

Aggies hope to make statement against KSU

A&M would move up Big 12 ladder with victory

By TOM DAY
THE BATTALION

Three weeks ago, many people considered the Texas A&M Football team to be dead and buried. Having won just a single game out of their first four and already saddled with a Big 12 Conference loss, the Aggies were yesterday's news.

Critics were calling for Head Coach R.C. Slocum's head, crying that the glory days were gone and that the team needed a new coach for the new era.

But after two consecutive wins out of our pocket and an Oklahoma upset of Texas last weekend, the Aggies are right in the middle of things in the Big 12 South.

A win over No. 21 Kansas State this weekend would not only end the streak of Big 12 Conference losses, but would serve as a boost of confidence. "It would mean a lot," Horn said. "A lot of people got down on

us. I look at [Saturday's matchup] as a chance to show we are the team everyone expected us to be and that we can come out and beat big teams like this. To beat K-State would be a great victory for us, and hopefully it will get us on the right track to go on and not lose any more games."

Last weekend, the Aggies struggled offensively against an Iowa State defense that ranked No. 104 in the nation in total defense. A&M will have its work cut out for it this weekend against a Wildcat defense that ranks 16th nationally in total defense (250.8 yards per game).

Kansas State fields a talented secondary highlighted by All-American and Jim Thorpe Award candidate Chris Canty. The junior cornerback leads a unit that ranks second in the nation in pass efficiency defense at 69.8.

"I doubt if anyone in the league has a better secondary than them," Slocum said. "They lined up against Nebraska with the corners out man to man and put the safeties about four yards deep and played the whole game like that. Not many people in the country can do that."

A&M senior wideout Albert Con-

nell is confident the A&M passing game can produce against the touted Wildcat defense.

"They have two great corners in (senior Joe) Gordon and Canty," Connell said. "(But) if they go man-to-man, it is a mistake. I don't think anybody can stop [the A&M receivers], especially with Brannon Stewart (at quarterback). It's going to be a good matchup."

Slocum said the Aggies are trying to establish a more consistent offensive attack.

"We have made progress on offense, but we're not as smooth or oiled-up as I'd like to be," Slocum said. "We've broken off some 70-yard runs and you execute a 70-yard screen pass, but at other times we look out of sync."

After playing passing-oriented teams their first five games and then rush-happy Iowa State last week, the Aggies will face a well-balanced offensive attack from Kansas State.

The Wildcats' biggest weapon is the one-two combination of senior quarterback Brian Kavanagh and senior wideout Kevin Lockett. Kavanagh ranks third in the Big 12 with a 130.8 pass efficiency rating, while Lockett has caught 26 passes

for 350 yards and two touchdowns this season.

"Lockett is a good receiver," Horn said. "He's fast, quick, and explosive, and we're going to have to work real hard this weekend to make the plays against him."

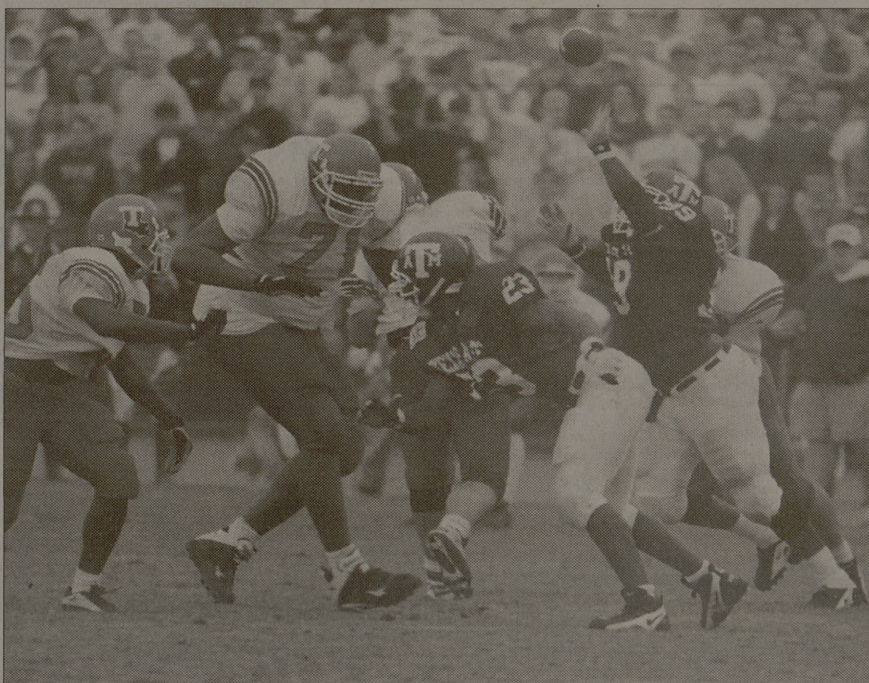
Wildcat sophomore running back Marlon Charles and junior running back Mike Lawrence have rushed for 409 and 365 yards respectively this season.

Senior outside linebacker Keith Mitchell said Saturday's matchup has December implications.

"This is a big game for us," Mitchell said. "This is the one that is going to count for the St. Louis trip. It looks like we've been chasing Texas. But if we take care of these two teams, they'll be chasing us."

"We have to make a statement. [Kansas State] is a top-ranked team and they have the ability to beat us. We have to go out and dominate and play good on both sides of the ball."

Slocum said an A&M win



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Senior outside linebacker **Keith Mitchell** (#23) and senior defensive end **Pat Williams** apply pressure against Louisiana Tech at Kyle Field.

would further point the team in the right direction.

"I think last week we needed to put two wins together back to back," Slocum said. "Now if we

come back and beat Kansas State, which is a highly regarded team, we will get something out of beating them ... more than we would from beating some other teams."

Aggies bolster front line with small-town connection

Change in size meant change in position for Eddie 'Troup' Jasper

By JAMIE BURCH
THE BATTALION

In the movie *All the Right Moves*, Tom Cruise uses his God-given ability to play football as his ticket out of a small industrial town. Substitute senior noseguard Eddie Jasper into Cruise's role and you have a different story.

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When he joined the squad as a freshman, Jasper said none of his teammates knew his name.

"They all remembered where I was from because they had never heard of the town," Jasper said. "They used to make a lot of jokes about it. And after the jokes, they just stuck me with the name Troup. Now some of the coaches even call me Troup."

Adding 30 pounds during the offseason, the coaches moved Jasper to the defensive front during the 1993 season. Hampered by back problems, Jasper saw limited playing action at defensive end. He posted just four tackles, one tackle for a loss of yardage, and one quarterback pressure.

Jasper said his change in positions was not as difficult as the transition from a small high school to a large university.

"The transition from linebacker to defensive lineman wasn't that bad," Jasper said. "The transition that was really hard was from Troup to A&M. Coming from a small school, where you can easily be one of the heroes on the team, to A&M where there's nothing but All-Americans, is difficult. When I first came here, everyone was an All-American except me. I didn't know if I would ever be able to play at this level."

Jasper accelerated his play during his sophomore season. Starting all 11 games at noseguard, Jasper compiled 31 tackles, three quarterback sacks, and four tackles behind the line of scrimmage. Jasper's efforts also resulted in one forced fumble and three quarterback pressures.

As a junior, Jasper amassed 53 tackles, including an A&M record 14 tackles for loss of yardage, four sacks and was voted a consensus second-team All-Southwest Conference selection.

Jasper attributes his improvement to the vast amount of knowledge he has gained at A&M about the game of football. "(A&M Defensive Line) Coach (Bill) Johnson does such a good job of teaching us what to do," Jasper said. "My knowledge now is far and beyond what I ever thought I would know. Actually, I didn't think there was that much to playing football until I came here and started learning."

Johnson said Jasper's consistency has helped him develop into the player he is today.

"He never has one great game fol-

lowed by several bad games," Johnson said. "He shows up every Saturday and plays up to his ability. He's also an over-achiever. He's a talented player, but he plays with a little bit more than he has."

Jasper has established himself as one of the cornerstones of the defensive front, which was ranked the top defensive line in the nation by *The Sporting News*. *The Sporting News* also rated Jasper the 10th-best noseguard in the country.

While Jasper said he takes pride in such accolades, Jasper said that he just wants to be remembered at A&M.

"I don't want to be just an average player," Jasper said. "I want to be a difference-maker. More importantly, I want to be remembered at A&M. It doesn't even need to be on the football field. I want to be remembered as a guy who was respected by his teammates and who was seen as a friend."

Listening to praise from his teammates and coaches, Jasper may have already accomplished that feat. Senior defensive end Pat Williams said the team feeds off his style of play and emotion.

"It's very exciting to play with Troup," Williams said. "He's real good at technique. He's very emotional. He helps to motivate us and keep us hyped up."

The noseguard is close not only to his teammates, but his coaches as well.

"There's several people that you get close to in college for the simple fact that your family is so far away," Jasper said. "My family doesn't even have a phone back in Troup, so I don't have anyone to talk to. I look to Dr. Carl Mooney (A&M associate athletic director for academics), Coach Johnson and Coach Slocum as my three fathers. Those are three guys that I turn to during my time of need."

At season's end, Jasper may hear phones ringing from NFL scouts. Jasper said although there are an unbelievable amount of pro scouts at practice every day, he has not sat down to talk with anyone one-on-one.

"I would love to play in the NFL," Jasper said. "But if it's not there, then I can be happy just working. I try not to pay attention to all that because I don't want to get distracted. My purpose is not to have a standout season, but to get our football team back on a roll so that we can be the A&M of the past."

Soft-spoken Williams carrying big stick

By ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

Athletic ability alone does not guarantee a football scholarship at Texas A&M. Senior defensive lineman Pat Williams did not qualify academically to play for A&M out of high school, so he immediately began to work on his classroom performance.

Williams enrolled at Navarro Junior College, where he could play football and improve his grades.

"He had to overcome a lot of adversity to come to A&M," A&M Defensive Line Coach Bill Johnson said. "He made the decision that he wanted to go to A&M, and he started doing things to get here. He had to go to junior college and graduate junior college to be able to come to A&M."

He was blessed with plenty of size and strength out of Wossman High School in

Monroe, La., and displayed his football talents playing for the small junior college in Corsicana. There he was twice named a Junior College All-American, totaling 132 tackles, 24 sacks, and 27 quarterback pressures in two seasons. As a sophomore, Williams earned conference defensive player of the year.

But after making an impression on the field, the 6-foot-4-inch, 275-pound lineman still had to take yet another route before playing for the Wrecking Crew. He transferred to Northeast Oklahoma Junior College to complete his associate of arts degree.

After graduating from Northeast in the spring of 1995, Williams transferred to A&M. He said A&M's large student body and expansive campus was a big change for him.

"I was kind of nervous because it's so big here," Williams said. "You have 500 people in a class and only 35 in junior college. It was a big change for me, and it was hard to adjust."

Williams worked hard in practice at A&M until he gained a starting position on the line in the final six games of the 1995 season. Last year, he recorded 43 tackles with seven for losses, earning second team All-Southwest Conference honors.

Senior noseguard Eddie Jasper said his teammate has had success because of his strength.

"He's one of those guys that has unbelievable strength," Jasper said. "He's still learning all the techniques, and what he lacks in technique he makes up in strength."

"We all mess with him a little bit about being a bull rusher. I've seen him grab the biggest of offensive linemen and throw them out of the way. The center from Iowa State (Pat Augufa) weighs 340 pounds, and on one of the plays Pat peeked around him and saw the running back coming, threw him aside, and made the tackle."

This season, Williams has made 22 stops, with five of them going for losses. Against Iowa State last weekend, Williams posted six tackles.

Williams said he tries to have a silent and focused approach to his game.

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Pat James, THE BATTALION

Senior noseguard **Eddie Jasper** has recorded 23 tackles this season.



Pat James, THE BATTALION

Senior defensive end **Pat Williams** has recorded 22 tackles this season.

This Weekend in Sports Friday

A&M Volleyball at Nebraska, 7:30 p.m.

A&M Soccer vs. Duke at Adidas Challenge Cup, 2 p.m.

A&M Swimming and Diving will compete at the Big 12 Invitational in St. Louis, Mo., all weekend.

Saturday
A&M Football will host Kansas State at Kyle Field at 6 p.m.

A&M Cross Country will compete at the University of Texas-Arlington Quadrangular all day.

A&M Volleyball at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Co., TBA.

Sunday
A&M Soccer vs. North Carolina at the Adidas Challenge Cup, 12 p.m.

The Battalion's 1996 Staff Picks

The Match-Ups	Tom Day	Kristina Buffin	Jamie Burch	Sara Duesing	Jeremy Furtick	Colby Gaines	Ross Hecox	Matt Mitchell	Dennis Ramirez	Nicki Smith	Consensus
#21 Kansas State at A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	Kansas St.	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M: Aggies make "statement"
Oklahoma at Baylor	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Baylor: Oklahoma one-hit wonder
#9 Colorado at Kansas	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado: KU couldn't beat Tech at home
Iowa State at Oklahoma State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Oklahoma St.	Iowa State: Cyclones sweep down plain
#5 Nebraska at Texas Tech	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska: Raiders kiss first place goodbye
#16 Auburn at #1 Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida: Tigers sink in "The Swamp"
#14 Northwestern at Wisconsin	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Wisconsin	Northwestern	Wisconsin	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern: Wildcats do the badgering
USC at #4 Arizona State	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.	Arizona St.: Devil defense too much
#19 California at Washington State	California	California	California	California	California	California	Washington St.	California	Washington St.	California	California: Don't Jack the Bear
Pittsburgh at Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Pittsburgh	Oilers	Pittsburgh	Oilers	Pittsburgh	Oilers	Pittsburgh	Oilers	Oilers: Actions speak louder than words
Atlanta at Cowboys	Cowboys	Atlanta	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys: Georgeless Falcons jacked
Miami at Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Philadelphia	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami: Battle of the backups
Last Week	10-2	9-3	9-3	11-1	11-1	11-1	11-1	11-1	10-2	11-1	104-16: Best week in Battalion history
Cumulative	52-20	44-28	42-30	50-22	46-26	45-27	47-25	45-27	47-25	46-26	464-256: Duesing nipping at Day's heels