

A&M tight end Schorp quietly having big year

By Matthew J. Rush

THE BATTALION

Away from the spotlight of Heisman Trophy candidates and future National Football League linebackers, the shadows have fallen on a football player who has quietly put together a solid career at Texas A&M.

Senior tight end Greg Schorp has been touted as an All-American candidate, receiving top rankings at his position in several national college football magazines, but he has been overlooked on offense because of A&M's stable of running backs, including the nation's sixth leading rusher, Rodney Thomas.

Through four games, Schorp has caught nine passes, tying him for the team lead with freshman running back Leeland McElroy. Schorp has gained 133 yards receiving, ranking him second on the team in passing yardage. Schorp said that although the Aggies will now feature three running backs because of the return of Greg Hill, his role will not change. "I think we're using the tight ends the same way as we did last year," Schorp said. "As far as changing the scheme, we're trying to remain balanced on offense."

In 1992, Schorp was named the Most Valuable Player in the Pigskin Classic, a 10-7 A&M victory over Stanford. In addition to that honor, Schorp caught 24 passes for 280 yards.

Because A&M has dominated three of its first four opponents, Schorp's playing time has been diminished, as younger players have logged playing time.

Schorp said that while he would like to see more passes thrown his way, he will do whatever it takes for his team to win.

"I'm pretty happy with the catches I've made," Schorp said. "You would always like to have more, but as long as the team is doing well, you can't complain."

Schorp said that his main contribution to the team is his experience and his sense of enthusiasm for competition.

"I think, because I'm a senior, I am more of a leader on the field for some of the younger guys," Schorp said. "I just try to play every play as hard as I can and try to be tough."

A&M tight ends coach Shawn Slocum said that he thinks Schorp is a player that constantly plays above and beyond his abilities.

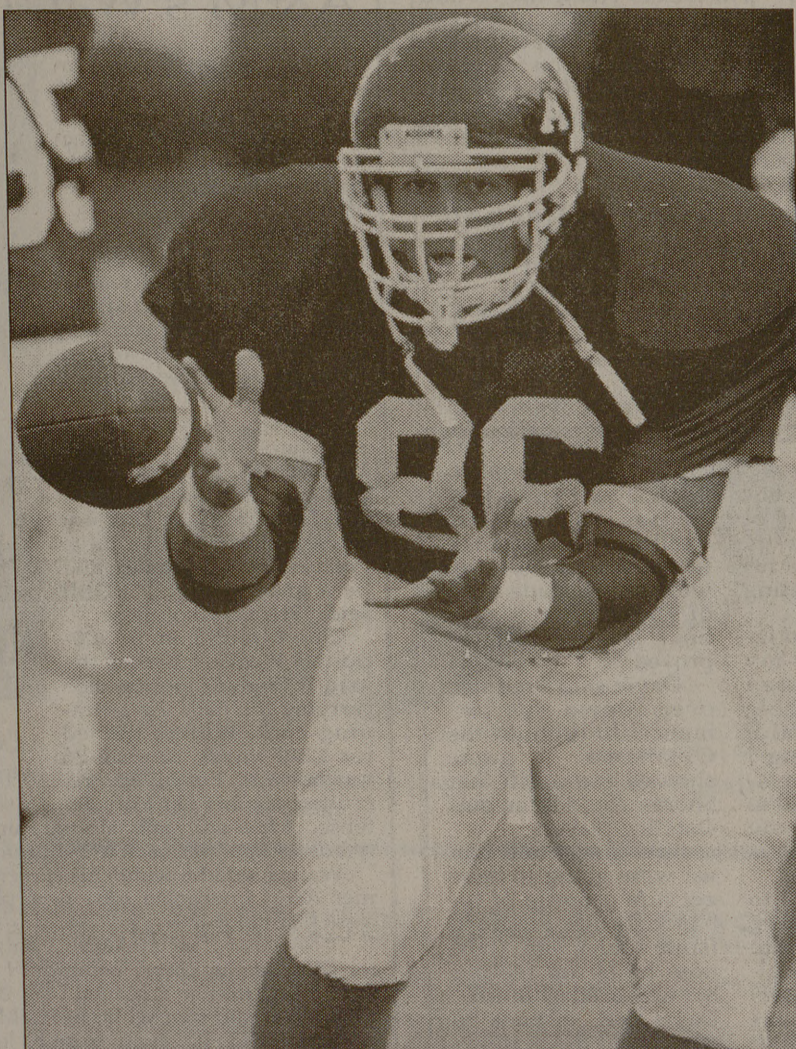
"I think that he is a leader by example," Slocum said. "More than anything he plays hard, practices hard, and does what he is supposed to do."

"He is really mature, and he handles himself well."

Slocum also said that Schorp is a definite NFL prospect.

"Greg definitely has the mental capability to play in the NFL, and he has got the size," Slocum said. Schorp said that in his final year at A&M, he would like to win his third straight Southwest Conference title, and that he would expect nothing less of his team.

"(Winning the title) is a goal I think every Southwest Conference team should have before the season, and I think for us it is a realistic goal," Schorp said. "We have a lot of seniors, and if everybody plays up to their ability, we should be there."

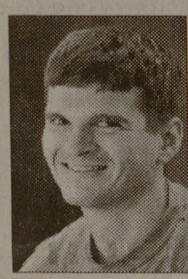


Kyle Burnett/The BATTALION

Texas A&M tight end Greg Schorp prepares to catch a ball in practice. Schorp has been a hidden weapon in the Aggies' passing game.

Artificial turf: 'Three yards and a cloud of... Carpet Fresh?'

Imagine for a few minutes that it's 1968 all over again. The nation was in turmoil, what with Vietnam and the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King making worldwide headlines.



WILLIE CORRINGTON Sports writer

"Tune in, turn on, drop out," Haight-Ashbury and Woodstock (OK, that was in 1969) were buzzwords for a generation bent on changing the world.

But lurking behind all the polyester, an evil greater than that of double-knit bell bottoms was taking root in Knoxville, Tennessee. It was an event that would change the college football landscape forever.

The Tennessee Volunteers became the first university to replace grass with artificial turf in 1968.

"Three yards and a cloud of dust" became "three yards and a cloud of... Carpet Fresh?" Twenty-five years later, this abomination is still very much in evidence across the nation.

Here at Texas A&M, it would seem Aggies would be immune to this siren call. After all, the 'A' in A & M does still stand for "agricultural", does it not? One of the leading turfgrass management professors in the nation is on the faculty here. At last check, College Station was still capable of supporting the growth of God's green grass.

Why, then, is there a rug on Kyle Field?

On the surface, the answer is simple: it's easy to maintain. An artificial turf field needs only to be painted periodically and replaced every 12-15 years. There is no watering, seeding, fertilizing or sodding to be done.

Beside the occasional vacuuming, there's nothing else to be done once the turf is laid. The one-time cost of installing astroturf outweighs the constant maintenance a grass field requires.

What makes artificial turf not worth the convenience is the physical toll it takes on the ath-

letes involved, whether it be football or baseball players.

Astroturf is hard. Damned hard.

Cover the average sidewalk with a quarter-inch thick cushion, put Grandma's ugly green welcome mat over the padding and bam, instant astroturf! What's tragic is that this example is not too far from the truth.

One of the major drawbacks of artificial turf is the stress that it causes on the joints, especially the knees.

Prolonged running and jumping on astroturf (or any hard surface, for that matter) speeds up the deterioration of the cartilage.

These knee injuries are one of the leading causes of premature retirement among athletes. The human body was just not built to withstand being bounced off of covered cement.

Another hazard associated with artificial turf is biological in nature. The amount of blood spilled during an average football game is fairly sizable. When a player spits blood on a grass field, it is absorbed into the ground and there is little harm done.

If the same player loses blood on astroturf, the blood just sits

there because it has nowhere to go. If another player happens to slide across this pool of blood, he is risking an infection or worse.

Slowly but surely, colleges and professional teams are starting to see the light. In the last five or six years, two NFL teams (the Bears and the Patriots) and several universities have ripped up their artificial turf and put real grass back in. The cost of maintenance is certainly higher for a grass stadium, but the players' welfare should be first and foremost, not whether an owner or college president can save a few bucks in the short run.

The question of why there is astroturf on Kyle Field has been answered. It's the easy way out. Should the university do something about it? Absolutely. Since football ticket prices went up from \$10 to \$12.50 this season, it's only reasonable to suggest that this extra income be used to replace the turf with some nice, soft grass. It's the only humane thing to do.

If Mr. Edwin Kyle knew that the field named after him was covered with fake grass, he'd be spinning in his grave. I just hope he doesn't get rug burn in the process.

Helton

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rush, as evidenced by the Aggies going sackless in last season's 38-30 A&M victory in the Astrodome.

"I think Jimmy is the key for us, how can he keep his composure, and how we can get the ball out quickly and keep him from getting sacked," Helton said.

Defensively, the Cougars are led by senior middle linebacker Ryan McCoy who logged 21 tackles against Baylor, helping stuff Baylor's veer offense.

McCoy said Helton is trying to change more than the offense; dispelling the Jenkins' image of running up scores on weaker opponents.

He said that in practice he could tell the difference in the offense as tight ends and drop-back passing were reinstated in prac-

tice. But he said the defense was the same design, emphasizing his role in the middle.

He said he knew what he was in for at Kyle Field Saturday.

"It's been a battle all four of my years (at Houston), and it's always been that way," McCoy said.

"Our defense is keyed up for the game. We know what our capabilities are and what we have to do to shut them down."

Jack said that he wasn't con-

cerned with bucking the odds heading into the game, and that he was eagerly anticipating a hard-fought afternoon.

"We're going to get respect any way it goes, (and) it's going to be a fight," Jack said. "I'm sure that (A&M head coach R.C.) Slocum is preparing them, (but) Helton is preparing us."

"It's going to be a great game. We have great players on both sides of the ball and you couldn't ask for anything more."

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