

Zeroing in on the Horns

A&M, Texas ready to rumble in long-standing rivalry



CHRIS FERRELL
Sports editor

they come into the game 4-7 on the season, with a couple of big losses, all by knockout. They are the defending Big 12 champions of the world, from Austin — the Texas Lonnngnghorns.

And their opponent, from College Station, Texas. They are the current Big 12 South champions of the world. They come into the game 8-2 on the year, wearing maroon jerseys with white trim — the Texas A&M Agggggggg.

And now from Kyle Field in College Station, Texas. Leeeeeeeeeeetttttt get ready to rummmmmmmmmmmble.

(End Buffer Voice)
It is more than a football game. In the state of Texas, it is everything. Sure you've got Texas Tech, SMU, Rice and Baylor and several other schools but when it really boils down to it, there are Aggies and there are Longhorns. And they don't like each other.

"You come here for these types of games," junior linebacker Dat Nguyen said. "It's one of those games where you

can come in 0-10 and if you win the game your season's resurrected."

Texas will come to Kyle Field looking to resurrect a season which has not gone anywhere near what was expected. The preseason pick to win the Big 12 South and possibly challenge for a national title, the Longhorn's season has gone horribly wrong, falling to 4-7 and out of bowl consideration.

John Mackovic by all reports will be coaching his last game for Texas. Ricky Williams, their All-America running back is headed to the NFL and James Brown is graduating. Nothing would help put a sparkle on a dull season in Austin than a third consecutive win over their cross state rivals.

The Aggies have more motivation than usual as well. Texas has won the last two games including last season's 51-15 romp in Austin, a game in which coach R.C. Slocum said his team looked "inept" in the second half.

But honestly, you can throw all that out the window. This is A&M-Texas, enough said.

AS BIG AS IT GETS.

One of the things that makes this game so special is the fact that many of the players from each side have grown up competing or playing with each other.

"You know most of their guys," junior quarterback Brannndon Stewart said. "You played against some of them in high school or played with them in All-Star games."

Offensive coordinator Steve Marshall said that last week when he gave his offensive lineman the scouting report, they knew more about the Texas players than Marshall, who is in his first year at A&M after coming over from UCLA, did.

"It gets to the very basic element of football here in the state of Texas," Slocum said. "When you play in a backyard game it's the pride of you against the guy you live next door to. When you get to high school it's you against the cross town rival. When you move up it's the big interstate rival. It just doesn't get any better in terms of motivation."

HEISMAN TALK

The Heisman debate has pretty much centered around two players, Tennessee's Peyton Manning and Michigan's Charles Woodson.

Tuesday, the debate was no different as Stewart and sophomore running back Dante Hall argued over their candidacies. Stewart who played with Manning as a freshman at Tennessee said that he would give the award to his former teammate.

Hearing this, Hall said he would vote for Woodson because of his all-around ability. "Do you know how hard it is to return a punt?" Hall asked.

Stewart defend Manning, saying he was the best player in college football and had been among the best for his entire career.

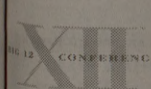
He also said he would probably talk to Manning after the Big 12 title game.

Chris Ferrell is a sophomore journalism major

NOTEBOOK

...the following game is scheduled for four quarters and is sanctioned under the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. First the challenger. Fighting out of the east sideline in the uniforms with burnt orange trim,

Big 12 Part II offered plenty of excitement



JAMIE BURCH
staff writer

attack is not the ground game. Trying to replace last season's Heisman Trophy candidate Troy Davis, the Cyclones have been anything but impressive on the ground.

In last week's 28-3 loss to No. 9 Kansas State, Iowa State posted zero rushing yards compared to the Wildcats 284. Now in all fairness, Darren Davis, the younger brother of the favorite son of Ames, Iowa, rushed 28 times for 66 yards to gain over 1,000 yards on the season.

But the Cyclones owe what little success they've experienced to their aerial assault. In a conference that is better known for its powerful ground game, the Cyclones have thrown the ball 386 times, completing 184 passes for 2,551 yards, placing Iowa State at No. 36 in the nation in passing offense.

SALT IN THE WOUND

Adding insult to injury, Baylor's heralded running back, Jerrod Douglas, was injured on the final carry of his collegiate career in the Bears' 24-14 loss to Oklahoma State on Saturday. In yet another of a season-long line of demoralizing losses, Douglas suffered a separated shoulder on his final run. The star tailback rushed nine times for 49 yards, pushing his season total to 693 yards. Despite the disappointing end to his career, Douglas finished an impressive four-year career as Baylor's second all-time leading rusher, behind Walter Abercrombie (3,665), with 2,947 yards.



RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore cornerback **Jason Webster** creatively leaps over Sam Houston's ball carrier in the first game of 1997 the season. The Aggies close out their season against rival Texas Friday at 10 a.m. at Kyle Field.

Cornerback Webster quietly leaping into A&M secondary

BY JEFF WEBB
Staff writer

He was a high school All-America running back. He was the special teams most valuable player last year. He is A&M sophomore cornerback Jason Webster, and most ask, "Where did this guy come from?" That is understandable.

Webster is the quietest guy on a secondary that does not make many statements besides on the field. And despite his diminutive 5-foot, 10-inch stature, Webster shares the team lead in pass break-ups with six and doesn't back down from anyone — especially receivers.

"A receiver is a receiver whether he is taller or shorter," Webster said. "I use my technique to guard them all the same way. I have to be more aggressive with a large receiver, but I try to be as aggressive as I can, always."

That aggressiveness is something defensive backs

coach Larry Slade said favorably compares him to a former Aggie cornerback who now starts for the New York Jets.

"When you look at Ray Mickens, he was a 5-foot 8-inch bulldog," Slade said. "He was a tough guy, and Jason Webster is in that mold. He won't back down from anyone."

Webster began his football career at running back in the Willowridge High School program, but was recruited by Slade to play cornerback at A&M.

"In high school, running back was 'the position,' and I never thought about being a corner," Webster said. "I was recruited as running back, but I opened up other options. I wanted to contribute early, so I came in at defensive back."

Slade emphasized that on the college level, coaches like to put the best athletes in their best positions.

Ags ready to close with win

BY LEN CALLOWAY
Staff Writer

Campus feels different this week, and the air definitely feels different. It's obvious that it's time for the Texas A&M Football Team to face its arch rival from "that other school" — the mighty Longhorns.

A victory against Texas could do well for the Aggs' state of mind before facing Nebraska in the Big 12 Championship on Dec. 6.

Revenge. Revenge. Revenge. Last year the Aggies took a beating from the Horns 51-15, but the Aggies believe and are confident that they will prevail this year.

As senior lineman Steve McKinney noted Tuesday, "We're in the position that if we lost to Texas it would hurt our season and I would be very upset, but it wouldn't ruin our season — we've had a good season, and it is going to be fun no matter what happens — all in all, we feel pretty confident."

A couple of questions later, McKinney was reminded that Texas could be trying to save its season by beating A&M and agreed but he added, "That's not going to happen, our team is ready to play, it's the same as last year only the roles are reversed. We want to win the division outright — we don't want to share the trophy with anyone, that's no fun. We already know we're going to the championship, but we can't take Texas for granted. We have to play just as hard against Texas as we have played all year."

Most of the players acknowledged the rivalry aspect, but denied a bitter hatred for the Longhorns.

CYCLONES EARN FREQUENT FLYER MILEAGE

The secret ingredient to Iowa State's less than potent offensive

PLEASE SEE **BURCH** ON PAGE 8.

PLEASE SEE **WEBSTER** ON PAGE 10.

PLEASE SEE **AGGIES** ON PAGE 8.