



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

Senior placekicker Kyle Bryant was a 1996 Lou Groza Award semifinalist.

# Kyle's Field

## Senior kicker does not let anything faze him

By MATT MITCHELL  
Staff writer

One would think that a man placed in the most glaring spotlight in football would be a bit more anxious at the advent of a fourth and final season. But for senior placekicker Kyle Bryant, nothing could make him feel more at ease.

"This is my last year, and I've thought that in the middle of January I'm going to look back, and there's not going to be a single thing I can do about this football season," said the 5-foot, 7-inch College Station native. "Anything I want to reflect on in January as a good performance, I need to take care of now. Basically, I'm just looking forward to having fun and enjoying this."

And why not? There is not a whole lot left for Bryant to prove, as he ranks among the top returning placekickers in the country.

As a 1996 Lou Groza Award semifinalist and top 10 ranking in numerous categories, Bryant's junior campaign catapulted him in the A&M record books to within striking dis-

stance of several school records. The majority of those records are held by former A&M standout Tony Franklin, but Bryant is closing in on two of the most prestigious.

With 42 career field goals to his credit, Bryant is just 14 behind Franklin's 19-year-old record of 56 career three-pointers. And with 223 career points scored, he may also break Franklin's school career scoring total of 291 points.

It is not beyond the realm of possibility to think Bryant may become A&M's only 300-point scorer.

"Those records don't totally own my concentration, but they are a goal I have set for myself," Bryant said. "I don't think about them every day. I think if I was to do that, it would be more of a distraction."

"If I take care of those little things, as far as records and other goals are concerned, those things will take care of themselves."

With thoughts of a record-setting season swirling in his head, Bryant's not in any hurry to change a good thing.

PLEASE SEE **BRYANT** ON PAGE 12.

# Special teams should not be taken lightly

By KRISTINA BUFFIN  
Staff writer

They are the unit on the field that no one really pays attention to unless a punt or kickoff return is fumbled or a point after attempt or field goal is missed. This distinction goes to the Texas A&M Football Team's special teams unit.

Heading up this year's squad is senior placekicker Kyle Bryant. Bryant raged onto the scene four years ago by earning second team All-SWC honors after connecting

on 17-of-25 field goals and 31-of-34 extra points. Since then he has been a solid starter for the Aggies.

Bryant said that this year the Aggies' unit will be huge.

"A lot of momentum swings come with special teams play," he said. "If you get a kickoff or a punt return for a touchdown, even a field goal, can change the momentum and give one team an advantage."

While the Aggies had a young team last season, but this season the Aggies return Bryant, the placekicker and punter, the deep snap-

per and holder, as well as the kick returners.

"The first thing we try to ensure is the possession, that is the objective in most special teams play," said Shawn Slocum, A&M's special teams coach. "It is all about team play because, for example, if we have a good punt recovery then we give the offense a better average."

Sophomore punter Shane Lechler battled a leg injury this summer, but he will be ready for the Sept. 6 game against Sam Houston State University.

Lechler averaged 42.7 yards per punt last season on 72 kicks, which ranked 29th nationally and the top average by a freshman. He also had a 76-yard effort against Iowa State University.

His performance earned him freshman All-America honors but Lechler said there is still much room to improve.

"I did earn freshman All-America honors but I don't think I had a good year," he said. "The first four games were not too good but I think I finally settled down."

Slocum, however, is not so hard on Lechler.

"He can change the field position in one play," Slocum said. "He has the leg strength and a lot of athleticism. He can get the ball off on one play."

Leading the return team will be multi-talented sophomore Dante Hall and junior Sirr Parker. Hall returned 43 punts for an average of 13.3 yards per return and broke a 69-yard return for a touchdown against Iowa State. Parker returned one kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown against the University of Texas last season.

# Settin' it on fire like Dante's inferno

## Sophomore Hall has knack, instincts for offense, special teams

By KRISTINA BUFFIN  
Staff writer

Looking at Dante Hall in his 'civilian wear,' evokes an image directly opposite of the image he displays on the field — a bullet train with the pigskin tightly tucked away, barreling towards the end zone and setting it on fire like Dante's inferno.

Instead, A&M's 5-foot 8-inch running back does not look like a prototypical football player — a 6-foot 4-inch, 250 pound man.

This sophomore, who piled up 642 yards and three touchdowns in his freshman outing, is smaller, has a lower center of gravity and is quick, agile and always looking for a hole to break through.

"He is a young guy and a gifted guy,"

"All good running backs have them [instincts] because that is what helps you get the ball and find the open holes."

DANTE HALL  
SOPHOMORE RUNNING BACK

said Steve Marshall, offensive coordinator for the Aggies. "But he must be an all-around back. We try to get the best athlete on both sides (offensive and special teams), like we did with Leeland [McElroy]. We are fortunate to have Dante on our team."

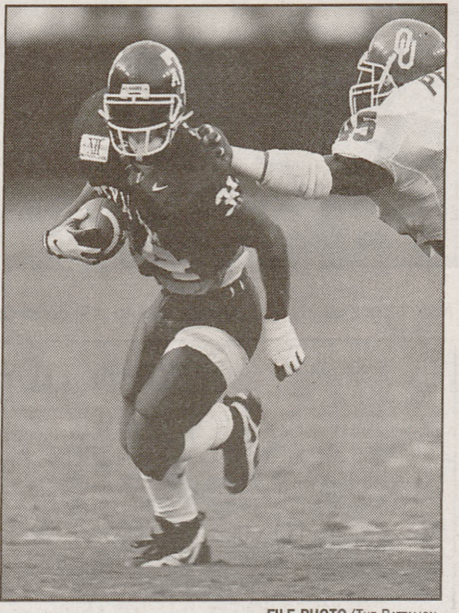
The Aggies are indeed fortunate to have a history of talented running backs

and the most recent back to graduate to the NFL is Leeland McElroy.

Hall's number, 34, which he says is purely coincidental, invokes visions of greatness in Aggie fan's minds. Both split duties on special teams and offense and A&M running backs coach Ken Rucker said there is a certain intangible entity that both backs have.

"Both have a knack for the position," he said. "They just know where and when to run and being a punt returner is not easy so the knack is essential. Kickoff returns are easier to handle but overall it is that knack."

Hall says he has a type of knack but instinct also enables him to do what he does on the gridiron.



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

Sophomore Dante Hall is the multi-talented player the Aggies will rely on for a variety of duties this fall.

PLEASE SEE **HALL** ON PAGE 12.

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