By Colby Gaines THE BATTALION

November

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sking the Texas A&M Football Team's sophomore right tackle Cameron Spikes to cribe his favorite block is like ing a spectator to describe what y see when a steamroller crusha cat — a pancaking. At 6-foot nches and 305 pounds, Spikes, tion we'khe Aggies' starting right tackle,

es to flatten defensive lineman. "I love to run block," Spikes d. "When the ball is hiked, I to come off (the line) and see at I can do with somebody. I e to bust them in the mouth put them on the ground.

Strangely enough, Spikes se is necessitarred as a defensive tackle at ontinue us Bryan High School, earning firstshe said. eam Class 5A all-state honors as Engineering a senior. There, Spikes compiled ajor, said stellar numbers, including 90 the referentiackles (48 for losses), 20 sacks neir opinion and 31 quarterback pressures.

ng students: Despite being recruited by

have been to ther schools as a defensive rease with lineman, Spikes said he chose Texas A&M because he liked the d in the proAggies' tradition of a good of-e grant we fensive line and because "A&M has one of the best offensive line coaches in the country.'

While Spikes is quick to give cs as a field credit to A&M Offensive Line ogy and to Coach Mike Sherman, Sherman ped," he said he still has high expectathe genera tions for Spikes.

"He has the perfect body type for an offensive lineman, are being ime and are and at (his height), he's exy into the **tre**mely strong," Sherman said. 'But right now, he gets by on hysical strength and athletic ability. (The coaches) know if he keeps working on the technical skills, he'll be an outstand ing player.

Last season, Spikes played in every game despite backing up

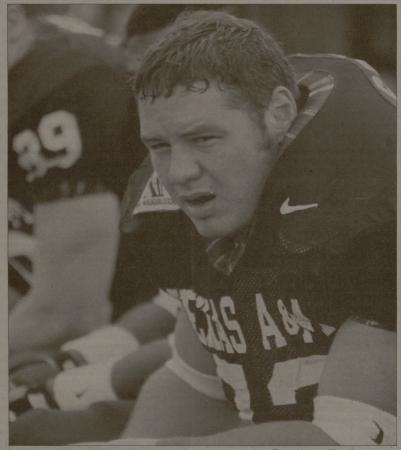
Hunter Goodwin, who now plays for the Minnesota Vikings. During the offseason, Spikes finished first overall among offensive lineman while setting a new school squat record of 600 pounds.

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 in the conditioning program 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



during the Oklahoma game at Kyle Field.

Sophomore offensive tackle Cameron Spikes takes a breather

Left tackle Ruhman takes a walk on the blind side

By Ross Hecox THE BATTALION

laying 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 Branndon 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 (40yard 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.

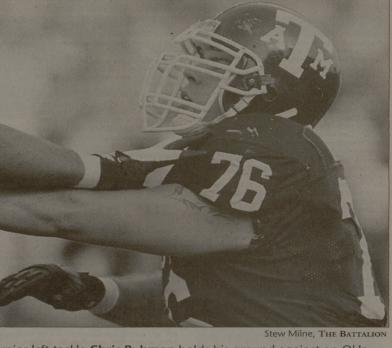
Offensive Line Coach Mike Sherman said a tackle must depend on his body mass to keep pass rushers from reaching the quarterback.

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 blocking more this season. Lucky a skilled player who understands



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

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," Ruh-man 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, Avenue South Lawrence, Kan., 7:30 p.m.

Saturday

M Basketball vs. North arolina A&T, G. Rollie hite, 7 p.m.

A&M Volleyball at Kansas tate, Manhattan, Kan.,

&M Swimming and Diving LSU, Baton Rouge, La.,

## 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	Viginia 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



THE PERSON NAMED IN

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## **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 studen 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 se mester 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 In-

formation 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** 

ou 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 requirement

Your degree is conferred and posted on the Texas A&M University Student Information

You are in good standing with the University, including no registration or trapast due fees, loans, parking tickets, returned checks, etc.

ou have completed all of your degree requirements and can obtain a "Letter of Completion the Office of Graduate Studies, the original letter of completion, with the seal, may be

ed 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

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

Women's 10K - \$174.00



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• We need all fish, pissheads, butts, zips, & dead zips

• Grab your pot & come to stack

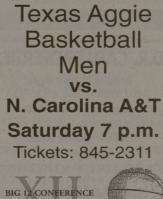
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• 36 hrs. of stack from 6 P.M. Friday to 6 A.M. Sunday

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