

At the end of the line

Right tackle Spikes fond of blocking — and pancakes

By COLBY GAINES
THE BATTALION

Asking the Texas A&M Football Team's sophomore right tackle Cameron Spikes to describe his favorite block is like asking a spectator to describe what they see when a steamroller crushes a cat — a pancaking. At 6-foot-11 inches and 305 pounds, Spikes, the Aggies' starting right tackle, loves to flatten defensive linemen. "I love to run block," Spikes said. "When the ball is hiked, I like to come off (the line) and see what I can do with somebody. I like to bust them in the mouth and put them on the ground."

Strangely enough, Spikes starred as a defensive tackle at Bryan High School, earning first-team Class 5A all-state honors as a senior. There, Spikes compiled stellar numbers, including 90 tackles (48 for losses), 20 sacks and 31 quarterback pressures.

Despite being recruited by other schools as a defensive lineman, Spikes said he chose Texas A&M because he liked the Aggies' tradition of a good offensive line and because "A&M has one of the best offensive line coaches in the country."

While Spikes is quick to give credit to A&M Offensive Line Coach Mike Sherman, Sherman said he still has high expectations for Spikes.

"He has the perfect body type for an offensive lineman, and at (his height), he's extremely strong," Sherman said. "But right now, he gets by on physical strength and athletic ability. (The coaches) know if he keeps working on the technical skills, he'll be an outstanding player."

Last season, Spikes played in every game despite backing up

Hunter Goodwin, who now plays for the Minnesota Vikings. During the offseason, Spikes finished first overall among offensive linemen in the conditioning program while setting a new school squat record of 600 pounds.

Spikes said he was surprised to finish so well considering the athletic talent on the team. But he said he continues to challenge himself every day.

"When I watch a film or a football game, I'm always watching the tackle to see how good he is," Spikes said. "I think, 'How do I compare to that guy?' I think comparing myself to other good tackles is what makes me strive to be great."

Teammate and starting left tackle Chris Ruhman said Spikes is already playing at another level.

See SPIKES, Page 6



Dave House, THE BATTALION

Sophomore offensive tackle **Cameron Spikes** takes a breather during the Oklahoma game at Kyle Field.

Left tackle Ruhman takes a walk on the blind side

By ROSS HECOX
THE BATTALION

Playing left offensive tackle for the Texas A&M Football Team has a greater influence on the game than one might think.

The job does not simply require run and pass blocking on the outer limits of the line. Since junior quarterback Brannon Stewart is right-handed and has his back turned to the left when passing, the left tackle must keep pass rushers from a clean shot at the quarterback's blind side.

Junior left tackle Chris Ruhman, who plays at the highly accountable position, said the defenders he usually has to block — defensive ends or outside linebackers skilled at sacking quarterbacks — raise the level of difficulty with their quickness and have no mercy if he makes a mistake.

"They're running a 4.5 (40-yard dash), so you gotta do 4.4 backwards," Ruhman said. "You use your technique and hope to overcome him. You're kind of out there by yourself."

Offensive Line Coach Mike Sherman said a tackle must depend on his body mass to keep pass rushers from reaching the quarterback.

"There's a tremendous speed difference, and that worries all offensive line coaches," Sherman said. "So what you lack in speed you have to make up in size."

Ruhman definitely fills the bill when it comes to size. His 6-foot-6-inch frame carries 295 pounds of offensive lineman, and he totes strength to match.

The three-year starter posted a lift of 500 pounds in the squat, and is one of the strongest players on the team.

In addition to possessing physical power, Sherman said Ruhman is a skilled player who understands



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Junior left tackle **Chris Ruhman** holds his ground against an Oklahoma defensive lineman at Kyle Field.

the mechanics of his position and continues to improve.

"He's gotten better through the course of the season," Sherman said. "He is very much a technician and very seldom makes mental mistakes."

Ruhman relies on his technique to put a solid hit on the defender, but from there his size and strength allow him to finish the block.

"I think about what [the defender] is going to do and what steps I'm going to take, and the rest comes natural," Ruhman said. "Coach Sherman really teaches us technique. If you know what to do it lets you play with more tenacity."

Ruhman said he enjoys run blocking more this season. Lucky

for him. With four 500-yard plus rushers in the backfield, he can count on having to make at least as many holes as pockets.

Ruhman said despite the four backs' different running styles, the blocking is all the same.

"A lot of times we don't even know who's back there," Ruhman said. "We just take care of our job and let the [tailbacks] take care of the rest."

When the quarterback does drop back to pass, Ruhman changes from attacking the defender to falling back for pass protection. And Stewart is counting on him to watch his back.

Does that add any pressure? "Yeah, there is a little bit of pressure," Ruhman said.

This Weekend in Sports Friday

Lady Aggie Basketball vs. Southwest Texas, G. Rollie White, 7 p.m.

A&M Volleyball at Kansas, Lawrence, Kan., 7:30 p.m.

Saturday

A&M Basketball vs. North Carolina A&T, G. Rollie White, 7 p.m.

A&M Volleyball at Kansas State, Manhattan, Kan., 7 p.m.

A&M Swimming and Diving at LSU, Baton Rouge, La., all day.

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
#23 W. Virginia at #17 V. Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech: Hokies go mountain climbing
#21 Michigan at #2 Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State: Buckeyes come up with roses
Iowa State at #14 Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas St.: 'Cats go storm-chasin'
Auburn at #15 Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama: Tigers drown in Crimson Tide
#4 Arizona State at Arizona	Arizona	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona State	Arizona St.: Devils apply heat
Texas Tech at Oklahoma	Texas Tech	Oklahoma	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Oklahoma	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Tech: Aggies kiss title hopes good-bye
Kansas at Missouri	Missouri	Kansas	Missouri	Kansas	Missouri	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas	Kansas: Tigers have a 1-game winning streak
Baylor at Oklahoma State	Oklahoma St.	Oklahoma St.	Oklahoma St.	Baylor	Baylor	Oklahoma St.	Oklahoma St.	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor: Happy trails to you
USC at UCLA	USC	USC	UCLA	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC: Southern Ca. sun burns Bruins
Carolina at Oilers	Oilers	Carolina	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers	Oilers: Panthers shot back to expansion status
Cowboys at NY Giants	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys: New York not so giant
Pittsburgh at Miami	Pittsburgh	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	Miami	Pittsburgh: Steelers not on vacation
Last Week	6-6	9-3	8-4	7-5	9-3	8-4	9-3	8-4	7-5	6-6	77-43: It just wasn't Tom's Day
Cumulative	91-41	83-49	79-53	90-42	87-45	88-44	86-46	85-47	86-46	86-46	861-459: Burch gunning for 80 wins

AGGIE RING ORDERS

THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STUDENTS
CLAYTON W. WILLIAMS, JR. ALUMNI CENTER
DEADLINE: December 6, 1996

Undergraduate Student Requirements:

- You must be a degree seeking student and have a total of 95 credit hours reflected on the Texas A&M University Student Information Management System. (A passed course, which is repeated and passed, cannot count as additional credit hours.)
- 30 credit hours must have been completed in residence at Texas A&M University, providing that prior to January 1, 1994, you were registered at Texas A&M University and successfully completed a fall/spring semester or summer term (I and II or 10 weeks) as a full-time student in good standing (as defined in the University catalog).
- 60 credit hours must have been completed in residence at Texas A&M University if your first semester at Texas A&M University was January 1994 or thereafter, or if you do not qualify under the successful semester requirement. Should your degree be conferred with less than 60 resident credits, this requirement will be waived after your degree is posted on the Student Information Management System.
- You must have a 2.0 cumulative GPR at Texas A&M University.
- You must be in good standing with the University, including no registration or transcript blocks for past due fees, loans, parking tickets, returned checks, etc.

Graduate Student Requirements

If you are a December 1996 degree candidate and you do not have an Aggie ring from a prior degree, you may place an order after you meet the following requirements:

- Your degree is conferred and posted on the Texas A&M University Student Information Management System; and
- You are in good standing with the University, including no registration or transcript blocks for past due fees, loans, parking tickets, returned checks, etc.

If you have completed all of your degree requirements and can obtain a "Letter of Completion" from the Office of Graduate Studies, the original letter of completion, with the seal, may be presented to the Ring Office in lieu of your degree being posted.

Procedure To Order A Ring:

- If you meet all of the above requirements, you must visit the Ring Office no later than Friday, December 24, 1996, to complete the application for eligibility verification.
- If your application is approved and you wish to receive your ring on February 19, 1997, you must return and pay in full by cash, check, money order, or your personal Visa or Mastercard (with your name imprinted) no later than December 11, 1996.

Men's 10K - \$309.00	14K - \$421.00
Women's 10K - \$174.00	14K - \$201.00

Add \$8.00 for Class of '95 or before.
The ring delivery date is February 19, 1997.

STACKAPALOOZA

- It's not too late to do your part for Aggie Bonfire
- We need all fish, pissheads, butts, zips, & dead zips
- Grab your pot & come to stack for STACKAPALOOZA
- 36 hrs. of stack from 6 P.M. Friday to 6 A.M. Sunday

California Smoothies and supplements

Buy any EAS Creatine 325gr. or larger & receive an EAS 100 gr. Creatine bottle FREE!

(located next to Fox & Hound)
(409) 846-6202 505 E. University
coupon expires 11/20/96

Texas Aggie Basketball Men vs. N. Carolina A&T Saturday 7 p.m. Tickets: 845-2311

Big 12 Conference
Hear it on KORA 98.3

Texas Aggie Basketball Women Tonight 7 p.m. vs. SW Texas State Tickets: 845-2311

Big 12 Conference

VICTOR'S

QUALITY MEN'S & LADIES BOOT & SHOE REPAIR
Custom Hand Made Aggie Senior Boots
Regular Delivery 3-4 months
Best warranty in B/CS
\$764.92 total/ including tax & deposit

3601 Texas Ave. (at Dunn), Bryan
3 Lights North of University Intersection
Serving Aggie's Since 1966
Hours Mon.-Fri. 8-6:30 Sat. 9-4
846-4114