

TEXAS A&M



NEBRASKA

# REGAINING HIS FOCUS

## Junior Shun Horn has over come injuries to regain his position at A&M

By CHRIS FERRELL  
Sports editor

Surely this was not how Shun Horn envisioned his junior season would go, but looking at it now, he wouldn't change it.

After starting all 10 games he played in at cornerback as a sophomore (he was injured against Oklahoma State) Horn set high expectations for the season. After all Horn had been a solid performer in a young secondary and was now an upperclassman, ready to take his place as a leader for the Wrecking Crew.

Horn was the link between the current young, promising group of corners and the Aaron Glenn/Ray Mickens tandem which may have been the best in school history. He set lofty goals. He wanted to be All-Big 12. He wanted to be the next in the great cornerback in a long line of great Aggie defensive backs.

But as the Aggies opened the season against Sam Houston, he was not in the starting lineup. An ankle injury in two days coupled with the strong play of sophomore Sedrick Curry left Horn on the outside of the lineup looking in.

But Horn refused to sit back and accept his role on the second unit. After overcoming the ankle injury Horn began to return to his '96 form. He refocused on football and began to step up his level of play on

the practice field, when without warning, injury struck again, this time in the form of a pulled hamstring which would force him to miss games against Iowa State, Kansas State and Texas Tech. It was another roadblock in a season which he had hoped would yield much bigger rewards.

Once again Horn was forced to come back from an injury and again he responded. He lived in the trainer's office, sometimes getting the hamstring stretched out as many as fifteen times a day. He was there at 6:30 in the morning, in between classes and whenever he had free time. He had to refocus again, and again he rose to the challenge, doing the extra things in practice to make the coaches take notice. Prior to the Aggies' game against Baylor, defensive back coach Larry Slade noticed.

"I was more focused into practice," Horn said. "If you make the big play in practice, it shows up because the films don't lie."

"One day he (coach Slade) said, 'you go with first team.' He doesn't make a big deal about it. You know, the guy in front of you knows what's going on. It's not like there was any hostility. When he (Curry) got the position I told him, 'I'll help you out any way that I can, I've been here for a while.' When I got my position back, he came up and congratulated me, it's not like it was a big deal."

The week of practice, coupled with his performance in the Oklahoma State game a week earlier had propelled Horn back into the starting lineup.

The game against the Cowboys, an overtime thriller which sent the Aggies into position to win the Big 12 South and set up their showdown with second-ranked Nebraska this weekend was a microcosm of Horn's season.

In his first game back, A&M started off slow, much like the junior cornerback had early in the season.

**"If you make the big play in practice, it shows up because the films don't lie."**

SHUN HORN  
A&M CORNERBACK

Then as the game wore on the Aggies became stronger and stronger, coming up big when the stakes were at their highest.

Last Friday, the stakes were high, and Horn came up with his biggest performance of the season in a nationally televised game against A&M's biggest rival and defending Big 12 champion, Texas.

"As a defensive back I said 'I don't care if I go without a big play the entire season, this is the game where I

want to come out. It was one of those games where I couldn't wait to get out on the field.

"If I could pick out one game to have a big play that would be it because not only will you remember it but the rest of the world will, too."

And Horn turned in perhaps the two biggest plays of the game to go along with his career-high 13 tackles.

The first came early in the second half when Ricky Williams, the Longhorn's All-American running back turned the corner and headed in Horn's direction. Horn wrapped him up and drug him down, injuring Williams' ankle on the play. It was a play which both slowed Williams for the rest of the afternoon and gave the defense new life, helping the Aggies take control of the game.

The other play was more of a statement. On the next to last play of the game Texas quarterback James Brown threw a pass to full-back Ricky Brown in the flats and Horn delivered on of the hardest hits of the season, breaking up the pass attempt. It was a play Horn admitted he has watched about 100 times since Friday.

Indeed it was Horn's actions which spoke louder than his word, something Slade said is very characteristic of him.

PLEASE SEE HORN ON PAGE 9.



RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Junior cornerback Shun Horn has regained his starting job.

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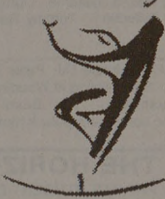
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