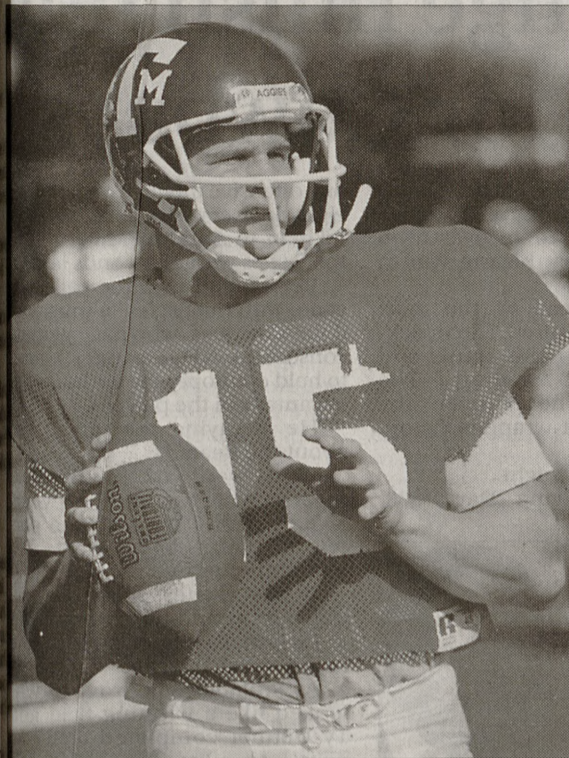


RANDY IS DANDY

McCown taking advantage of opportunities at quarterback

By JAMIE BURCH
Staff writer



RONY ANGKRIWAN/THE BATTALION
Sophomore Randy McCown is ranked fifth in the Big 12 in passing efficiency.

It's the fall of your senior year in high school and you have just verbally committed to play quarterback for Texas A&M. Prior to signing day you hear word that a highly-touted transfer quarterback is returning home to play football. What do you do? Do you bail out and sign with a rival school? Not if you are Randy McCown.

McCown committed to play at A&M after completing his last season at Jacksonville High School in 1994. Prior to signing day the following February, Brannon Stewart announced his intentions of transferring from the University of Tennessee, after becoming frustrated by playing backup behind Peyton Manning.

McCown was faced with the biggest decision of his young life, 'Should I honor my commitment to A&M or should I

choose a school where I believe I will have a better chance to play?'

The same thought Stewart must have had prior to leaving Tennessee.

McCown said his decision was easier because he has confidence in his abilities.

"Ever since I was a little kid I wanted to be the next Roger Staubach," McCown said.

"So when it came time for me to make a decision on where I would go to school, I said I wouldn't let whoever was the head quarterback render my decision.

"My goal is to be an NFL quarterback. If I can't beat out a college quarterback then I shouldn't worry about the NFL."

Beating out the starting quarterback has been a difficult task so far for McCown.

The sophomore backup spent much of last season under the tutelage of Stewart. McCown's biggest role

came early in the second half against Oklahoma State University in 1996. McCown entered the game with a 17-13 lead under his belt and guided the Aggies to a 38-19 victory, completing 5-of-11 passes for 108 yards.

backs coach Ray Dorr made it clear Stewart is still the starter and McCown is well aware of that fact.

But the humble McCown said he does not like to garner attention.

"I've never been much for wanting to be in the spotlight," McCown said. "I just like to go out and do my job. That's what they brought me here to do — run the offense, lead the team, and complete passes."

Because McCown is effective running the offense, coach R.C. Sluom has decided to stay with a two quarterback system as long as it continues to work.

"He has an awareness on the field," Sluom said. "He feels and knows where the pressure is coming from. He can keep away from it and still make the plays. That's one thing I always looked for as a defensive coordinator."

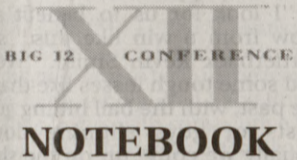
"I've never been much for wanting the spotlight. I just like to go out and do my job."

RANDY MCCOWN
A&M QUARTERBACK

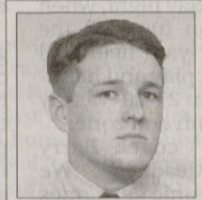
But regardless of how well McCown performs, he still seems to live in the shadows of Stewart. After his 7-of-14 for 148 yard performance against Sam Houston State University, A&M quarter-

PLEASE SEE **McCOWN** ON PAGE 8.

Big 12 teams not living up to preseason expectations



NOTEBOOK



JAMIE BURCH
staff writer

Griese is the Word

Wolverine quarterback Brian Griese, son of Dolphin's Hall of Famer Bob Griese, threw for 258 yards and two touchdowns, leading Michigan past Colorado 27-3. Griese, who didn't receive the starting nod until Tuesday, completed 21 of 28 passes with one interception.

Bledsoe Watch

Colorado quarterback John Hessler, following a shaky performance against Colorado State a week earlier, chunked four interceptions to a hungry Wolverine secondary in the Buffaloes' Saturday loss to Michigan. Hessler was 15 of 40 for 141 yards and no touchdowns.

After the game, Colorado coach Rick Neuheisel said his quarterback must reverse his recent lack of fortunes.

"Right now, it's a confidence problem in my mind," Neuheisel said. "He's not performing ... well, he's just got to play better, that's all."

If Hessler does not improve quickly, Neuheisel

may have to go with second string quarterback Adam Bledsoe, the brother of Patriots' standout Drew Bledsoe. Although Bledsoe is a freshman and second on the depth charts as a result of a freak weight room accident, Neuheisel may be forced to promote the child prodigy to keep the Buffaloes from plummeting out of the AP Top 25 poll. The Buffaloes dropped eight spots to No. 15 following the 24 point loss to Michigan.

Route 66

Feeling a little psychosomatic addict insane, UCLA quarterback Cade McNown threw for a school record five touchdown passes, all in the first half, handing Texas its worst defeat in 93 years, 66-3.

In his post-game press conference, Texas coach, John Mackovic said he is ashamed and puzzled by the loss.

"The guys are going to be embarrassed," Mackovic said. "What do you say to friends and family who see this score? If you're saying what went wrong — I don't know, everything went wrong."

The Longhorns' offense turned the ball over eight

times and surrendered eight sacks.

With injured starter James Brown on the sideline with a severely sprained ankle, backup quarterbacks Richard Walton and Marty Cherry, obviously need work in practice on how to find the end zone.

New Heisman Hopeful

UCLA quarterback Cade McNown has posted impressive numbers the past two weeks, comparable to those of one Peyton Manning. McNown was 12-of-18 for 140 yards and five touchdown passes in the first half against Texas. McNown finished an impressive 15-of-23 for 202 yards.

The prior week, McNown threw for 400 yards in UCLA's 30-24 loss to Tennessee.

The Bruins general's five touchdowns against the Longhorns broke a UCLA record for most touchdowns in a game. The previous record was held by seven players, including Troy Aikman, Rick Neuheisel and Tommy Maddox.

PLEASE SEE **BURCH** ON PAGE 8.

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