

Ready for the storm

No. 7 Aggies host Golden Hurricane

BY BETH MILLER
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Football Team will face off against the Tulsa University Golden Hurricane for the eighth time in history Saturday at 7:30 p.m. as the Aggies play their first home game of the 1999 season.

In the most recent of the seven meetings between A&M and Tulsa, the Aggies defeated the Golden Hurricane, 52-9, in 1995.

A&M enters this weekend's contest after defeating Louisiana Tech University in its season opener two weekends ago, 37-17.

The Aggies' game against Louisiana Tech showcased an uncharacteristically balanced A&M offense, as the team racked up 252 yards passing and 219 on the ground. Senior quarterback Randy McCown completed 17 of 28 passes, throwing the best game of his career so far. Sophomore receiver Bethel Johnson gained 106 yards on four passes and one touchdown in an impressive collegiate debut.

McCown said the team used its off week to review video tapes of the Louisiana Tech game and practiced avoiding errors it made concerning consistency, timing and precision in the passing game.

McCown said although the team had some polishing to do during practice, he was impressed with the success of the passing game against Louisiana Tech.

"I, overall, was pretty pleased [with our performance in the first game]," he said. "We came out and completed 60 percent [of passes attempted] and didn't have any inter-



Junior running back D'Andre "Tiki" Hardeman runs the ball against Louisiana Tech University.

ceptions, and that's basically what you want to do when you are throwing the ball. But when we went back and looked at the tape, we had little things we could work on."

A&M senior running back Dante Hall said having an off week at the beginning of the season could hinder the team's ability to fall into a routine.

"It's not good to play in a game and have a week layoff because you're not practicing the same way you would if you were preparing for a game," Hall said. "It's harder to keep a rhythm, and it is hard to get a team motivated when you don't have a game. You're just practicing to be practicing. It's like

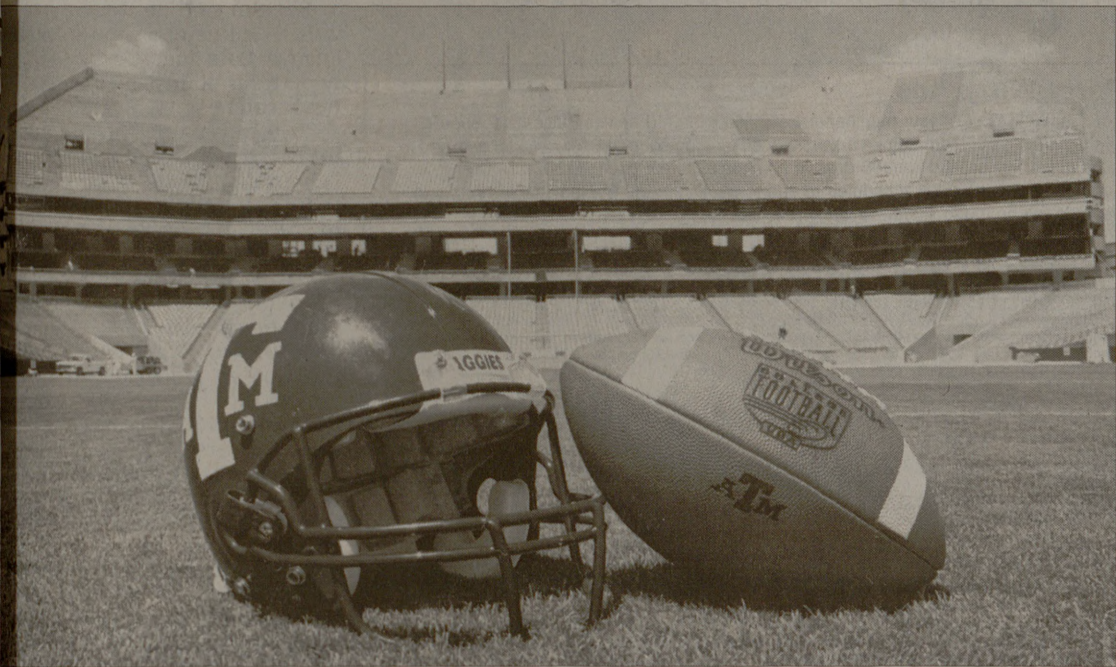
having two-a-days for two weeks, then having a game, then going right back where you started."

The game against Louisiana Tech served as a debut for the Aggies' much-anticipated passing attack, and a talented A&M receiving corps — including the newcomer Johnson — did not disappoint.

McCown said Johnson is an asset to the Aggies because he gives the offense another option in the passing game.

"[Having Johnson on the team] just gives us another guy," McCown said. "Before he got here, we just had Chris Taylor and Chris

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GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

The Zone" promises to make Kyle Field — where the Aggies have won their last 13 games — an even more imposing place for opponents to play. A&M boasts a home record of 49-4-1 during the 1990s.

Zoning out the competition

Completion of The Zone adds to already large home field advantage for Texas A&M Football Team

BY DOUG SHILLING
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Football Team absolutely loves Kyle Field. Three-time NFL MVP Brett Favre has called it the toughest place he has ever played. The Aggies have the fourth-best home record in all of college football (49-4-1) during the '90s.

Coming into Saturday's game against Tulsa University, the Ags have a 22-game winning streak against non-conference opponents and a 13-game overall winning streak at Kyle.

In all reality, Kyle Field is the place opposing teams go to lose. And if things were bad before, they are about to get worse.

Saturday's game marks the debut of "The Zone", the endzone expansion on the north end of Kyle Field — and with it, many more screaming Aggie fans making life miserable for opponents.

The opening is a long-anticipated event for the Aggies as construction has been going on for over a year,

resulting in decreased seating capacity and lack of fans in the endzone.

Now, with the near-completion of the Zone, senior running back Dante Hall said the team is looking forward to driving toward an actual crowd.

"We are very pumped," Hall said. "This Zone thing has been under construction for a while, so it's going to be exciting to go out there and know when we score on that end we won't be running to a bunch of plywood and tractors and stuff. We'll actually have screaming fans so it will be exciting."

There will be no shortage of screaming fans for the Aggies in the Zone. Only the first and second levels will be open for Saturday's game, adding an additional 9,200 seats. However, by the time the game against Baylor University rolls around, everything but the luxury boxes will be open — adding 22,720 seats.

If the fans are not enough, opposing teams will also be intimidated by the sheer magnitude of the Zone. It

SEE ZONE ON PAGE 8.

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The Texas A&M Athletic Department will be running student shuttle buses to home football games again this season! The buses will run on their normal routes. Students and Faculty/Staff plus their guests may ride **FREE!!** Just show your game ticket to board the bus. The Student shuttle buses will start their regular routes 2 hours before kickoff and depart campus for 1 hour after the game is over.

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