

# Shuffling of the Deck



## Marshall last through the revolving door of Aggie offensive coordinators

By KRISTINA BUFFIN  
THE BATTALION

It happens outside Buckingham Palace every hour, but on the gridiron it happens only when a team is looking for a new direction and the changing of the guard.

After a subpar 1996 season, the Texas A&M Football Team decided to say out with the old and in with the new.

Head Coach R.C. Slocum let both his coordinators and a position coach go. Included was offensive coordinator Steve Ensminger. Slocum then promoted offensive line coach Mike Sherman. However, Sherman resigned from the post to coach the Green Bay Packers. Slocum was forced back to the drawing board.

Enter Steve Marshall. After coaching under former Aggie offensive coordinator Bob Toledo at UCLA for a year, Marshall was offered an opportunity to run the Aggie offense.

"I have always wanted to coach at the high school level. I always thought I would be a high school coach," Marshall said. "I got my degree from the University of Louisville and had an oppor-

tunity to work for Johnny Majors, and then I went to Tennessee and never looked back from there."

So far, it has been a whirlwind experience for Marshall. Because he arrived late, he has had to acclimate not only to a new program but also a new town in record time. However, Marshall said he is excited about what has been going on.

"The offensive coaches worked awful hard last month to make this spring as productive as possible," Marshall said. "I think we accomplished the goals we set out to do. In the spring, we wanted to give the players a basic fundamental offensive philosophy and go from there. The players took it all and went with it."

"It has been fast and furious, but it has been a good time."

Marshall has worked on the offensive side of the ball his entire career. Before his UCLA stint, Marshall worked with the offensive running game and line at the University of Tennessee, where he met current Aggie quarterback Brandon Stewart.

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## Kragthorpe brings storied past to A&M receiving corps

By JAMIE BURCH  
THE BATTALION

Many college students spend the bulk of their college career playing musical majors, but have finished the game by the time they graduate. Texas A&M wide receivers coach Steve Kragthorpe invented a new way to play the game.

Kragthorpe, who replaces former wide receiver coach Les Koenig Jr., chose his career path long before graduation, but he opted for a drastic change once the diploma was in hand. Although his father was a collegiate coach, Kragthorpe wanted to live life as a white-collar worker, away from the gridiron.

"I never really intended to go into coaching," Kragthorpe said. "I got married on Friday night, graduated from college on Saturday and moved to Oregon. At that time, my dad was the head coach at Oregon State (University)."

"I was a graduate assistant for him while earning my MBA. I was going to wean myself from football and head into business. At the end of my tenure there I had an opportunity to be a part-time coach at the University at Northern Arizona. I decid-

ed to give it a try. I wasn't ready to give up football yet."

Kragthorpe said he has not looked back since.

"I probably work twice as many hours as I would in business," Kragthorpe said. "I make half as much money, but I have three times as much fun."

Kragthorpe's coaching career unfolded in the same fashion. Kragthorpe began coaching at the University of Northern Arizona, spending two years as quarterbacks coach (1990-91) and offensive coordinator (1992-93). During his tenure, Kragthorpe helped the Lumberjacks to the school's first winning record since 1988.

Following his stint at Northern Arizona, Kragthorpe served two seasons as offensive coordinator for head coach Matt Simon at the University of North Texas, helping the Screaming Eagles set several school and Southland Conference records.

In 1994, UNT led the conference in passing (268.2 yards per game), total offense (386.9) and scoring offense (28.6 points), and broke the school record for total offense in a single season (4,670 yards).

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## New defensive coordinator takes reins of Wrecking Crew

By MATT MITCHELL  
THE BATTALION

In case one wonders whether Texas A&M's Wrecking Crew defense is well-known outside the cozy confines of greater Bryan-College Station or if it's just in the swollen heads of Aggie fans, Mike Hankwitz can set the record straight — at least from a coaching perspective.

"You know the schools that have the great traditions for defense because you're trying to build a unit that equals those great defenses," said the new defensive coordinator for the Texas A&M Football Team. "And when you think of [the] greatest college defenses, one of the first places that comes to mind is Texas A&M and the Wrecking Crew."

Hankwitz will get his chance to rebuild one of college football's great defenses next season as he takes the reins from the departed Phil Bennett. The 49-year-old University of Michigan alum joined the Aggie coaching staff in February, after serving as defensive coordinator

for Glen Mason at the University of Kansas the past two seasons.

A&M Head Coach R.C. Slocum pointed to Hankwitz's experience as well as his comparable style of coaching as excellent qualifications to lead the Wrecking Crew.

"He's a veteran coach who has been a defensive coordinator for many years," Slocum said. "His defenses have a similar philosophy as the Wrecking Crew here at Texas A&M."

Hankwitz said the Aggies' aggressive, blitzing style of play and ability to attract top talent were incentives to join Slocum's staff.

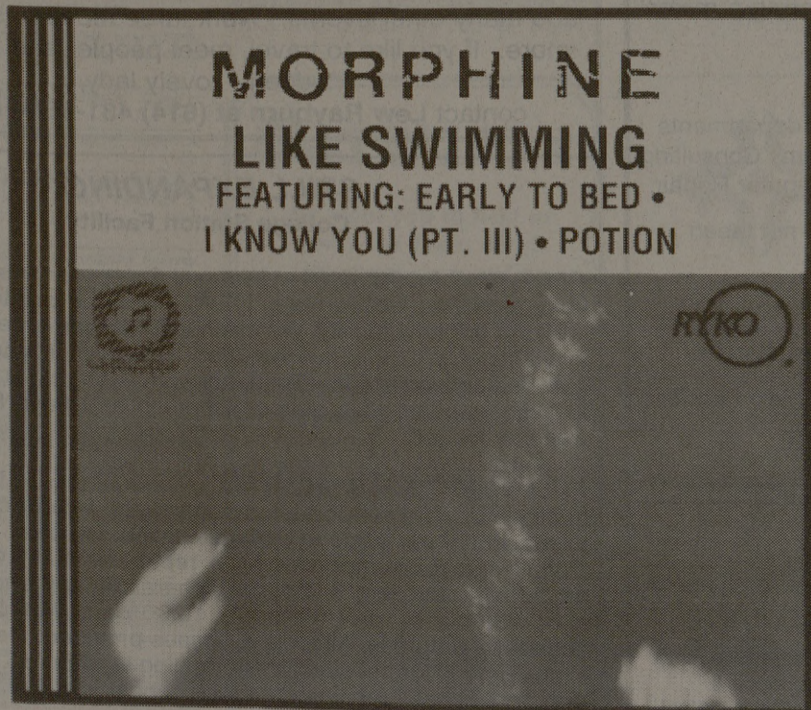
"There are a lot of things that I like to do that are very similar to what they've done here in the past," Hankwitz said. "I think when you have the kind of speed that we're able to attract here, it kind of fits in to many of the things I like to do, so it's a good match in that way."

Hankwitz has 12 years of defensive coordinator experience at three different schools and boasts a 98-37-6 record.

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