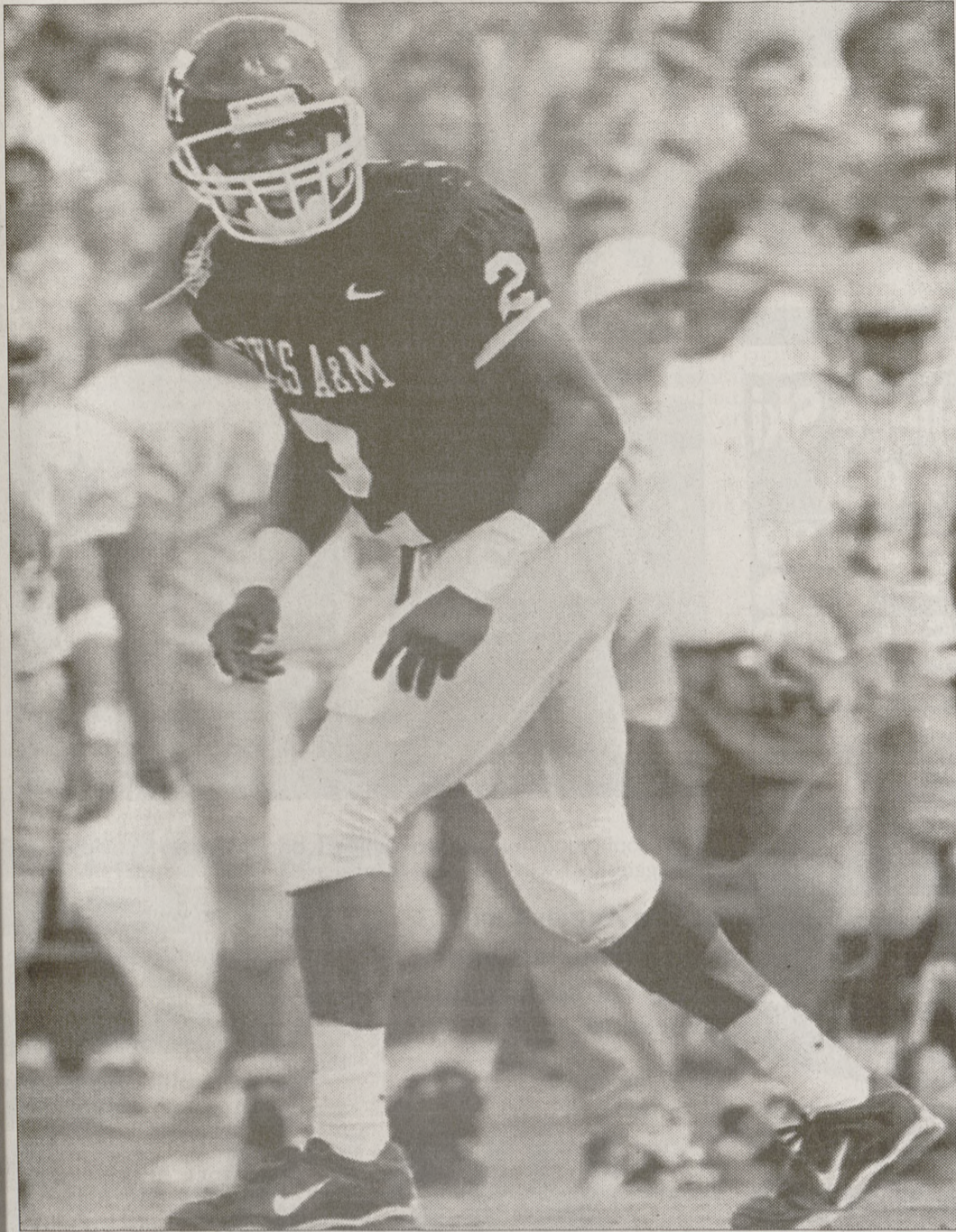


The Need For SPEED



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Texas A&M junior wide receiver Danny McCray awaits the snap in the Aggies' defeat of Louisiana State University Sept. 2.

□ Danny McCray has shed the track runner in pads label and become a dangerous weapon for A&M's offense.

By David Winder
THE BATTALION

Labeling him a sprinter in shoulder pads negates the hard work he has put into becoming a starting receiver for Texas A&M.

Branding him a football player in spikes erases the 1994 NCAA Indoor 1600-meter relay title he helped A&M to win.

But calling him an athlete affirms Danny McCray's ability.

"I can do a lot of different things," McCray said. "God gave me ability. Just because I can play football and have speed shouldn't be a handicap."

But ever since McCray arrived at Texas A&M, his speed has been detrimental. He has yet to achieve what everyone anticipated his deep-threat ability would bring. In two years, McCray has caught four passes for 33 yards.

"People are always going to have expectations of what I should do," McCray said. "I know I'm capable of big plays. I just have to be at the right place at the right time."

"Up until now, I really haven't received the opportunity (to play). Ryan (Matthews) and Brian (Mitchell) were such good players that they got most of the reps. I've just been here waiting for my turn."

This year, McCray has started at split end and flanker in the Aggies' first two games. He has caught two

passes for 16 yards.

"Danny has always been labeled as a track guy," A&M Wide Receivers Coach Les Koenning, Jr. said. "But he's done everything we've ever asked of him. He's really coming on."

McCray had a hard time adjusting to wide receiver after playing only running back in high school. He caught 40 passes for 626 yards and seven touchdowns his senior year on mostly screen plays.

"I had never had to run precise depth routes before," McCray said. "I came here and had to run real routes against talented defensive backs. On every play, I'm coming around. In practice, everything is getting much easier."

"I catch myself really worrying about making mistakes. I'm really hard on myself but not as much as I used to be. I see (San Francisco 49er receiver) Jerry Rice make a mistake, and I realize we're all human."

Last year, McCray qualified in the 200-m dash, 400-m dash and the 1600-m relay in the NCAA Outdoor Championships. He also ran the anchor leg on the Aggies' 1600-m relay team that captured the indoor title. This season, McCray plans to run the 100-m, 200-m and the 400-m and 1600-m relays.

"People often refer to me as

just a 'track guy,'" McCray said. "There's nothing negative about being a 'track guy.' I take it as a compliment because I know what it takes to be one. I know what it takes to be a football player, also."

McCray said that both the football team and the track team have the talent to win national championships this year.

"You wouldn't be able to describe the feeling if we won them both," McCray said. "Not too many people have won two national championships. There's a job I have to do, and I'm going to do it."

McCray said he also plans to go to tryouts for the United States Olympic Track and Field Team this year.

"Everyone dreams about wearing the red, white and blue," McCray said. "Going to Atlanta to represent my country, I would be on cloud nine."

Can you imagine winning a national championship, then making the Olympics? You couldn't write a better script than that."

Right now, McCray is concentrating on football, but does not know which sport he will eventually choose to participate in full-time.

"I can't actually pick one," McCray said. "God will choose which road I go down."

Until then, McCray is just an athlete.



"Can you imagine winning the national championship, then making the Olympics?"

— Danny McCray
A&M wide receiver

Sudden Impact: Connell adds instant offense to A&M

□ The junior transfer caught four passes for 76 yards in his first career start as an Aggie.

By Tom Day
THE BATTALION

They tried to tell Albert Connell differently, but he would not listen. They told him all the Texas A&M football team did was run the ball, but it did not faze him.

When it came time for the junior wide receiver to transfer to a Division I football program, A&M was his choice.

"A lot of people told me A&M wouldn't pass the ball," Connell said. "But (Offensive Coordinator Steve) Ensminger is a good coach, and I had heard about him at Georgia."

"He mixes (the offense) up, and I had a pretty good feeling about things."

Since taking over as offensive coordinator last season, Ensminger has put a high priority on implementing a potent passing attack to complement the team's talented group of running backs. With seven receptions for 113 yards through the first two games this season, Connell's decision to transfer is already paying off.

The transfer wide out caught four passes for 76 yards and a touchdown last week in the Aggies' 55-9 rout of Tulsa.

"He adds another talented wide out to our corps," fellow receiver Danny McCray said. "He gives us one more weapon that opposing teams have to stop."

Connell attributed the mutual trust he has with Aggie quarterback Corey Pullig as the key to his immediate success against the Golden Hurricane.

"Corey was completing a lot of passes," Connell said. "Being my first start, I felt I had to do well because we got off to a slow start."

"I believe in Corey and he believes in us. Once we got that established, it's all about having fun."

Last season, as a standout at Trinity Valley Community College, Connell was nothing short of spectacular. His team-record 41 catches for 738 yards helped catapult TVCC to a 12-0 season record and the Junior College National Title.

"I felt I wasn't a Division II player," Connell said. "I figured I could play with the big boys. The only real big transition for me was working harder, running a lot more plays and playing in front of bigger crowds."

"Once I made my first catch, I felt real comfortable."

A&M Receivers Coach Les Koenning, Jr. said Connell is climbing the ladder to success one rung at a time.

"I think he has adjusted well,"

Koenning said. "There's a chosen few that play on the college level and if you don't progress and keep improving, then obviously you don't get the opportunity to keep playing. Albert is getting better each week."

Connell said he is preparing himself for a future leadership role.

"I haven't yet, but I feel I'll need to be a leader," Connell said. "Chris Sanders is a great leader and we look up to him a lot. I'm a junior and I have to prepare myself because I know that next year I'm going to have to step up."

Koenning said Connell has shown glimpses of greatness.

"If you're going to be a really great athlete and competitor, you have to be consistent," Koenning said. "He's played two ball games at A&M and he's done a good job and has improved in each game."

Connell has lofty goals set for himself.

"I want to break the individual school record for receiving (in a single season)," Connell said. "That was a goal I set when I went to junior college and I got it done. I feel I can do it here if I just work hard."

"A lot of people don't know of my ability and what I can bring to the team, but it's only a matter of time. I want to be known as a good receiver."



Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

Texas A&M junior wide receiver Albert Connell sidesteps through the Tulsa secondary during the Aggies' 55-9 win Sept. 16 at Kyle Field.

THE BATTALION'S 1995 STAFF PICKS

THE MATCH-UPS

	Nick Georgandis	Kristina Buffin	David Winder	Tom Day	Lisa Nance	Philip Leone	Robin Greathouse	Rob Clark	Sterling Hayman	Stew Milne	Kyle Littlefield	Michael Landauer	Gretchen Perrenot	Stacy Stanton	Jody Holley	Dr. Ray Bowen	COMMENTARY
#3 A&M at #7 Colorado	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	Colorado	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M: Clark picked Lu, last year
#13 Texas at #21 Notre Dame	Texas	Notre Dame	Texas	Notre Dame	Texas	Texas	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Texas	Texas	Texas	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Texas	Texas: Davie's luck runs out
Houston at Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Houston	Houston	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas: UH every team's homecoming
SMU at Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	SMU	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	SMU	SMU	Wisconsin	Wisconsin: SMU gets badgered
Rice at #18 LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	Rice	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	Rice	LSU	LSU: Owls don't fly in Death Valley
TCU at Vanderbilt	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	Vanderbilt	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU: Littlefield gets Vandy crazy
#5 USC at #25 Arizona	Arizona	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	Arizona	USC	USC: Keyshawn's too strong
Baylor at N.C. State	Baylor	N.C. State	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	N.C. State	N.C. State	N.C. State	N.C. State	N.C. State	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	N.C. State	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor: Bears come out of hibernation
#11 Virginia at Clemson	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Clemson	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia	Clemson	Virginia	Virginia	Virginia: Cavs rustle Clemson
Oilers at Bengals	Oilers	Oilers	Bengals	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Bengals	Bengals	Bengals	Bengals	Oilers	Bengals	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Bengals	Oilers: Game of the Century!
Cardinals at Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cardinals	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys: Buddyball gettin' old
Chiefs at Browns	Chiefs	Browns	Browns	Browns	Browns	Chiefs	Browns	Chiefs	Browns	Chiefs	Browns	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Browns	Chiefs: Bono works in mysterious ways
Last Week	6-6	8-4	9-3	9-3	8-4	8-4	8-4	9-3	8-4	8-4	9-3	10-2	8-4	9-3	8-4	R.E. Keen:	125-55 (.694)
Cumulative	23-13	28-8	27-9	27-9	27-9	25-11	26-10	25-11	27-9	28-8	28-8	30-6	25-11	24-12	27-9	9-3	397-143 (.735)