



A&M Report Card



QUARTERBACK B



Pullig

Corey Pullig finished the day 14-of-29 for 127 yards and a touchdown even though he spent much of the day giving the ball to McElroy. His only real mistake was underthrowing receiver Albert Connell near the end zone which resulted in an interception. Pullig also ran for two first downs.

WIDE RECEIVERS A-



Sanders

After a week where it seemed every receiver on the roster was hurt, the Aggies were still able to get a passing attack going. Newcomer Albert Connell had three receptions for 37 yards and a touchdown. Limited by a hamstring injury, senior Chris Sanders still caught two passes, as did junior Danny McCray.

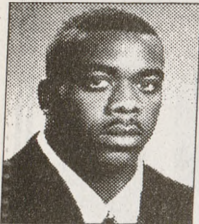
SECONDARY A



Mickens

Ray Mickens led the entire "Wrecking Crew" with 11 tackles including a massive hit on LSU tight end David LaFleur. Donovan Greer led the squad with three passes broken up. Typail McMullen and Andre Williams both saved a touchdown by breaking up a pass. McMullen put the finishing touch on the day by making the drive-ending tackle on LSU's last possession.

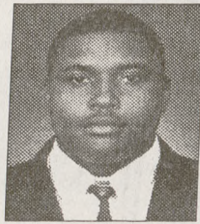
RUNNING BACKS A+



McElroy

Leeland McElroy jumped to the front of the Heisman Trophy race with three touchdowns and 229 yards on 35 carries. He also caught five passes for 49 yards. Fullback Detron Smith reliable as always, opening up holes for the tailbacks with punishing blocks. Freshman Sirr Parker saw action in the second half after the Aggies had sealed the game and collected 18 yards.

DEFENSIVE LINE A-



Mitchell

The Aggies were not deep on the line going into the game with the two-game suspension of David Maxwell. The line was able to get constant pressure on LSU quarterback Jaime Howard for most of the game. The LSU offense focused on junior Brandon Mitchell for much of the game, allowing nose guard Eddie Jasper to record several tackles.

SPECIAL TEAMS A-



Bryant

Once again LSU dared Leeland McElroy to return kickoffs, and he answered by giving the Aggies good field position each time with three returns for 81 yards. The only mistake the A&M special teams had was the block of a Kyle Bryant field goal in the first quarter. Bryant came back to kick a 24-yarder and Brandon Mitchell returned the favor by blocking an LSU field goal attempt.

OFFENSIVE LINE A



Collins

One of last year's weak links came together Saturday. With most of the starters missing time with injuries during the game, the line still gave up only one sack and opened holes for 291 yards of rushing. Junior guard Calvin Collins sprained both ankles in the second half, but returned to action later in the game.

LINEBACKERS A+



Brown

Linebacker U. was at it again with Reggie Brown recording nine tackles while Dat Nguyen collected eight. Keith Mitchell recorded the only sack for the Aggies when he blew by the LSU line untouched for a safety on Howard. Nguyen excelled without starting the game, splitting time with Trent Driver.

COACHING A



Slocum

Slocum and Bennett admitted to being not quite prepared for the intense heat, but they managed to rotate players well enough to keep fresh bodies in at nearly all times. Offensive Coordinator Steve Ensminger knew who to get the ball to every time the Aggies need yards.

Players' prayers no big deal

KRISTINA BUFFIN

AST. SPORTS ED.



In the last few years, the NFL and NCAA have been trying to increase their fan bases by changing certain rules of the game. These new rules have ranged from the useful to the useless.

For example, in the last few years, both the NFL and NCAA passed rules that limited excessive celebration on the field following touchdowns. The reasoning was that it constituted unsportsmanlike conduct. Thus, both governing bodies began assessing penalties against teams they felt were acting in a manner detrimental towards the game.

While the excessive celebration rule acts to keep players from doing such things as giving game balls to fans, a new rule instituted by the NCAA goes a little too far.

The NCAA recently passed a rule that bans players from praying on the field including acts such as kneeling down after scoring touchdowns. The reasoning is that prayer is not necessary, and that it is similar to the excessive celebration problem. However, NCAA officials must realize that they have no right to tell athletes they can or cannot pray.

If the NCAA does not want to allow religion in the game of football, they should look at some of the other aspects of the game. Before certain college football games, the public announcer asks everyone to pray for the home team, the visiting team and against any type of injuries that may occur throughout the game.

For example, at A&M, the invocation is not meant to have religious undertones.

If the NCAA does not want individual players to pray during the game, they should end the practice of praying before the game. If not, the NCAA would be hypocritical in its rulings.

The NCAA has no right to invade people's privacy by telling them they can or cannot pray. Religion is an individual choice, and no governing body can regulate how people feel and how they want to express how they feel.

This is much different from the excessive celebration rule because religion is protected by the Constitution. Spiking a football between your legs is not.

The logic behind the excessive celebration rule is that dancing and turning somersaults are viewed as merely taunting the opposing team.

However, when a player scores a touchdown and decides to pray, he merely gets down on one knee and bows his head for a few seconds. This is not taunting the other team; it is merely taking a personal moment to thank whomever he wants.

A brief moment of prayer is more dignified than strutting around showing 50,000 or more fans how special you think you are.

University officials must realize that athletes are human and not just robots that generate money. Like any other religious individual, athletes should be allowed to express their feelings. It is called freedom of expression.

The NCAA also ruled against team prayer on the field. Usually, after a victory, players gather to pray and thank God for their win. The NCAA wants to end this practice as well, but the NCAA must realize that praying is a choice.

If some of the players do not want to pray after the game, they do not have to. There is no pressure from other players, and until this new ruling, religion has never been an issue on the football field.

Instead of worrying about whether or not players should be able to pray on the field, officials should concentrate on more pressing topics such as excessive violence on the field, drug abuse and other issues that are plaguing both collegiate and professional sports.

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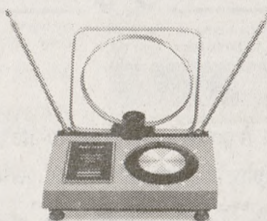
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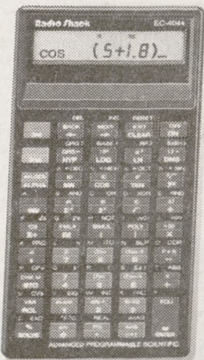


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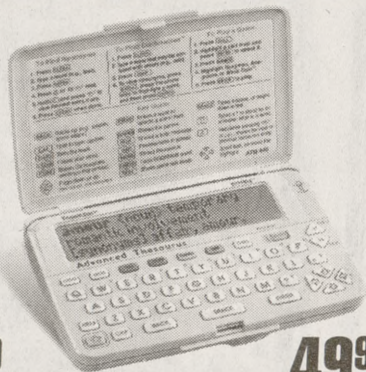
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