

THE BATTALION SPORTS

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Nguyen no fun for Aggie opponents

Spurs sign top pick Alexander to 3-year deal

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The Spurs have agreed to terms with top draft pick Cory Alexander, the San Antonio Express-News reported today.

Alexander, a point guard from Virginia, was drafted 29th in the first round. His signing was expected to be announced today.

"It feels good to have all the pieces in place and begin to prepare for even a better season than we had last year," said Spurs general manager Gregg Popovich.

Alexander's three-year deal is worth between \$1.4 million and \$1.7 million under the rookie scale.

The Spurs head to Austin today for training camp, which begins Friday at the University of Texas.

Taiwan officials won't let Magic enter country

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Magic Johnson's agent says there must be "mixed signals" in Taiwan, where a government health official said the basketball star has been barred from entering the country because he has the AIDS virus.

"(Magic) has an official invitation from the president of Taiwan to visit with him there," agent Lon Rosen said today. "So obviously there are some mixed signals."

Johnson is scheduled to arrive in Taiwan later this month with his All-Stars basketball team for two exhibition games.

Johnson retired in 1992 after announcing that he had contracted the AIDS virus and has since become a spokesman on the disease.

Rangers designate two to minor leagues

ARLINGTON (AP) — The Texas Rangers have outrighted catcher John Marzano and designated hitter Sam Horn to their Triple A affiliate at Oklahoma City, the team announced Thursday.

Each player has the option to declare free agency but neither has notified the club of his intention, the Rangers said.

Marzano spent most of the season with Oklahoma City, where he hit .309 with nine home runs and 56 RBI in 120 games. He went 2-for-6 in two games with the Rangers in September.

Horn hit .308 with 12 homers and 42 RBI in 46 games in Triple A, but went 1-for-9 in late-season action with Texas.

The moves reduced the Rangers roster to 38.

Rockets complete training camp roster

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Rockets completed their training camp roster Thursday with the addition of four players: Ricky Blanton, Alvin Hegg, Tony Watson and Tremaine Wingfield.

Blanton, 29, was drafted by the Phoenix Suns in 1989 but did not see NBA action until 1993 during a 10-day contract with the Chicago Bulls.

Before playing briefly with the Bulls, the 6-7, 215-pound forward played for four Continental Basketball Association teams: Grand Rapids, Wichita Falls, Sioux City and Rapid City. He's averaged 10.8 points and 3.5 rebounds per game in the CBA.

Hegg, a 6-8, 225-pound forward, played in Argentina and most recently in Japan. The 28-year-old also spent the 1990-91 season with Oklahoma City in the CBA.

Watson, 24, a 6-4 guard, spent four years at the University of Houston, averaging 7.8 points. Wingfield, 23, a 6-7 forward, played two seasons at the University of Texas, averaging 7.6 points. Neither has pro experience.

The Rockets' open training camp Friday in Galveston.

The redshirt freshman has started since Trent Driver was sidelined with an injury.

By Tom Day
THE BATTALION

To many players, football is not a game, but a job. Getting bruised and banged up running your opponent into the ground comes with the territory.

But to A&M inside linebacker Dat Nguyen, football isn't all blood, sweat and tears, it is about having fun.

"Dat loves to play football," A&M Defensive Coordinator Phil Bennett said. "He has fun on the field and plays with great enthusiasm in practice and in games."

A redshirt freshman this season, Nguyen has all the attributes to have plenty of "fun" against opponents on the gridiron. Blessed with a 6-foot, 1-inch, 213-pound frame, Nguyen's powerful build is his greatest asset.

But when first arriving at A&M last fall, Nguyen's size is what concerned Aggie coaches. Weighing in at a stocky 240 pounds, he was considered a little too heavy.

"A year ago, Dat was quite a bit overweight," Bennett said. "Everybody was disappointed. But, he had a good spring, and he decided he didn't need to be that heavy to be a successful college football player."

Nguyen said playing on the scout team as a redshirt player last season helped prepare him mentally and physically to be a starter this season.

"I lost a lot of weight last season and over the spring," Nguyen said. "I also learned a lot about the game sitting out a year."

As a senior at Rockport-Fulton High School in 1993, Nguyen posted

188 tackles and being named District 30-3A Defensive Player of the Year. His hard-nosed play also made him a Consensus Texas Top 100 linebacker as the Corpus Christi Caller-Times named him All-South Texas Defensive Player of the Year.

"He has great awareness on the field," Bennett said. "He reminds me of a guy I used to play with here in Ed Simonini (an All-American A&M linebacker in 1975.) He's very instinctive, but he's not going to overpower anybody with bone-crushing blows."

Early on, Nguyen was not projected to start at inside linebacker. However, an early-season injury suffered by Trent Driver opened the door of opportunity to the freshman.

Although it is an honor, Nguyen does not put too much emphasis on starting.

"I started a couple of games because Trent got hurt, but it really doesn't matter who starts," Nguyen said. "I don't really think about it because the coaches play a lot of positions two-deep, so we get an equal amount of playing time."

"We knew it would be a good battle between Dat and Trent for that position," Bennett said. "Trent's ankle injury has sort of lingered, so both players have played about an equal number of reps. They've complimented each other nicely."

Bennett said Nguyen's role is crucial to the success of the team.

"He calls all the defenses and has to align our front to different offensive formations," Bennett said. "He has a lot of responsibility for a guy that's just a year out of high school."

Nguyen said his only goal is to take full advantage of every opportunity he has on the playing field.

"I just want to be prepared and cover my assignments," Nguyen said.



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Texas A&M redshirt freshman linebacker Dat Nguyen gives Louisiana State University quarterback Jamie Howard something to think about during the Aggies' 33-17 win.

"You only have so many chances, so when I'm out there I want to do everything right and make as few mistakes as possible."

With consistent improvement, Bennett said Nguyen should have a bright future.

"He is getting better every game,

and I think he will continue to do so," Bennett said. "He takes coaching well, and he has a desire to improve."

"Dat's having a good time right now, and to think about some of the plays he's made this year just being a freshman is very exciting."

Confidence makes kicking easy on Kyle's Field



Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

Texas A&M placekicker Kyle Bryant prepares to kick a field goal out of the hold of Stormy Case during the Aggies' 55-9 defeat of Tulsa University Sept. 16.

The sophomore shattered several A&M kicking records last season.

By Kristina Buffin
THE BATTALION

Most kids collect baseball cards or posters. Sophomore placekicker Kyle Bryant collected the souvenirs from players at Aggie football games when he was growing up.

"My parents graduated from A&M, so A&M ran in the family," Bryant said. "At football games as a kid, I would run onto the field and ask the players for their pads and sweatbands. I enjoyed those games so much."

Like most placekickers, Bryant began his athletic career by playing soccer. However, as he began to play football, Bryant realized that kicking field goals and points after touchdowns was not as easy as it looked.

"Ever since I was three, I played soccer," Bryant said. "In eighth grade I started kicking because of soccer, and I thought it would be easy."

As a senior at A&M Consolidated High School, Bryant converted 10-of-11 field goals and 42-of-43 PATs.

He also set a state record of 19 field goals in one season during his career at A&M Consolidated. It was not easy at first, but Bryant attributes his high school success to an excellent program at Consolidated.

"Playing at A&M Consolidated was a big honor for me," Bryant said. "It was a good program that was ranked among the top teams in Texas. I wanted to be a part of that, and I enjoyed the challenge."

Bryant burst onto the A&M scene, after redshirting his first year, with a 61-yard field goal against Southern Mississippi. This field goal was a NCAA freshman record and is the second longest in NCAA history. This set off a media blitz which would affect most freshmen, but Bryant said it did not faze him.

"I don't want to say that it didn't affect me, but it was in the back of my mind," Bryant said. "I did not expect that much publicity. It was just a kick and just as important as a 32-yard field goal. I wish it did not get as much attention."

Special Teams Coach Shawn Slocum attributes Bryant's success and consistency to the style in which he kicks the ball.

"Technically, he kicks a straight ball, which gives him consistency," Slocum said. "The straight ball gives him better opportunity because there is no big curve or arch. Psychologically, he feels more confident. He is able to focus on doing his job. He's not nervous about factors such as wind or distance."

Bryant is not superstitious and does not believe in a "sophomore slump." Bryant is 2-of-4 in field goals this season and 14-of-14 in PATs despite a quadriceps injury that limited his play in the first three games this season.

"My goal this season is to get my strength back to 100 percent," Bryant said. "I want to get back to kickoffs. Ryan (Pillars) is a great kicker with a strong leg, but I'd like to do (kickoffs)."

Unshakable confidence is a key part of being a successful kicker. Bryant said he always goes into a

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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	Toby Boenig	COMMENTARY
#8 A&M at Texas Tech	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M: SWC title run begins
Rice at #20 Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Rice	UT: No '94 miracle for Owls.....
Houston at TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	Houston	TCU	TCU	TCU	Houston	Houston	TCU	TCU	TCU: Great game choice, Raycom
Miami at #1 Florida State	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Miami	FSU: Hurricanes blown out
#3 Florida at #21 LSU	LSU	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	LSU	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	LSU	LSU	UF: Gators champ on Tigers
#10 Tennessee at #18 Arkansas	Arkansas	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Arkansas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Tennessee: Too many weapons ..
#23 Notre Dame at #15 Wash.	Notre Dame	Washington	Washington	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Washington	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Washington	Washington	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	ND: Fighting Irish won't go away
#25 Northwestern at #7 Mich.	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan	Northwestern	Michigan: Northwestern a fluke
#5 Ohio St. at #12 Penn St.	Penn St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Penn St.	Ohio St.	Penn St.	Penn St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Penn State	OSU: Penn St. on the way down
Oilers at Vikings	Oilers	Vikings	Vikings	Oilers	Oilers	Vikings	Vikings	Vikings	Vikings	Vikings	Oilers	Vikings	Oilers	Vikings	Oilers	Vikings	Vikings: Bad Moon Rising on Oilers
Packers at Cowboys	Packers	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Packers	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys: Aikman or no Aikman
Chargers at Chiefs	Chargers	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chargers	Chiefs	Chargers	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chargers	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs	Chiefs: Chargers fizzle on MNF
Last Week	5-2-2	2-5-2	4-3-2	5-2-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	3-4-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	4-3-2	2-5-2	Toby goes for	Nick G. wins week, stock market collapses
Cumulative	36-19-2	40-15-2	40-15-2	43-12-2	40-15-2	40-15-2	38-17-2	37-18-2	38-17-2	39-18-2	41-14-2	43-12-2	38-17-2	32-23-2	36-19-2	the upsets	Day makes a move on the top spot