

1998 Texas A&M Football Preview

HOW TO BE A GOOD AGGIE FOOTBALL FANATIC

How maroon does your blood run? If you're like the majority of fans attending Texas A&M Football games, you might like a refresher course on the dos and don'ts of Aggie football etiquette.

Remember: the wave may be classified as a defensive cheer only at some universities, but in Aggieland, you can throw it right out the window.

1. 12th Man Spirit

When E. King Gill displayed his readiness during the Dixie Classic in 1922 to enter the game against Centre College for Aggie coach Dana X. Bible, it began a tradition that has been copied around the nation but has never truly been understood by other schools.

Show that Aggie spirit by standing from kickoff to halftime. But don't sit down while the Aggie Band struts its stuff on Kyle. That's bad bull, Ags.

2. Uncover! Off the wood!

When the unbelievable Aggie Band strikes up the familiar tunes of the "Aggie War Hymn" or the "Spirit of Aggieland," step off the bleachers and take your hats off or be yelled at.

3. Forward or back?

The big question facing football fans at Kyle Field is an important one. When you stand, is it on your bleachers, or do you step forward and stand on the bleachers in front of you?

The answer lies in front of you. Take a step or two forward and stand on the row in front of you. When the time comes to rest your feet, simply take a step back and sit down.

4. Get those towels a'wavin'

A must-have for the Aggie Football season is a 12th Man Towel.

These babies are great for waving as support for the Wrecking Crew defense and serve to cool you down during the hot games if you soak them in water.

Watch the people in front of you. It's bad manners to hit other people in the head.

5. Whose fault was that?

It doesn't happen very often, but when it does, fans let everyone know.

Texas A&M might give up a sack every now and then, but gripes about the quarterback are unwarranted.

Don't yell at Brannndon Stewart for taking a sack. Take a look at the offensive line.

6. Know your football

Before you go to a game, it might be helpful to be able to recognize a trap, screen or option when you see one.

Visitors sometimes judge fans on their knowledge of the game, not just whether they show up to the games.

7. Fill 'er up

An afternoon football game in Texas is no time to be dehydrated. Drink plenty of water before a game and stay away from alcohol, which only speeds the process.

This season, the first two Aggie home games are at night, so heat won't provide much of a problem.

8. Keep it down!

Making lots of noise while the Aggies are on defense makes it hard for the offensive team to communicate in a huddle.

Make it loud and watch the Yell Leaders for the right times to yell.

But make sure the Wrecking Crew is on the field. When the Aggies are on offense, silent support is usually the best when the team is in the huddle.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG 12 CONFERENCE

The Zone construction on Kyle Field will finish by next season. The capacity for Kyle for this season has been reduced to 58,000.

9. Hopefully, it won't happen, but...

If the Aggies lose on Kyle Field, it is the duty of the fans to stay and sing the 12th Man song before conducting a short yell practice for the next game.

10. Maroon Out!

Anyone who sees the sea of scarlet and cream at a Nebraska Cornhuskers game knows how intimidating a united crowd can be.

Texas A&M class councils are sponsoring a "Maroon Out" game on Oct. 10. Nebraska is the opponent and T-shirts will be sold for \$5 leading up to game time.

And the last rule, of course, is to keep up with the Aggies by reading *The Battalion*.

JEFF SCHMIDT AND JEFF WEBB WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR TIRELESS EFFORT ON *THE BATTALION'S* 1998 TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL PREVIEW.

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Special Thanks goes to:

- Alan Cannon, Texas A&M Sports Information
- Veronica Serrano, copy editor
- Manisha Parekh, copy editor
- Matt Weber, Night News Editor

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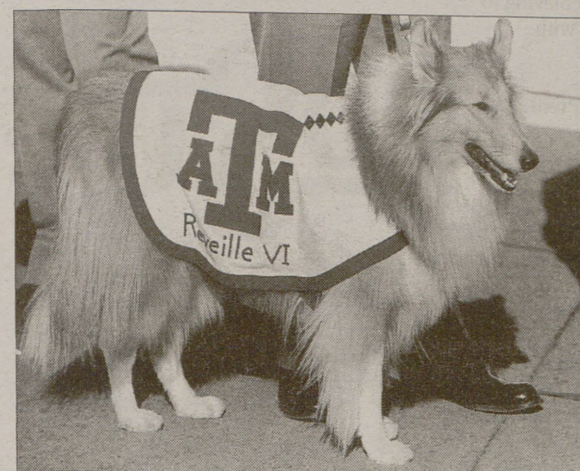


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BIG 12 CONFERENCE

Reveille VI, an American Collie, is the Texas A&M mascot.

Scouting the nation

Would-be Heisman candidates, title contenders flood college football

You've read about as much Big 12 and Aggie football as you can take. Now, here's a look at the larger picture of national college football.



JEFF SCHMIDT

Top-Five Teams:

1. **Nebraska.** They are No. 1 until somebody beats them. The very mention of the word "Nebraska" can strike fear into the hearts of most college football players. The Cornhuskers could be even more explosive this year with quarterback Bobby Newcombe taking over the reins from Scott Frost.

2. **Florida State.** The Seminoles just have too much talent not to contend for the title. The only thing that can hold back the 'Noles is themselves.

3. **UCLA.** The Bruins' offense is the most explosive in the country. Ask Texas.

4. **Florida.** As long as Florida coach Steve Spurrier finds a quarterback, the Gators have perhaps the biggest upside of the Top 10 teams.

They also have the biggest downside if they do

not find a star quarterback. A voracious defense will only help.

5. **Kansas State.** The Wildcats take the prize for worst schedule. They HOST Indiana State (whom they have already demolished), Northern Illinois and Northeast Louisiana.

They also have the country's most paranoid coach, Bill Snyder. Against Texas A&M, Wildcat quarterback Michael Bishop was injured and left the field. Snyder made players hold towels over Bishop so TV cameras could not see what was wrong with his star player.

Honorable mention: **Ohio State.** Why won't the Buckeyes win it all? Five words: Michigan. They never beat Michigan.

Top Heisman candidates:

1. Kentucky quarterback **Tim Couch.** The early favorite for the top pick in the 1999 NFL Draft, Couch kicked off the 1998 season by throwing for seven touchdowns and almost 500 yards. It's funny how things change.

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THE BACKS ARE BACK



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JAKE SCHRICKLING/THE BATTALION

The Big Three are bolstered by the return of Bernard

BY AARON COHAN
The Battalion

Picture yourself on one of the opposing defenses as you study the forces that make up the Aggies' running attack. Descriptively, they are the best combination of running backs a team could imagine. The power, speed and agility that D'Andre Hardeman, Dante Hall, Sirr Parker and Eric Bernard bring to the backfield is unmatched.

The four backs all surpassed the 500-yard plateau during the 1996 season. Hall, Parker, and Hardeman continued the tradition last year, making A&M the only Division I school with three backs over 500 yards.

"The experience and depth that we have will be our greatest strength this year," running backs coach Lawrence Livingston said.

One of the aspects to

this wide variety in the backfield is the agility Hall brings. Hall is recognized nationally by sources like Mel Kiper Jr. as one of the "Top 20 Threats in the Country." As the quickest player in A&M history to reach 2,000 all-purpose yards, Hall is consistently relied upon to get the job done.

"His gritty moves are always menacing to opposing defenses," Livingston said. "Dante is one of the most complete weapons I have ever seen. He can run and return the ball in rare form at any time."

Hall's 7.3 yards per carry last year proved not only to be the best in the Big 12, but the highest average ever by an A&M back. Still, Hall said he does not care.

"The stats don't mean anything to me," Hall said, "but the wins and championships do."

This season looks to be another groundbreaking

one for Hall as he needs only 190 yards to become the all-time leading punt returner in A&M history.

Sirr Parker, another facet of this quartet, is one of the most explosive backs in the Big 12. Parker led the team with 10 rushing touchdowns last year but the ability he brings to the team is not limited to his running attack. Coach R. C. Slocum plans to send Parker out as a wide receiver this season to take advantage of his speed.

"It gives us the capability to have more threats in the offense at one time," Slocum said. Parker's A&M record 4.24 in the 40-yard dash last spring gave Slocum a new view of what he could use his talented back for.

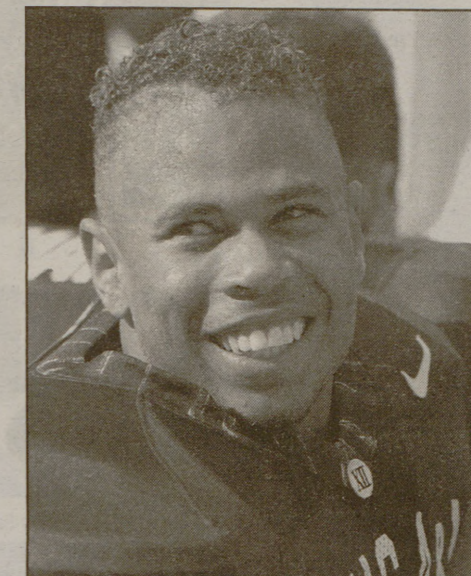
However, Parker remains indifferent about his new role.

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FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

Right: Sirr Parker takes a breather during a game.



BRANDON BOLLUM/THE BATTALION

Below: Dante Hall stiff arms an opponent in last season's victory over Sam Houston State University.