

## CU game will show state of A&M program



**TRAVIS V. DABNEY**  
staff writer

No passing game, the defense isn't what it used to be, can't win the big game, too much staff turnover, plenty of talent but not enough results. Every Aggie from El Paso to Texarkana has either heard it said. Will the Aggies silence their critics this weekend with a victory over Colorado or simply fuel the fire? Much has been made of the Aggies past seasons and whether they have been able to par with what their fans have come to expect of football in Aggieland. The talk over the entire off season was how far had the Aggies fallen and why? The answers are an easy thing to pinpoint but many reasons have been given from various sources about last season 6-6 record. In 1994 the Aggies were placed on probation after the Greg Hill/Warren Albert scandal that caused A&M to lose out on several top prospects due to the fact the Aggies might receive much more than probation. The relative youth of last year's team was said to have put undue pressure on the Aggies who were no longer in the position of facing the small fries of the SWC like Rice, TCU and SMU but rather they were lining up against Big 12 rivals such as Colorado, Kansas State and Oklahoma. For all the talk of 6-6 and the other criticisms that have been laid out the Aggies seemed to have put all that aside and moved on with their football lives. The team came out like a locomotive in the first two games of the season and barreled over their opponents like everyone expected or thought they should. Then came North Texas University along with the rest of the Aggies preseason schedule was expected that the Aggies would win. While the team won in a convincing manner some old problems began to surface that might send Aggie fans into a state of anxiety. The offense appeared to have a great deal of trouble with the passing game, the pass protection broke down at times when the Aggies needed it the most. So what does this mean going to Colorado? Were the Aggies looking for the Mean Green contrary to what they said? Only Saturday in Boulder will tell, but if you are an Aggie fan you have hope that this is the case. Could part of the Aggies problems last week be the quarterback rotation the team is running? Other teams have run a quarterback rotation with success including Mark Brunell and Billy Joe Hobert at the University of Washington, Brock Berringer and Tommie Frazier at Nebraska and Cody Carlson and Tom Blenke at Baylor when they were still playing football in Waco. Problems or not, the Aggies will be in Boulder this weekend trying to exorcise demons of the past. The Aggies entered the 1997 season with one goal and that was the national championship. The 3rd-ranked Aggies went to Boulder and found out that it is cheap. After the 29-21 loss to the Buffs they found themselves in a tailspin that would see them lose to Texas Tech, receive last second heroics from Corey Pullig and Albert Connell to defeat SMU and lose to The University of Texas at home for their first loss at home since 1989. Unfortunately for the Aggies, even with a victory in Boulder the national media won't likely recognize them as winners, but rather the Buffaloes as the losers as Rick Neuheisel steps on the seat at Colorado. The Buffaloes have been highly criticized for their play this season and a victory over the Buffs at this point hasn't been worth less in the terms of respect from the fan perspective since the mid 1980's. Win or lose the Aggies will not be adversely affected in the chase for the Southern division title of the Big 12. Lose all the Aggies have to do is beat every team in the south along with a victory or two against Iowa St. and Kansas St. and they will be in San Antonio. On the surface it is just that simple that a victory over the talented Buffs would likely give the Aggies that swagger that has been missing since the last time they visited the Rocky Mountains. Putting aside the media criticism of A&M and Colorado along with the coach and this is likely a make or break game for both the Aggies and Buffs. Confidence will lead to great things; hesitation will lead to mediocrity.

Travis Dabney is a senior journalism major

# BOULDER BOUND

## No. 17 Aggies set for conference opener against No. 16 Buffaloes

By CHRIS FERRELL  
Sports editor

The 1995 game between the Texas A&M Football Team and the University of Colorado was billed as college football's game of the year.

ESPN's College Game Day was there, along with ABC's top play-by-play tandem, Keith Jackson and Bob Griese. There was talk of national championships and Heisman Trophies. There was all of this, plus about as much big game atmosphere as the fourth game of the season can have.

It was the day A&M was going to prove to the world that they were a true national power. That they were as good as advertised and not just a bully who beat up on weak Southwest Conference opponents.

It was their time to shine. The team had been loose all week and had what coach R.C. Slocum described as one of the team's best weeks of practice ever.

Then something went wrong. The pressure of the big game got to the Aggies. With a 29-21 loss to the Buffaloes, they lost any hope of a national championship. Leeland Mcleeroy lost his chance of winning the Heisman, and most of all, they lost respect.

"If I learned anything from the game, it was that I allowed our players to be put in a situation where it's almost like the only way they could come out there and survive was to blow out Colorado and that's really unfair to them," Slocum said.

That game was supposed to be a turning point for the A&M football program. Many people would argue that it was, only they took a turn for the worse.

The next week, they were upset by Texas Tech. The next season, they fell to 6-6.

In the 25 games prior to the match up they were 22-2-1, in the 25 games since then, they are 16-9.

Despite the drop off, players and coach-



DAVE HOUSE/THE BATTALION

Sophomore receiver **Matt Bumgardner** tries to haul in a pass against the University of North Texas. The Aggies will open big 12 play this weekend when they travel to Boulder to take on the Colorado Buffaloes.

es said the game did not affect the program. "You can't blame it on one game," junior quarterback Brannon Stewart said. "Sometimes that's just the way the ball bounces. Sometimes you have tough years and it's definitely not the result of one football game."

Tomorrow, when the 17th-ranked Ag-

gies travel to Colorado's Folsom Field to play the 16th-ranked Buffaloes before a national T.V. audience, they will have a chance to show the world that they are back and that their 3-0 record and huge blow out victories are no fluke.

A&M has rolled over Sam Houston State University, Southwestern Louisiana, and the

University of North Texas by a combined score of 161-16 putting up gaudy numbers on both sides of the ball along the way.

This week the test gets much tougher. Offensive coordinator Steve Marshall said the Aggie offense will have their hands full.

"Colorado presents problems in that they're dad-gum good," Marshall said. "They have very good personnel. The two inside guys that they start (Viliami) Mau-mau and Ryan Olsen are tempo setter guys for their defense. They've been in the wars.

"What they present is that they play ball, they are very talented. They match up very well. I doubt there is an offense in the country that they couldn't match up with."

Last season Colorado took the Aggies ground game attack and forced the Aggies to throw the ball.

Stewart set single game records for pass attempts, completions and passing yards, going 34-for-64 for 385 yards in the 24-10 loss at Kyle Field.

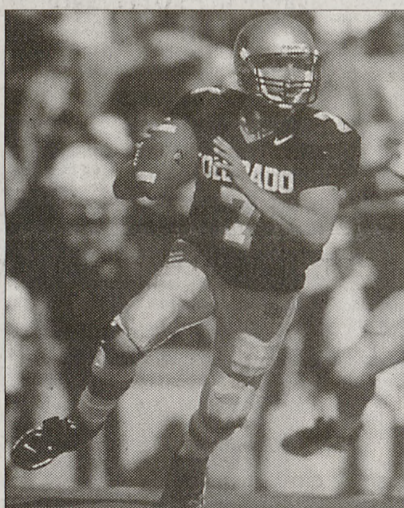
This season A&M wants to establish the run. Last week against North Texas, sophomore Dante Hall and junior Sirr Parker each ran for over one hundred yards.

On the defensive side of the ball, getting to the quarterback is the key.

Colorado quarterback John Hessler has struggled under pressure this season, posting a 2:7 touchdown/interception ratio. Michigan's attacking defense was able to rattle Hessler all day in their 27-3 win over the Buffs.

"Pressure is the key," former Colorado and current A&M defensive coordinator Mike Hankwitz said. "I don't know if it's necessarily more true with him. Maybe this year just because of the circumstances he's played in."

Surely the Aggies would like to see the pressure on someone else in Colorado. They, more than anyone can understand what a burden it can be.



COURTESY COLORADO SPORTS INFORMATION  
CU quarterback **John Hessler** has struggled this season.

## Hessler finding trouble in starting role

By CHRIS FERRELL  
Sports editor

When Colorado quarterback Koy Detmer went down with a torn ACL against the Texas A&M Football Team in 1995, an unknown, unheralded sophomore named John Hessler stepped onto the field in one of the biggest games of the season.

He went 10-for-20 for 177 yards. He ran for two touchdowns and passed for another while leading the seventh-ranked Buffaloes over the third ranked Aggies 29-21 at Folsom Field. After the game, he was named Big 8 player of the week

"More than anything, that game gave me confidence," Hessler said. "I've really tried to build on that. At the time I really didn't have much going for me."

He went on to start the rest of the season, quarterbacking CU to a 10-2 record, a win over Oregon in the Cotton Bowl and a No. 7 ranking in the final polls.

The following season, Detmer returned to the starting line-up and Hessler returned to the bench. "Last year was a rough year for me," Hessler said. "I told myself that I can't let the opportunity go."

Hessler entered this season with high expectations, he was named a preseason honorable

mention All-American.

However, he and his team

"More than anything, that game gave me confidence. At the time I really didn't have much going for me."

**JOHN HESSLER**  
COLORADO QUARTERBACK

have struggled.

In an embarrassing 27-3 loss to the University of Michigan, Hessler felt pressure all day and

could never get in sync.

His 2:7, touchdown/interception ratio, along with his inability to live up to the high expectations of Rick Neuheisel-coached quarterbacks has caused doubts about the player who at one time could do no wrong for the Buffaloes.

Despite this, Hessler said he and his teammates are confident.

"Right now we're 2-1. We were hoping to be 3-0, but we still control our own destiny," he said. "We feel like we're in a good situation. After losing to Michigan, our confidence was low but we had a big win over Wyoming last week and we feel like we're in pretty good shape."

### ◆Texas Tech Investigation

## Red Raiders used ineligible players

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — Seventy-six Texas Tech athletes in eight sports competed ineligibly over the past six years, leaving it up to the NCAA whether the school's 1996 men's NCAA basketball tournament run and other games are in jeopardy, officials announced Thursday.

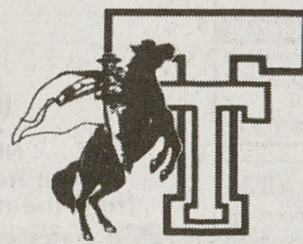
The ineligibility announcement was made as athletic administrators released the results of an audit conducted by an Overland Park, Kan., law firm that specializes in NCAA compliance matters.

Since the 1991-92 school year, according to the audit, athletes in football, men's and women's basketball, baseball, women's soccer, men's tennis, men's track and women's volleyball competed ineligibly at one time or another.

The audit said 25 football players were ineligible to compete in 1993-94 and 16 the next season, the year the Raiders won the Southwest Conference championship.

The women's basketball program had

ineligible players in three seasons. However, the 1993 NCAA national championship squad didn't appear to have any certification problems.



New compliance director Robert Burton said it wasn't clear whether the school would have to forfeit past victories or return the \$120,000 received for the men's basketball team's two NCAA tournament victories in 1996.

Most of the violations occurred because of misapplication of revised NCAA certification rules passed in 1992, auditors concluded. The problem areas were rules governing the minimum number of hours taken and minimum progress to a degree.

The report, compiled by the school with the help from the law firm of Bond, Schoeneck & King, also found that the school paid out too much scholarship money in baseball, football, men's golf and men's track.

The NCAA has accepted the audit as part of its 1 1/2-year inquiry into allegations of improprieties in the athletic program, Burton said. He added that he's confident there aren't further compliance problems that the NCAA might uncover later.

Burton added that the problems appeared to stem from mismanagement, not intentional rules violations.



COURTESY TEXAS TECH SPORTS INFORMATION  
Coach **James Dickey's** basketball team is one of eight Texas Tech teams to use ineligible players.

## The Battalion's 1997 Staff Picks

The Match-Ups	Chris Ferrell	Paul Mitchell	Jeremy Furtick	Kristina Buffin	Jamie Burch	Matt Mitchell	Stephen Boudreau	Travis Dabney	Margaux Harris	Nicole Hooven	Jeff Schmidt	Jeff Webb	Jason Whitcomb	Consensus
#21 Texas A&M @ #16 Colorado (-3)	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Colorado	Colorado	Texas A&M	Colorado	Texas A&M	Colorado	Colorado	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M; Aggies number; Buffs tumble
#17 Kansas St. @ #3 Nebraska (-21)	Nebraska	Kansas St.	Kansas St.	Nebraska	Kansas St.	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska: Another step towards #1
Texas (-7) @ Oklahoma St.	OSU	Texas	OSU	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas: They'll wake up sooner or later
Texas Tech @ Baylor (NL)	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Baylor	Texas Tech	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Texas Tech	Texas Tech: Won't be embarrassed this week
Oklahoma (-3) @ Kansas	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Kansas	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Kansas	Oklahoma: Sooners looked tough last week
Iowa St. @ Missouri (-17)	Missouri	Missouri	Iowa St.	Iowa St.	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri	Iowa St.	Missouri	Missouri	Iowa St.	Iowa St.	Missouri: Iowa St. is just too weak
Miami @ #4 Florida St. (-22)	Florida St.	Miami	Florida St.	Miami	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Miami	Miami	Florida St.: This used to be a big game
#11 Iowa @ #7 Ohio St. (-4)	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Iowa	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Iowa	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Ohio St.	Iowa	Ohio St.: Iowa gets a wake-up call
#20 Alabama (-6.5) @ Kentucky	Alabama	Alabama	Kentucky	Alabama	Kentucky	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama: Roll Tide, Roll!
Cowboys (-7) @ Giants	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Giants	Giants	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys	Cowboys: Williams should give Emmitt a rest
Buccaneers @ Packers (-8)	Buccaneers	Buccaneers	Packers	Packers	Packers	Packers	Buccaneers	Packers	Buccaneers	Packers	Packers	Buccaneers	Buccaneers	Packers: Bucs just not at this level, yet
Patriots @ Broncos (-4.5)	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Patriots	Broncos	Broncos	Broncos	Patriots	Patriots	Broncos: Elway; Big game; Mike High; Nuff said
Last Week	8-4	8-4	9-3	9-3	9-3	8-4	8-4	7-5	7-5	8-4	7-5	8-4	6-6	102-55; Welcome, Mr. Schmidt
Cumulative	25-22-1	24-23-1	21-26-1	26-21-1	21-26-1	23-24-1	26-21-1	24-23-1	21-26-1	24-23-1	7-5	18-29-1	22-25-1	294-282-12; Finally above .500

NOTE: The Battalion Staff will be picking against the betting line this semester. We in no way encourage any illegal wagering with the use of these betting lines, they are presented solely for entertainment purposes.