

Ags, Sooners seek to set record straight

By ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

Two teams considered much tougher than their records indicate will finally meet this weekend. When the University of Oklahoma (3-6) rolls into Kyle Field Saturday at 2:30 p.m., the Texas A&M Football Team (5-5) will find out which team can truly defy its lackluster record.

Head Coach R.C. Slocum said the Sooners' 30-27 win against the University of Texas Oct. 12 indicates the potential they have, despite their poor record. "You go through a number of their games and they've had some turnovers," Slocum said. "But the Texas game helps get the attention of our players. You look at what they have the capability to do against a team (like Texas)."

A&M and Oklahoma, both 3-3 in conference play, share an outside shot at advancing to the Big 12 Championship Game in St. Louis, Mo. But A&M junior quarterback Brandon Stewart said the Aggies are keeping their sights set on the present. "Oklahoma is the most important thing to us right now," Stewart said. "We're taking it one game at a time, and we have a challenge ahead of us."

This weekend's game is pivotal for the 5-5 team. A win over Oklahoma would extend hopes for a winning season, a division title and a bowl berth for the Aggies. Although they cling to a short-term approach, senior linebacker Keith Mitchell said the team realizes the season can be salvaged.

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Keith Mitchell
Senior outside linebacker

"Hopefully we can win out, have a winning season, get a bowl bid and go out with style," Mitchell said.

The Wrecking Crew faces a Sooner offense that has played two quarterbacks this season. Freshman Justin Fuente started the last eight games, but Head Coach John Blake has often re-

placed him without hesitation with sophomore Eric Moore.

Slocum said he expects both players to see action Saturday.

"They've had times when both quarterbacks look good at the same time," Slocum said. "I think we'll see both of them in the game."

Mitchell said A&M's defensive front will have to adjust to the two quarterbacks' different styles.

"Fuente is more like a drop-back passer type, and Eric Moore is a scrambler and is an all-right passer," Mitchell said. "You've got to

prepare for both of them. When Eric Moore is in there, you're thinking about containing him, and against Fuente, we can cut loose and not worry about containing as much."

The A&M offense has relied heavily on its ground game the last two weeks, rumbling for 579 yards against Oklahoma State and Baylor combined. With the passing struggles the team has encountered lately, A&M running backs have seen an increased role.

Freshman Dante Hall needs only 12 yards to reach 500 yards rushing on the season, which would give A&M four 500-yard rushers in one season for the first time in school history. Sophomores D'Andre Hardeman, Surr Parker and Eric Bernard have already surpassed the mark.

But Slocum said beating a team like Oklahoma will require a more diverse attack.

"If we can't throw against them, I would think they could give us some real problems," Slocum said. "We can't get into a mode where it's all run."

Sophomore wideout Aaron Oliver is questionable for the game with a lumbar contusion, but junior defensive lineman Zerick Rollins is probable with a sprained ankle. Junior linebacker Philip Meyers sustained ligament damage to his thumb, but will play with a cast. He is scheduled to have surgery on Sunday and will be ready for the Texas game on Nov. 29.



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION
Sophomore tailback **Surr Parker** runs the last play in A&M's 24-7 win over Baylor last Saturday.

Lady Ags face USD in NCAA first round

By NICKI SMITH
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Soccer Team fell just two and a half minutes short of advancing to double overtime and a possible chance at victory in its 1-0 loss to the University of Nebraska in the Big 12 Conference Championship game last Sunday.

But the team has earned a chance at redemption this weekend.

The Aggies play host to the University of San Diego in the first round of the NCAA Championships at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

Posting an overall record of 19-3, the seventh-ranked Aggies were not only among the 32 teams nominated to compete in the prestigious tournament, but they also took home the seventh seed and a host role against the unranked Lady Toreros.

Head Coach G. Guerrieri said it did not matter who the Aggies played.

"We have learned not to expect a whole lot when this tournament is concerned," Guerrieri said. "Getting into the tournament was what we hoped for, so now we just have to concentrate on ourselves and not change our game plan according to who we play."

San Diego brings an overall record of 13-5-1 to A&M and has beaten some of the top-ranked teams in the nation, including an upset win over fifth-ranked Santa Clara during regular season play.

See **SOCCER**, Page 8

Legal trouble, injuries keep Oliver from reaching potential

By ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

Aaron Oliver seemed well on his way to an illustrious career for the Texas A&M Football Team. As a freshman last season, he caught 14 passes in the final five games, and in the season-opening Pigskin Classic this year, he caught a 57-yard touchdown pass.

But since then, the sophomore wideout has played sparingly in only five games. His play has been limited mostly by numerous injuries, but his well-publicized suspension could weigh heavily on the hearts of Aggie fans.

On Sept. 13, prior to the Aggies' contest against the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Oliver was brought up on felony charges of check

forgery and suspended from the team. He subsequently sat out the Aggies' games against USL and the University of North Texas.

Oliver said his roommate lent him his checkbook since his athletic scholarship check had not yet come in. Oliver wrote about \$200 worth in checks, signing the name of his roommate each time, until he received his scholarship money.

"I had no intention of keeping [the checkbook]," Oliver said. "And I was going to pay him back."

Since then, the charge has been reduced to a misdemeanor and Oliver received a one-year probation sentence with mandatory community service.

Oliver said he was unaware of the severity of his actions and viewed the situation as a simple loan. His reputation probably paid dearest.

"I would even have the wrong perception of me if I were [the fans]," Oliver said. "But they don't know me. You really can't judge a person from hearing [the news]. I'm not a bad person."

In addition to Oliver's off-field actions, a succession of injuries have kept the receiver off the field.

His season seemed to get off on the wrong foot. During two-a-days and the Brigham Young game, a pulled hamstring limited Oliver. A groin injury suffered during the Colorado game kept him out of the Louisiana Tech game the next week.

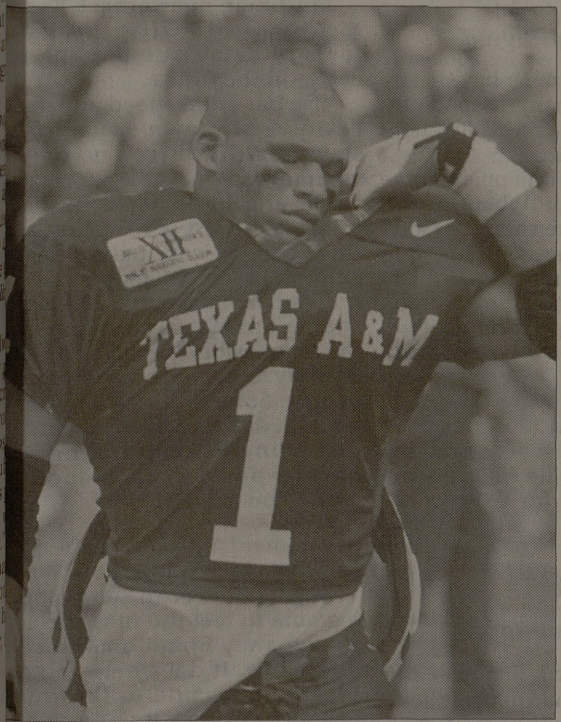
Last week he sat out with a lumbar contusion, which is a swelling along the spine, and he is questionable for tomorrow's contest against the University of Oklahoma.

"It's been stressful," Oliver said. "I can go out and practice and work hard, and still it's sort of like you're waiting for something else to happen."

Oliver's health problems have not been isolated to the 1996 season. In 1994, he was redshirted after rupturing his Achilles' tendon during two-a-days. Last year, he missed two games with a separated shoulder, but played in the team's other 10 games, catching 18 passes for 230 yards.

A&M Receivers Coach Les Koenning Jr. said because Oliver is hurt so often, it has been hard for him to make an impact on the team.

"I have not lost confidence in him," Koenning said. "If he can just stay healthy and keep working hard, he'll be OK. He needs to look at this in a positive way."



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Sophomore wideout **Aaron Oliver** is questionable for tomorrow's game because of a lumbar contusion.

McCown patient with position

By MATT MITCHELL
THE BATTALION

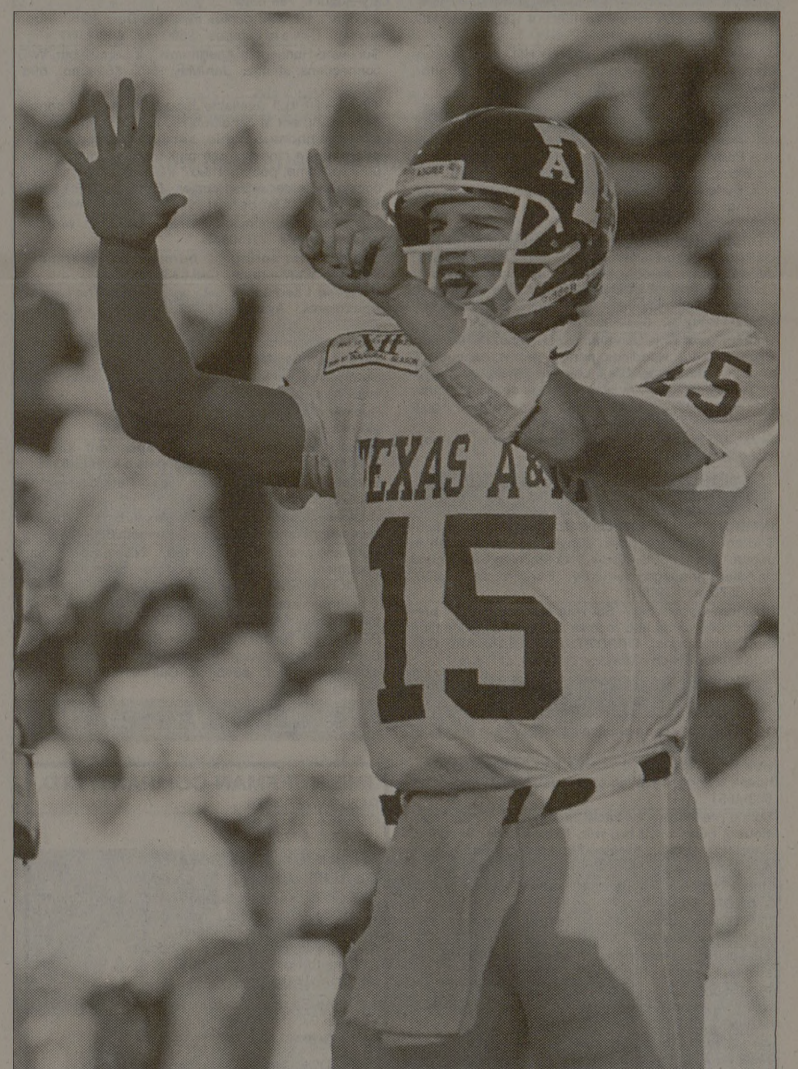
Contrary to popular belief, not all ultrasuccessful schoolboy quarterbacks are weaned on a steady diet of film study and all-afternoon throwing drills with an overbearing father. For Randy McCown, the backup quarterback for the Texas A&M Football Team, the common misconception of signal-calling high school phenoms is just that — a misconception.

"My dad wanted to do it [play quarterback] in high school, and he just started teaching me how to throw the ball and everything and encouraged me when I started out in middle school," McCown said. "Dad just taught me the mechanics of throwing and the coaches took it from there."

Father and coaches alike surely enjoyed what they saw, as McCown became a three-year starter for Jacksonville High School and one of the most coveted recruits in the state. For his career, McCown completed 57 percent of his passes for 4,139 yards and 32 touchdowns.

McCown's father is still his biggest fan and has watched his son blossom into a solid player for the Aggies. The 6-foot-3-inch, 204-pound quarterback has seen extensive playing time this season, particularly during the Oklahoma State contest, in which he led the Aggies to five second-half touchdowns. In five games, McCown is 11-for-24 passing for 186 yards with just one interception.

McCown's ability to feel defensive pressure and react accordingly is the clearest indication of his outstanding athletic ability. The redshirt freshman posted the top mark among quarterbacks, and ranked 14th overall in the off-season conditioning workouts.



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Redshirt freshman quarterback **Randy McCown** calls the play from scrimmage against Baylor last week.

His strong arm and mobility was a key to the Aggie offense's success against the Cowboys.

"He's got a quick release, and he's an enthusiastic player," A&M Head Coach R.C. Slocum said. See **McCown**, Page 8

This Weekend in Sports

Friday

Swimming/Diving vs. TCU, Student Rec. Center natatorium, 5 p.m.

Saturday

A&M Football vs. Oklahoma, Kyle Field, 2:30 p.m.

Cross Country at the District VI Championships, Denton, all day.

Sunday

A&M Soccer vs. San Diego, Aggie Soccer Complex, 1 p.m.

A&M Volleyball vs. Oklahoma, G. Rollie White, 2:30 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
Oklahoma at Texas A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M	A&M: No soup for you!
#11 Penn State at #16 Michigan	Michigan	Penn State	Penn State	Michigan	Michigan	Penn State	Penn State	Penn State	Michigan	Michigan	Michigan: Wolverines win in trials of life
#6 North Carolina at #24 Virginia	N. Carolina	Virginia	N. Carolina	N. Carolina	Virginia	Virginia	N. Carolina	N. Carolina	N. Carolina	N. Carolina	N. Carolina: Put that in your pipe
Texas at Kansas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas: Horns graze on Kansas
Nebraska at Iowa State	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska: Sure
Missouri at Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor: Tigers go back to Misery
#9 Kansas State at #6 Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado: Rocky Mountain High
Southwest La. at Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech: No miracles this time
#21 Virginia Tech at #18 Miami	Miami	Virginia Tech	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami: Storm warning
Miami at Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Miami	Oilers	Miami	Oilers	Miami	Oilers	Oilers: Dolphins caught in oil spill
Green Bay at Cowboys	Cowboys	Green Bay	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	'Boys: The frozen tundra of Texas Stadium
Denver at New England	New England	Denver	Denver	Denver	Denver	New England	Denver	Denver	New England	New England	Denver: Elway continues Super season
Last Week	9-3	8-4	7-5	8-4	8-4	10-2	7-5	9-3	7-5	8-4	81-39: Gaines comes out of closet
Cumulative	85-35	74-46	71-49	83-37	78-42	80-40	77-43	77-43	79-41	80-40	784-416: Sports Desk flamin' hot