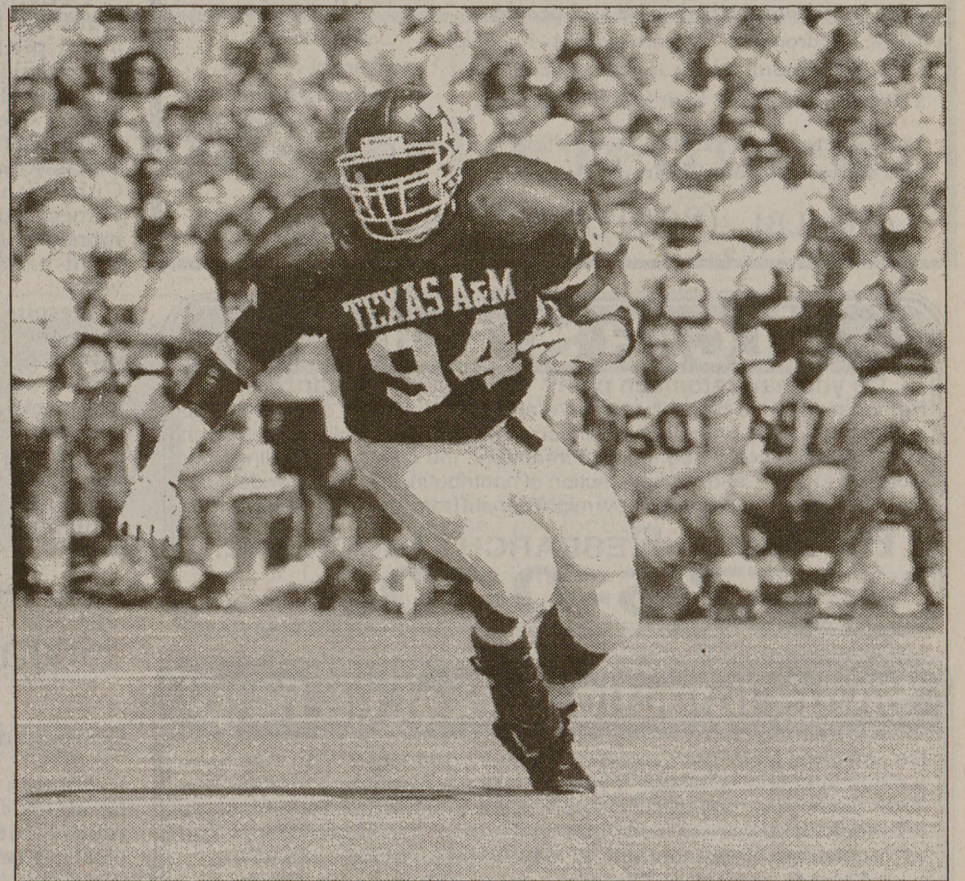
"He's got a lot of speed, and he knows how to get to the quarterback and make things happen."

Applying pressure on the quarterback is an integral part of the A&M defensive scheme. For an outside linebacker to be successful for the Aggies, he must possess the quickness to get around any potential blockers.

Outside linebacker coach Kirk Doll said Solari has those areas covered.

"He is a great athlete that can do a number of things," Doll said. "Steve is a great asset for our defense because he can take the pressure off the other linebackers."

"He can blitz and play the run which



A&M outside linebacker Steve Solari blitzes around the right end against LSU in the Aggies' 44-7 win in 1991. Solari is looking to be the next in the line of great NFL linebackers at A&M.

is important in the type of defense we play."

One aspect of Solari that could be viewed as a negative in his play is lack of height. Standing at 6-1, Solari will usually be matched against tackles and tight ends that are four to five inches taller than him.

But both Doll and Solari himself said that he can overcome that.

"Although Steve is relatively short, it actually might help him because he gains leverage against the bigger guys," Doll said. "It might work against him at certain times, but it probably shouldn't be that much of a factor. The matchups we try to create in our defense are hopefully to his advantage."

"Steve can use his quickness to get off

the blocks and get around the bigger man and make the play."

"Sometimes I feel I have the advantage by being shorter because when I turn the corner against a guy that is 6-5 and 280 pounds he doesn't want to get down and block me," Solari said. "It might hurt me when I play the run because sometimes I have to search around and find where the ball is."

"All in all, I don't think my height bothers me all that much when I'm playing."

Solari said his quickness can help in overcoming his supposed lack of size.

"It helps a lot that I am faster than most of the players I go against," he said.

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