

Clipped

The Battalion



"The snap was perfect. I guess I took my eyes off of it. I'll probably be sore tomorrow from that one hit."

—Shane Lechler
on his 22-yard run after a muffed punt in the 1st quarter

"I was just trying to hit the ball real solid, and it came off my foot really well."

—Terence Kitchens
on his 62-yard field goal, longest in school history without a tee

"If they ever get an offense as good as their defense, they'll be a real, real good team."

—Dante Hall
on Southern Mississippi's team

"We're never satisfied with just good defense. We want a great defense. We want that tradition to go on for a long time."

—Jason Glenn
on the performance of the Wrecking Crew



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Senior linebacker **Sean Coryatt** (left), senior cornerback **Jason Webster** (middle) and junior safety **Michael Jameson** converge on a University of Southern Mississippi receiver Saturday.

Defense provides offense in 23-6 win over Southern Miss

BY AL LAZARUS
The Battalion

In the days leading up to its game against the University of Southern Mississippi, it seemed the only thing the Texas A&M Football Team heard about was USM's performance against the University of Nebraska on Sept. 18, when the Golden Eagles held the Cornhuskers to 185 yards and no offensive touchdowns in a 20-13 USM loss.

In fact, A&M heard so much about the Golden Eagles' defensive prowess, it decided to remind everyone of the one thing that seemed to get lost in the shuffle: The Aggies have a pretty good defense of their own.

The Wrecking Crew's hands-on refresher course included six sacks, four interceptions and two defensive touchdowns as the Aggies rolled to a 23-7 victory Saturday afternoon in front of a raucous Kyle Field crowd of 65,264.

A&M (3-0) held the Golden Eagles (2-2) to 18 rushing yards and 129 total yards of offense, while posting a respectable 299-yard total against a USM defense dubbed by many as on par with the Big 12's best.

"We're never satisfied with just good defense," A&M junior linebacker Jason Glenn said. "We want a great defense. We want that tradition to go on for a long time."

That "tradition" came in handy

for the Aggies as, for the second week in a row, USM's defense allowed no offensive touchdowns.

Also aiding the A&M cause was junior place-kicker Terence Kitchens, who responded to being placed on scholarship just two days earlier with first-half field goals of 62, 28 and 20 yards. The 62-yarder was the second-longest field goal in NCAA history without the use of a tee.

"I was just trying to hit the ball real solid," Kitchens said. "And it came off of my foot really well."

It became apparent early on in Saturday's contest the Golden Eagles' run defense planned to carry over its stinginess from USM's game against Nebraska. Although the Aggies would eventually get a field goal out of their first drive, halfback Dante Hall and fullbacks D'Andre "Tiki" Hardeman and Ja'Mar Toombs were limited to 16 yards on 10 attempts.

Forced to air the ball out, A&M again found limited success. Senior quarterback Randy McCown finished the first half 10-for-17-passing for 116 yards, but with their running game stalled, it was clear the Aggies would need to do better than that.

So the stage was set for the Wrecking Crew to help A&M's offense by giving it good field position and maybe even putting some points on the board. Con-

sider the mission accomplished.

Halfway through the third quarter, with the Aggies clinging to a 9-0 lead, sophomore cornerback Jay Brooks intercepted a USM pass and returned it 41 yards down the sideline — hurdling a defender along the way — for a touchdown.

The Golden Eagles responded, though, and Todd Pinkston's 54-yard touchdown reception cut A&M's lead to 16-6 with almost an entire quarter of play remaining.

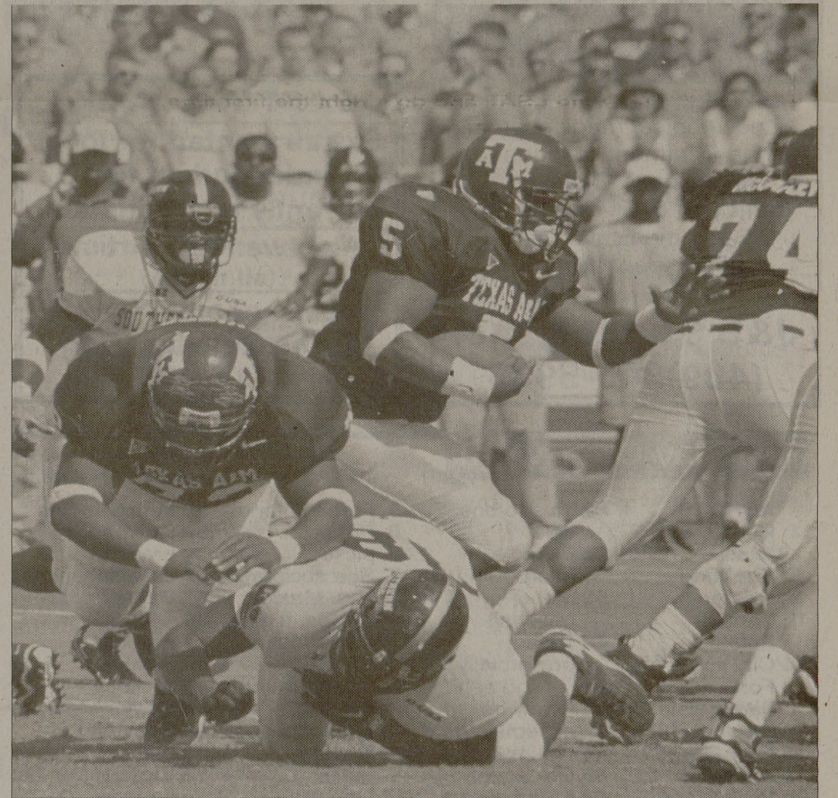
Again the Aggies needed a savior, and it would be a former high school teammate of Brooks, junior safety Michael Jameson, who provided the heroics.

Jameson stepped in front of a USM pass and returned it 26 yards, giving the Aggies their second defensive touchdown of the half and staking A&M to a 23-6 lead with 8:32 remaining in the game.

"Something we've emphasized and talked about is trying to create some turnovers," A&M coach R.C. Slocum said. "We said going into the season that we wanted to be more reckless and create more short-field opportunities for the offense, and I'm pleased that it is working out for us."

Hall, who finished with 23 yards on 16 carries, said the A&M offense was pleased to benefit from the Wrecking Crew's exploits.

"They put us in great field posi-



BRADLEY ATCHISON/THE BATTALION

Sophomore fullback **Ja'Mar Toombs** carries the ball into the heart of the USM defense. **Toombs** rushed for 94 yards Saturday.

tion a lot of times today, and they scored two touchdowns," he said. "So they were almost playing de-

fense and offense for us, and today we really needed that, because on offense, we had trouble."

The Battalion Top 25 Poll

Team	Record
1. Florida State	(4-0)
2. Penn State	(5-0)
3. Florida	(4-0)
4. Texas A&M	(3-0)
5. Nebraska	(4-0)
6. Michigan	(4-0)
7. Tennessee	(2-1)
8. Georgia Tech	(2-1)
9. Virginia Tech	(3-0)
10. Purdue	(4-0)
11. Ohio State	(3-1)
12. Georgia	(3-0)
13. Kansas State	(3-0)
14. Marshall	(4-0)
15. Michigan State	(4-0)
16. Texas	(4-1)
17. Miami	(2-2)
18. Alabama	(3-1)
19. Arkansas	(3-1)
20. East Carolina	(4-0)
21. Oklahoma	(3-0)
22. Mississippi State	(3-0)
23. Syracuse	(3-1)
24. Virginia	(3-1)
25. Maryland	(3-0)

Associated Press Top 25 Poll

Team	Record
1. Florida State	(4-0)
2. Penn State	(5-0)
3. Florida	(4-0)
4. Michigan	(4-0)
5. Texas A&M	(3-0)
6. Nebraska	(4-0)
7. Tennessee	(2-1)
8. Virginia Tech	(3-0)
9. Georgia Tech	(2-1)
10. Georgia	(3-0)
11. Purdue	(4-0)
12. Ohio State	(3-1)
13. Kansas State	(3-0)
14. Michigan State	(4-0)
15. Texas	(4-1)
16. Miss State	(4-0)
17. Marshall	(4-0)
18. Miami	(2-2)
19. East Carolina	(4-0)
20. Arkansas	(2-1)
21. Alabama	(3-1)
22. Syracuse	(3-1)
23. Oklahoma	(3-0)
24. Virginia	(3-1)
25. Oregon	(3-1)

Big 12 Standings

North				
	W	L	PF	PA
Nebraska	4	0	147	30
Kansas St.	3	0	115	35
Colorado	2	2	152	124
Iowa St.	3	1	102	52
Missouri	2	1	89	102
Kansas	1	3	114	154
South				
	W	L	PF	PA
Oklahoma	3	0	132	31
Texas	4	1	207	74
Texas A&M	3	0	122	36
Oklahoma St.	2	1	81	45
Texas Tech	1	2	65	69
Baylor	0	4	63	160



BRADLEY ATCHISON/THE BATTALION

Junior linebacker **Roylin Bradley** hits Southern Miss quarterback **Cable Davis** as he releases the ball during the fourth quarter.

Wrecking Crew returns to days of old

Memo to the Big 12: The Wrecking Crew is back. As funny as it seems, one of the big question marks going into the season for the Texas A&M Football Team concerned the defense.

The mighty Wrecking Crew was supposed to be in a state of transition this year. And who would question such a statement? With the loss of Rich Coady, Warrick Holdman and Lombardi Award winner Dat Nguyen, players who had never had a starring role on the team were going to have to step up and fill in as team leaders.

But after the defense's performance Saturday against Southern Miss, there should be no doubt the Wrecking Crew is back, if not better than ever. The jury was out on the Crew going into Saturday's game as it had yet to be really tested. After playing a game against a gimmicky offense (Louisiana Tech) and an overmatched opponent (Tulsa), there was no way to judge what type of defense the Aggies had.

Saturday was supposed to be an acid test for A&M's defense, as Southern Miss brought a conventional offense to College Station, the type of offense the Aggies will see from most of their Big 12 opponents.

The Aggies passed the test with flying colors. They allowed the Golden Eagles just 129 yards of total offense and only 18 on the ground. Take away the 54-yard touchdown pass from Cable Davis to Todd Pinkston and Southern Miss only averaged around 1.5 yards per play.



DOUG SHILLING

But the impressive stats do not tell the whole story, though. The biggest thing on Saturday was the way the defense performed. The all-out blitzes, the stifling run defense and the tremendous secondary play brought back memories of the old Wrecking Crew.

Memories of players like John Roper, Aaron Wallace and Marcus Buckley, all non-stop harassers of the quarterback. Players like Kevin Smith, Aaron Glenn and Ray Mickens patrolling the secondary and making life miserable for wide receivers.

Now the players invoking those memories are Jason Glenn, Roylin Bradley, Brian Gamble, Jason Webster and Sedrick Curry, among others.

A&M coach R.C. Slocum, a man who knows a thing or two about the Wrecking Crew, said the defense's performance brought back fond memories.

"I thought that was vintage Wrecking Crew out there today," Slocum said. "It's really enjoyable to watch them. I was really pleased that our defensive staff did a great job with the game plan and our guys flew around. It was a great team effort on defense."

One of the biggest changes for this year's version of the Wrecking Crew is its increased pressure on the quarterback.

Last year in 13 games, the defense recorded only 29 sacks. With six sacks Saturday, the Crew has 12 sacks on the year, a number which would work out to 44 over a full season.

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