


Battle-savvy Cajuns prepare for A&M

By ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

Facing nationally prominent football programs is nothing new for the University of Southwestern Louisiana Head Coach Nelson Stokely. He and the Ragin' Cajuns are excited to feel they are well prepared to square off with the heavily-favored Texas A&M football team on Saturday night in Lafayette, La.

"Over the past years [we've played the Floridas, the Alabamas, the

University of Southwestern Louisiana



Location: Lafayette, La.
Founded: 1898
Enrollment: 17,000
Coach: Nelson Stokely
Colors: Red and White
Stadium: Cajun Field, Seats 31,000 natural turf
1995 record: 6-5
Lettermen returning: 45
Lettermen lost: 23
Returning starters: 14
Titles won: Two Big West Conference titles

Auburns, the Tennessees and the A&Ms," Stokely said. "So it's nothing new for us. Any time you play that kind of competition, it's good for your program and your players. It gives you a certain amount of exposure."

The Ragin' Cajun's first game of the 1996 season was a 55-21 loss Aug. 31 at the hands of the University of Florida. Stokely said A&M will be no less of a challenge.

"[A&M] is much more physical than Florida," he said. "They're very physical defensively. They've got great talent on the defensive side of the football."

Senior quarterback Jake Delhomme said the Wrecking Crew defense will be difficult to overcome.

"I don't see any weaknesses in their defense, especially in their front seven," Delhomme said. "Naturally I would like a lot of protection. [The offensive linemen] know they're going against a great task, and we want them to just do their own job, you know, mow their own grass."

Stokely said he does not think the A&M secondary, after its poor showing against Brigham Young University, will be a weakness.

"They have some inexperience in the secondary," he said. "But I think over the last three weeks since BYU, they've improved in that area."

"I don't expect us to just go into the game and move the football, so when we get the opportunity, we've got to put points on the board. We need to execute much better offensively and take care of the football."

Delhomme, who threw for 213 yards, two touchdowns and four interceptions against the Gators, said the team is trying to minimize its turnovers, something that proved to be its demise two weeks ago. The Gators' defense scored four touchdowns off of USL's six giveaways.

"The score could have been much closer [without the turnovers]," Delhomme said. "Cutting down on turnovers has been our focal point. We

need to really play error-free ball, then we feel like we can go in there and play good football."

USL will no doubt rely on Delhomme to lead the team against the Aggies. His 6,315 career passing yards and 44 touchdowns have already found their place in the Cajun record books.

USL will also feature tailback Kenyon Cotton and sophomore wide receiver Brandon Stokely, who is the son of head coach Stokely. Cotton, who is one of the largest tailbacks in the nation at 6 feet and 259 pounds, rumbled for 82 yards on 20 carries against Florida.

Stokely motored to 122 yards on eight receptions against the Gators. Last season, he caught 75 passes for 1,121 yards and nine touchdowns, making him the most prolific freshman receiver in college football history.

The Cajuns are not only concerned about what A&M can do defensively, but senior strong safety Damon Mason said USL must be prepared for the Aggie's multi-dimensional offensive attack.

"They have strong running backs, so we can't miss any tackles," Mason said. "All their running backs are capable of making long plays. [A&M] is also a good passing team, so we have to be prepared for the pass as well."

"They have a balanced mix of the run and the pass," Stokely said. "When you can rush for 250-plus yards and throw for 230, it makes it very difficult to hone in on any particular area and stop it. We'll try to use our speed and quickness."

Stokely said Aggie junior quarterback Brannon Stewart will be tough to stop.

"He's an outstanding player," he said. "There was a lot of pressure on him to perform in the first game. Now he's going to be much more relaxed through the rest of the season."

USL should not be totally helpless against the Aggie offense. Seven starters return to a defense that ranked 19th in the nation last year [18th in

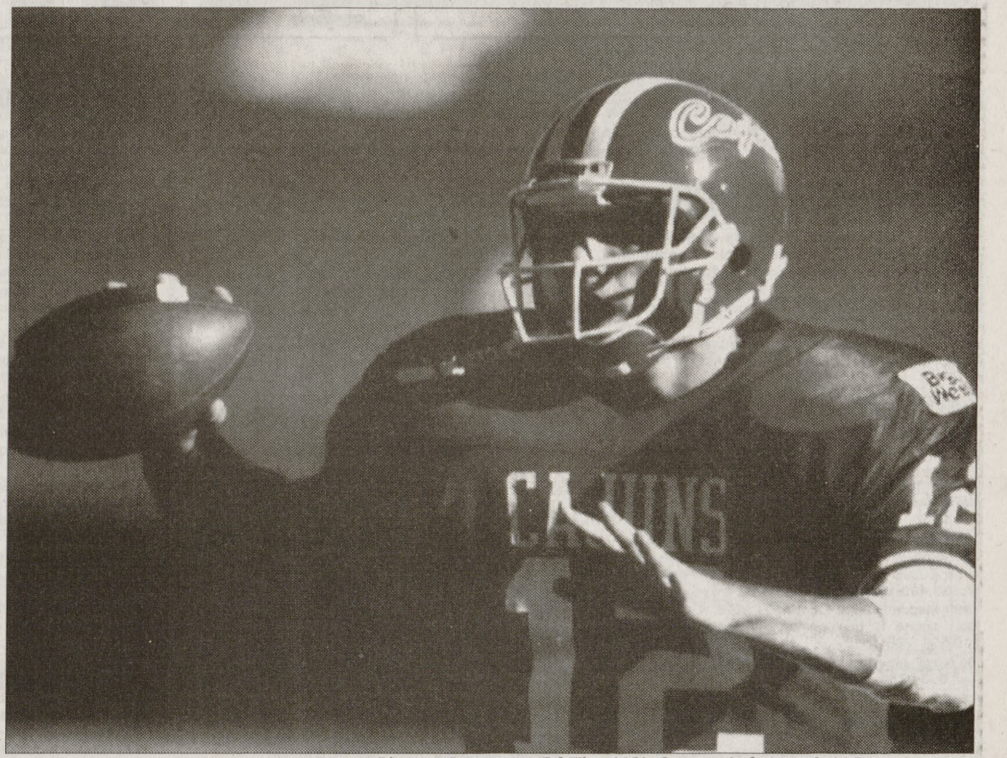


Photo Courtesy Of The USL Sports Information Department
Cajun senior quarterback **Jake Delhomme** has passed for 6,315 yards and 44 touchdowns in his career.

pass defense, 20th against the run]. The three linebackers, all returning starters, are considered to be the strength of the defense.

Senior Pat Brennan plays the middle position, senior Kelcy Dotson is in the weak slot, and sophomore Chucky Woodall patrols the strong-side. Mason started every game last season and recorded a total of 88 tackles.

Mason said A&M will probably be looking to dominate after its loss to BYU.

"They're going to come out here and play smash-mouth football," Mason said. "[After the BYU game] they're going to have something to prove."

Delhomme said the game is attracting much attention and will benefit the Ragin' Cajuns.

"It will probably be the biggest crowd ever here at USL," he said. "I'm a firm believer that the tougher the competition, the better you're going to play. We're doing that by playing A&M."

Cajun Field, which has a capacity of 31,000, is expecting the largest crowd in its history, but Stokely said USL will be ready to play.

"We're not going to be intimidated," Stokely said. "It doesn't do us any good just to play [big programs], we have to play well against them."

For Stanberry, Dingwall, it's all about heart

Sophomore harrier relying on discipline and intense training to vault her to top of sport

By COLBY GAINES
THE BATTALION

For many A&M students, the morning consists of a quick breakfast before darting off to class. But for Amy Stanberry, a sophomore cross country runner, sunrise starts in a rather unorthodox fashion — to a fartlek and the sound of "Hurts So Good" ringing in her mind.

Six days a week, Stanberry begins at 6 a.m. with practices including tempo runs (sustaining a race pace for four to six miles), long runs (around ten miles), and fartleks (alternating hard runs with rest periods over increasing intervals of time). In her weekly trek, she completes nearly 50 miles.

Stanberry said running at the crack of dawn is an unusual experience.

"Getting up is hard," Stanberry said. "I mean, we're out there running with the stars. It's so strange that sometimes it feels like something is wrong. But it really gets the day going."

Stanberry said that although she may not live a normal lifestyle, she has grown accustomed to it.

"I like challenges — anything that is put before me that I don't think I can do, I like to prove that I can handle it," Stanberry said. "I feel like I have purpose when I run. And I think the reason I've been able to do well is because I've stayed so focused."

"When the year begins, I don't take naps or watch TV. Some people tell me they live off naps and they watch TV all day. But for me, (this way) is all I've ever known."

After being forced to redshirt last season because of a stress fracture in her foot, Stanberry is set to lead the women on the Texas A&M Cross Country Team in 1996. The sophomore was the Lady Aggies' No. 2 runner last season behind two-time All-Southwest Conference runner Shannon Etchberger before the injury. She also placed in the top 11 at all three meets in which she competed.

Considering she runs 3.1 miles at each cross country meet, it is not surprising Stanberry says the sport is physically demanding.

"There are some workouts that I'll be thinking, 'Why am I doing this?'" Stanberry said. "My body cannot do this. But that is the cool thing about running — when you're done, you think, 'Wow! It's kind of like that song 'Hurts So Good.' You're body hurts, but it's kind of a natural high."

At Stratford High School in Houston, Stanberry began running four miles a day on her own to complement her basketball and volleyball workouts. She said upon hearing of her routine, the head track coach asked her to run in the next junior varsity track meet.

"I never thought I'd run cross country, but I was thought I could do it," Stanberry said. "Well, (at the first meet) I won first place."

See **STANBERRY**, Page 17

By SARA DUESING
THE BATTALION

When defining the word leader, the image of an outgoing, daring and vocal individual may come to mind. However, members of the 1996-1997 Texas A&M Women's Tennis Team use a different description of the word.

The team's perception of a leader falls into the character of its team captain, senior Nancy Dingwall. If the team's description of her as a laid back, easy going and responsible person does not convince people of her leadership ability, witnessing Dingwall in action on the court just might.

The senior finished the 1995-1996 season ranked No. 85 nationally, and was named All-SWC in singles with a 5-2 record in the conference's final season.

Dingwall also had tremendous success last season competing with recently graduated doubles partner Wilson Pate. The duo finished the season ranked No. 28 nationally and also was named All-SWC in doubles, finishing 6-1 in conference play.

Dingwall said being a leader has not always been something she has pursued.

"I've never been one to step ahead of the group and lead everyone," Dingwall said. "I did my own thing, and found that people were going along with it."

Women's Tennis Head Coach Bobby Kleinecke said Dingwall is a leader by example.

"She is the quiet type of leader," Kleinecke said. "She does her job and encourages others to do theirs. She sparks this team and really strives to achieve the goals she sets."

A key component to Dingwall's success is her intense mental and physical preparation for a competition.

"I have to clear everything out of my mind before anything," she said. "I try to focus on my opponent, how they play and then form a strategy."

See **DINGWALL**, Page 17

Senior netter's leadership, experience has teammates looking up to her

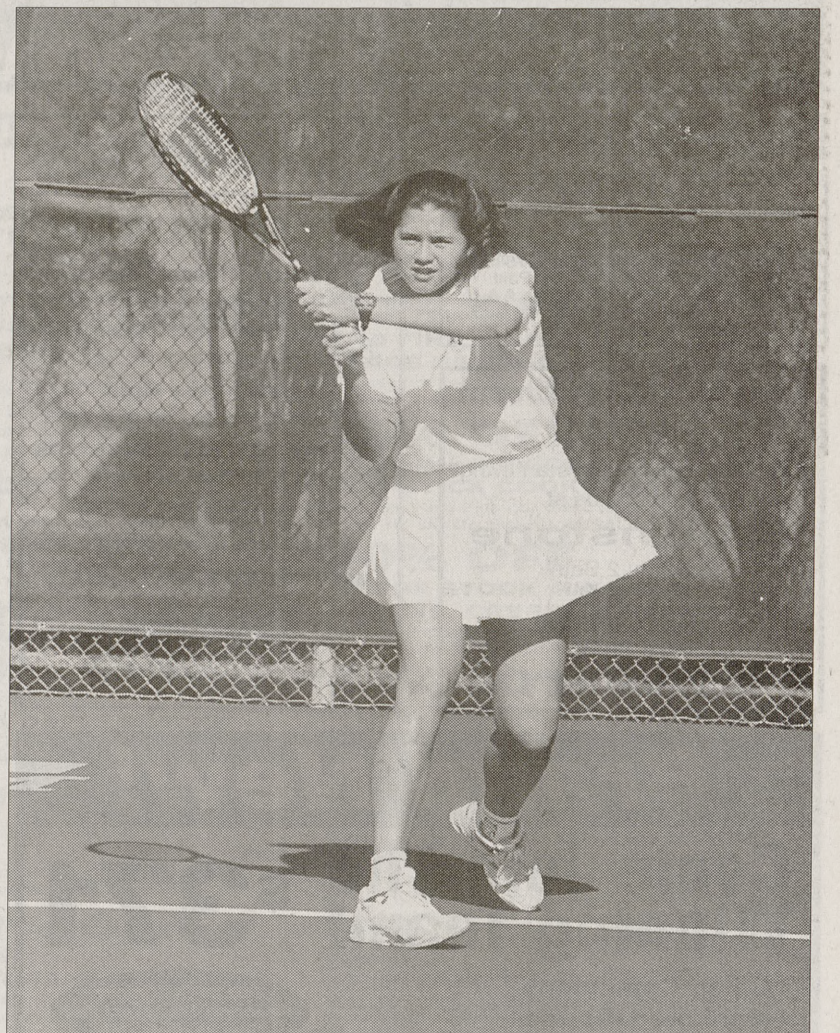


Photo Courtesy of TAMU Sports Information Department
Senior Nancy **Dingwall** and her partner last season **Wilson Pate** lost to the University of Florida in the NCAA Finals.

"I have to start out with a strong mentality or I've already lost. It's really hard to come back with the right attitude in the middle of a game."

Kleinecke said Dingwall is an easy player to coach.

"Nancy has a great focus," Kleinecke said. "She knows what she needs to do and doesn't need a whole lot of coaching. When you put her out there on the court, you know just what you're going to get."

Naming Dingwall as the team's

captain was not a difficult decision for Kleinecke.

"She is a great leader, on and off the court," Kleinecke said. "Nancy is at the top of the lineup, and in her fourth year of play, so the others automatically look up to her."

Entering her final year of collegiate play, Dingwall has again set the same goal for herself and the team — to make it to the NCAA finals.

See **DINGWALL**, Page 17



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Sophomore **Amy Stanberry** trains by running five days a week at 6 a.m.