

Battalion

# Aggies, Longhorns prepare for Signing Day

## Texas and Texas A&M use banner years on the field to recruit nationally-rated classes

DALLAS (AP) — These are heady days for college football coaches in Texas. Not only have they slowed a decade-long exodus of the state's top high school players, but they're also reeling in some of the best recruits from other states. That combination should make Longhorns

gies fifth or sixth. "Those two schools dominated the conference," Lemming said. "There's not even a close third in the Big 12."

Bobby Burton of the National Recruiting Advisor said he ranks Texas first and A&M among the top five. Although his publication is based in Austin, this is the first time he's ever had the Longhorns among his top 10. He's also never placed two Texas schools so high.

The Longhorns and Aggies wowed everyone this year by soaking up most of the state's best players and using their remaining scholarships on elite guys from other states.

Texas has USA Today's offensive and defensive high school players of the year in quarterback Chris Simms of Ramapo (N.J.) High and linebacker Cory Redding of Galena Park North Shore, plus three stars from Colorado. Simms initially committed to Tennessee before switching shades of orange and picking Austin.

A&M is bringing in four of the state's most highly sought recruits in Bryan defensive lineman Ty Warren, Cy Falls linebacker Jason Frederick, Brownwood quarterback Colby Freeman and defensive back Sam Davis. The Aggies also are adding three California gems and two from Louisiana.

"They cherrypicked some players from out of state who they really wanted and targeted. That's what pushes them into the nation's elite," Burton said, noting that in past years programs such as Michigan and Florida State have used Texas talent as the icing on their cakes.

According to Wallace's count, four of the top eight Texas recruits will become Aggies and two will be Longhorns.

Of the consensus top 30 players, an overwhelming majority choosing are going to Texas colleges — quite a change from the years when more than half fled the state.

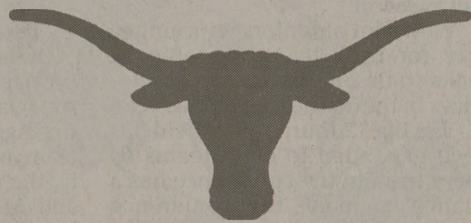
"Notre Dame, Tennessee and Kansas State are the only teams that came to Texas and went away with more than one very talented player," Burton said.

Another big shift is an all-for-one attitude growing among state schools. The reduced infighting and increased goodwill between programs includes Brown and Slocum.

For example, Aggies recruit Freeman was congratulated on his choice of schools in a letter — from Brown.

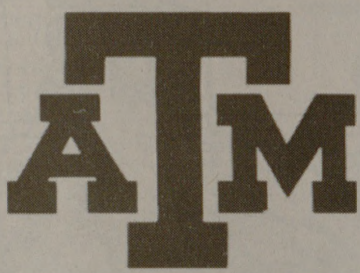
"I think it's great because it was really frustrating to see teams out of state win big games with so many players from Texas," Freeman told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

"What I wanted to do was try and be part of



the start of building teams in Texas into national powers."

Texas and Texas A&M kickstarted their recruiting efforts by each beating Nebraska. The Longhorns also were aided by Ricky Williams winning the Heisman Trophy, while the Aggies got a boost from beating Kansas State for the Big 12 title.



each Mack Brown and Aggies coach R.C. Slocum two of the happiest men in the country Wednesday when freshmen-to-be make their college choices official.

Based on non-binding oral commitments, national recruiting services rank the incoming classes for Texas and Texas A&M among the best in the country with the Longhorns topping the majority of lists.

"Right now we have Texas No. 1 in the U.S. and Texas A&M No. 6," said Allen Wallace of Laguna Beach, Calif.-based SuperPrep magazine. "Mack Brown has clearly made a statement. He's awakening a sleeping giant."

"I think R.C. Slocum saw this as a serious challenge and he stepped it up. He appropriately reacted to a change in circumstances with his marvial and they shouldn't be underestimated." Tom Lemming of Chicago-based Prep Football Report has the Longhorns first and the Ag-

## Payton in need of transplant

ROSEMONT, Ill. (AP) — NFL star Walter Payton has a rare liver disease and needs a transplant, his doctor said yesterday.

The 44-year-old former Chicago Bears star is being placed on a list to receive a new liver, said Dr. Joseph Lagattuta.

The cause of the disease — primary sclerosing cholangitis — is not known. However, it is not related to alcohol, steroids, hepatitis or any kind of immunodeficiency disease, Lagattuta said.

Symptoms of the disease, which blocks the bile ducts and leads to cirrhosis, are fatigue, followed by yellowing of the skin, he said.

The one-year survival rate is 88 percent for those who receive a liver transplant, and the long-term survival rate is "very promising," Lagattuta said. Most people can return to a normal, active life, he said. Patients in Payton's condition survive an average of two years without a transplant, the doctor said. Only three in 100,000 people develop the disease, known as PSC, he said.

## Olajuwon, Houston battle over building

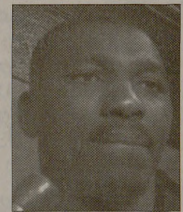
HOUSTON (AP) — Local officials hope they can do something to help the city of Houston as it battles over the years — get past Ham Olajuwon reach a goal.

By accelerating the sale of a high-rise building Olajuwon and his cardiologist, Dr. Port of Houston has ticked off some local officials who would like to demolish the unsightly building on the doorstep of the new reconstruction Ballpark at Union Station.

Olajuwon's partnership bought a block and two port buildings — including the high-rise — last Thursday. To fulfill its dream of building a park, the Harris County Sports Authority now must deal with The Dream.

"What is going there will be very nice, nicer than the baseball stadium," said Hugh McCulley, Olajuwon's attorney. Initial plans call for the building, which officials believe mars the skyline view from inside the stadium, into loft apartments or a hotel, with ground-level retail shops and restaurants.

The original plan was to replace



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