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Breaking Through

Freshman cornerback Jay Brooks shed his rookie fear in a notable Kickoff Classic performance

BY AL LAZARUS
 The Battalion

Playing against Florida State University had long been a dream of Texas A&M freshman cornerback Jay Brooks.

But when the dream became reality for Brooks as A&M squared off against the Seminoles in the 1998 Kickoff Classic, the freshman cornerback was not exactly jumping for joy.

"I was scared being out there against one of the best teams in the nation," Brooks said. "I was so nervous, I didn't know what to do."

Compounding his anxiety was the fact that in his first collegiate game he and his defensive backfield teammates had the unenviable task of covering Florida State's Peter Warrick, one of the top receivers in the nation.

"The more they throw, the more plays I can make."

— Jay Brooks
 A&M freshman cornerback

Brooks said while he tried to act confident the first time he lined up against Warrick, he knew he was not fooling his opponent.

"I'm pretty sure he saw it in my face," Brooks said. "And on the second play, they threw the ball to my side, and when [Warrick] broke [to the ball], my feet wouldn't move, and I just fell on the ground."

In the waning moments of the first half with the Aggies trailing 10-7, Brooks officially made the transformation from wide-eyed freshman to big-time playmaker.

After a fumble caused by a Christian Rodriguez hit on Florida State quarterback Chris Weinke, Brooks scooped the ball into his arms and returned it for a touchdown, giving the Aggies a halftime lead against the No. 2 team in the nation.

Brooks said the thought of making a big play had crossed his mind before the game.

"I wanted to make one big play, but mainly I just wanted to be out there and not get beat deep on national television," Brooks said.

Brooks finished the game with five tackles and two fumble recoveries, solidifying his stance as a starter on a team loaded with talented cornerbacks.

Larry Slade, defensive backs coach for the Aggies, said Brooks' hard work over the summer helped him earn his starting role.

"He came out of spring football as a guy that we knew would be competing, but he's just taken it to the next level," Slade said.

Slade said in addition to Brooks' 4.52 second 40-yard-dash time and 37-inch vertical leap, he has qualities that cannot be measured.

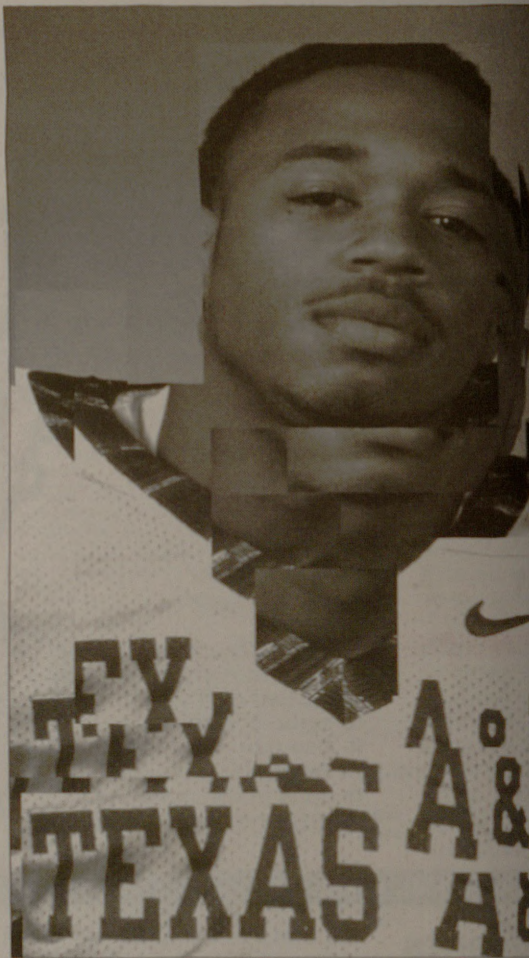
"[Brooks] has great instincts, that's probably his greatest asset," Slade said.

Another asset is his leadership ability, which during his career at Ellison High School in Killeen, earned him the nickname "Chief."

Brooks said his coach gave him the nickname his sophomore year.

"I started on varsity my sophomore year, and I was the only sophomore out there, so I was kind of a leader, even to the varsity players," he said.

Michael Jameson, a sophomore safe-



ty for the Aggies, played with Brooks in high school and said his play against Florida State did not surprise him.

"It reminded me of how it used to be in high school. To come out and play the type of game he played really made me proud of him," Jameson said.

In Saturday's game against Louisiana Tech the Aggies will once again face a team that poses a major passing threat.

While it might be expected for a young cornerback to dread facing a strong passing team like Louisiana Tech, Brooks said he will welcome the Bulldogs with open arms.

"I'm going to be happy," Brooks said. "The more they throw, the more plays I can make."

MOSCHETTI

Continued from Page 7

Perhaps Ralphie IV ushered in a new era of Buffalo football as well, for CU surprised the nation with a 42-14 win over the then-15th-ranked Rams in Denver's Mile High Stadium.

CU quarterback Mike Moschetti, making his first collegiate start, went 21-32 for 257 yards and three touchdowns.

CU coach Rick Neuheisel started Moschetti over Adam

faloos ranked in the top 25 this week.

Record-chasing Ricky

Texas running back Ricky Williams scored an eye-opening six touchdowns against New Mexico State Saturday.

Williams is now the second player in Longhorn history to have scored 300 points or more in a career.

Phil Dawson's school record (339) for points appears in jeopardy with Williams (320) only 19 points behind with at least 10 games to go in the season.



WILLIAMS

Bledsoe (brother of the NFL's Drew) and A&M transfer Jeremy Weisinger for the starting job, a decision contributing to the win that has the Buf-

FOOTBALL

Continued from Page 7

"The overall depth of just waves of guys coming at you was pretty impressive," A&M offensive coordinator Steve Kragthorpe said. "They have a lot of depth and a lot of speed."

"We knew that the defensive line would be extremely physical, extremely quick...I think we found that to be true."

Kragthorpe said the Aggies stayed within the game plan for aggressive Florida State, throwing the football on first down and attacking whenever possible.

A&M quarterback Brannon Stewart said the FSU defensive performance was the key factor in Florida State's win.

"They did a good job covering guys on a lot of routes, forcing me to throw the ball away," Stewart said.

The A&M Seminoles from the win by making big play.

The Aggies are win in 1998 and feel like they can do better things happen the season.

"I was disappointed performance of the said. "Looking at say we played well sively that we could game. We couldn't playing like we did."

The Aggies can game with a compe performance they throughout the season.

"I think there's value in the game said. "Our guys against a great opp was a great event."

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