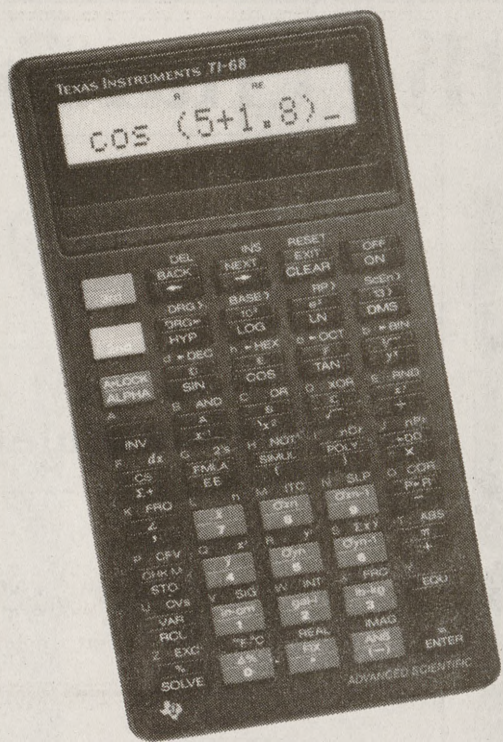
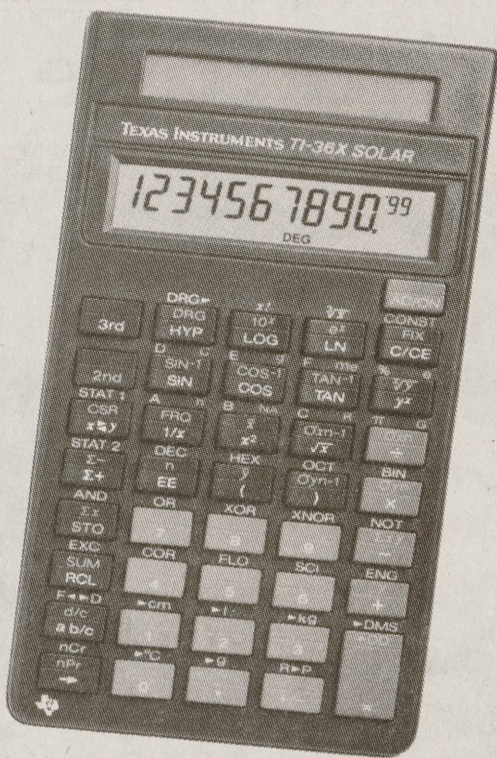


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PLAYER PROFILES

Pullig not just a passing fad

By David Winder

THE BATTALION

Talk about pressure. Texas A&M's expectations are running high for a third straight Cotton Bowl appearance and a shot at a national championship. Only two offensive starters are missing from A&M's best regular season ever at 12-0.

But for the Aggies to be successful this year quarterback Corey Pullig can not afford a "sophomore slump."

"Corey didn't have it all last year, but he caught on fast," Offensive coordinator Bob Toledo said. "The thing that's made a difference now is that after a year he's been able to sit down and analyze what happen to him last year.

"We ran a lot of bad plays last year because we ran into some stacked defenses," he said. "We're trying to get him to the point where they do something defensively we want to take advantage of what they're doing instead of just running the play to run it which puts the burden on him. We're going to put more of burden on him to get us out of some bad plays this year and he's been doing a good job of that right now."

Pullig also did a good job of jump-starting the Aggie offense when he started the final five regular season games of the season. In those games A&M went 5-0 as Pullig threw for 699 yards.

"I think this year is going to be easier on me because I don't have to prove myself every week," Pullig said. "I'm just going to go out each week and try to get a little bit better and try to learn the offense as much as I can, I think it going to be easier on me this year."

His teammates think that with Pullig in control the whole year the A&M offense could explode.

"Anytime you come in and it's your first year things are going to be different," junior running back Rodney Thomas said. "But now that Corey's got a year under his belt, he's got the confidence he needs."

"He's also going to help our running game more because any defense that sees you can't pass they're going to put all the men they want on the line scrimmage. His passing ability will open up our passing game."

A&M's new passing game is what has Pullig excited.

"The offense seems a lot more balanced this year, because what we're trying to do is open up the running game more," Pullig said.

"We have such a great ground attack, that the defenses have to respect our ground game. Now what we're trying to do is get them to

Miami where they throw the ball 30 or 40 times a game but I don't think that's type of quarterback I am.

"I wanted to go somewhere where they ran a pro-style offense and I think that's what we're trying to get here."

Pullig also thinks that the rest of the team will benefit from knowing that there will be one clear-cut starting quarterback.

"I can't speak for everyone of course, but I think it's going to be easier on the team because they know what to expect from me and I know what to expect from them," Pullig said. "So it makes the team chemistry a little bit better than last year."

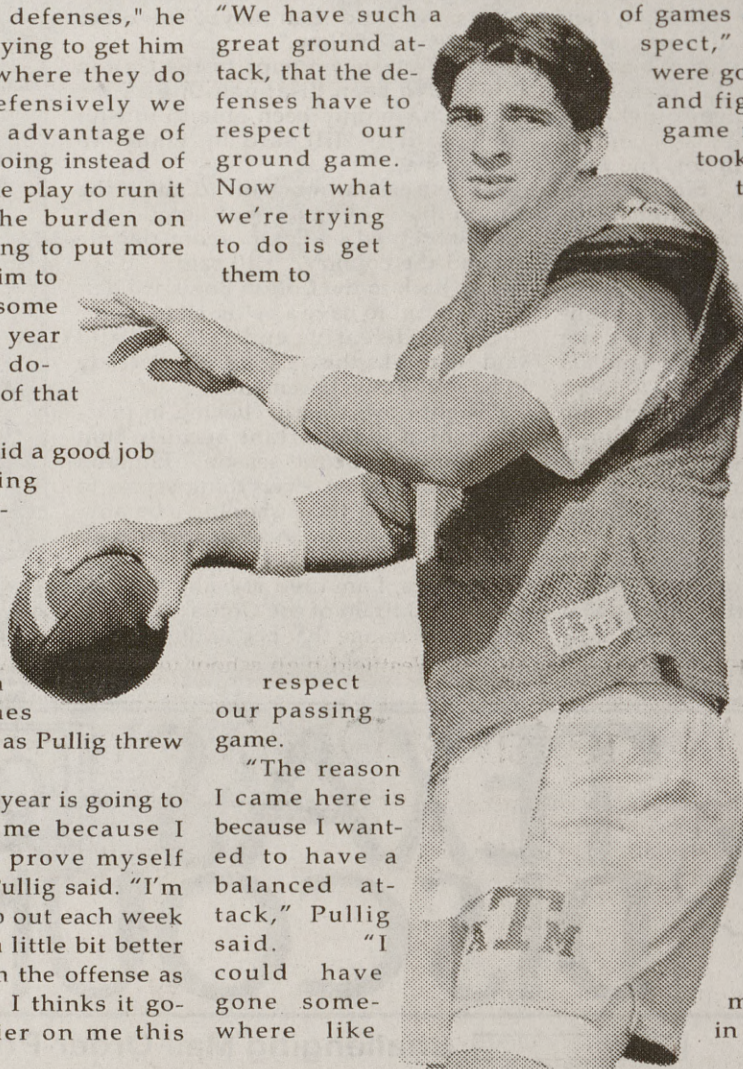
This year, however, is all Pullig is worried about.

"Last year, we didn't just try to go out and win a couple of games and get a little respect," Pullig said. "We were going out each week and fighting to win that game no matter what it took. I think this year's team will have that same attitude."

According to Toledo, Pullig's consistency is what helps him to be a good quarterback.

"Corey has great poise, he doesn't have those highs and lows," Toledo said. "When he's doing well he doesn't think much about it, when he makes mistakes he doesn't think much about it."

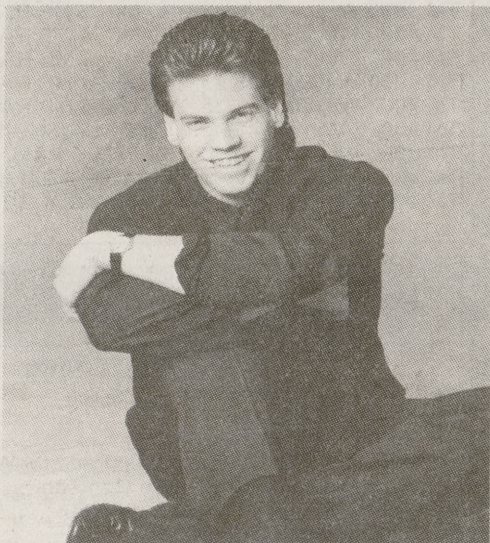
"He forgets about them quick so there's not a lot of those peaks and valleys. He's consistent and to me that's important in quarterback."



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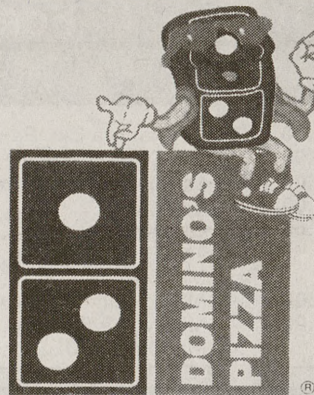
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