

The Battalion

## McCown shining as Aggies' starter

BY BETH MILLER  
The Battalion

When Texas A&M quarterback Randy McCown thinks about how he wants his career at A&M to be remembered, his preference is concerned neither with being a passing quarterback nor a running quarterback.

"I just want to be the kind that wins the most games," he said.

This season — McCown's first as full-time starter — the senior is averaging a school-record 254.7 passing yards per game and completing 53.5 percent of his passes.

He threw for a career-best 362 yards last Saturday against the University of Kansas, which was his second 300-yard plus game.

His average completed pass is 16.6 yards, and eight of them have been for more than 40 yards.

In 1998, McCown stepped into the starting quarterback position against Kansas after he completed 11 of 13 passes for 167 yards and two touchdowns against the University of North Texas a week earlier.

He finished the season 66 for 130 passing for 1,025 yards and six touchdowns. He also had 91 carries for 139 yards, the most by an Aggie quarterback since Bucky Richardson rushed for 423 yards in 1991.

After spending time during his first three seasons as a backup to departed quarterback Brannon Stewart, McCown said one thing he learned by observing Stewart is not to be affected by people's negative criticism.

"I have learned a lot each year," he said. "I have worked hard, and I can handle anything now."

He said the most difficult part of being quarterback has been dealing with the pressure associated with A&M's passing game.

"There is a lot of pressure on me to make every pass perfect," he said.

"It is partly me putting pressure on myself because I am a perfectionist. But also, other people put pressure on me because I am the quarterback, and everyone attributes good plays to the quarterback and bad plays to the quarterback."

McCown said being quarter-



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M senior quarterback **Randy McCown** is averaging 254.7 passing yards per game this season, which puts him on pace to set the school record.

back automatically assigns him a role as a team leader. He said it has not been difficult to keep other players motivated because they are all of the same mindset — cooperation and determination pay off.

"We don't have a bunch of superstars," McCown said. "We have blue-collar guys willing to work hard. It doesn't matter who makes the plays and who gets the credit, as long as it works out and as long as we win."

## Spurs' center taking time with decision

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tim Duncan, the big man with the mean jump hook, the killer bank shot and the deadly serious stare, is returning for his third season in the league and aiming for a second NBA championship.



DUNCAN

It could, however, be the end of his stint in San Antonio.

"I'm keeping my options open," said Duncan, whose three-year contract expires after the upcoming season. "At the end of the year, I'll figure out if I'm going to be here or somewhere else."

Plenty of teams surely will show interest in the 7-foot All-Star, who led the Spurs to their first title in June and was named Most Valuable Player of the NBA Finals.

Duncan insists his future with the Spurs will rest partly on a Nov. 2 vote in Bexar County on construction of a new basketball arena. That vote could determine whether the Spurs remain in the city, and Duncan has indicated he wants to know where the team will be based before committing to another contract.

Left unsaid are his other considerations.

It's widely known, for instance, that Duncan and Orlando Magic coach Doc Rivers are friends. The chance to play for Rivers could be a big draw for Duncan come next summer.

Rivers minimizes that scenario. "Guys are going to do what they want to do," he said.

"There's nothing I can do to talk a guy into coming or leaving. I think that's way overblown, to be

honest. They have a championship team and I don't see that changing anytime soon."

A former Spurs player, Rivers was a television commentator before accepting the Orlando coaching job in June. Rivers informally guided Duncan and his teammates in workouts during the NBA lockout last year when coaches weren't permitted to have contact with players.

"I know him," Duncan said. "He's a good guy. I worked out with him a bit during the lockout time. That's about it."

The NBA's tampering rule prohibits coaches and players from trying to entice players under contract to other teams. The league recently admonished former Spurs player Will Perdue, now with Chicago, for suggesting Duncan might join the Bulls after his Spurs contract is up.

"Tim Duncan is not married to San Antonio by any means," Perdue told reporters. "He's made that very clear."

Rivers said he doesn't know whether the arena vote and the possible relocation of the Spurs will be big factors in Duncan's decision.

"Honestly, I haven't talked to Tim about it, obviously. I can't, even if I wanted to," he said.

Should Duncan want to sign a contract extension with the Spurs before the season, the deadline is Oct. 31. Under the league's collective bargaining agreement, Duncan could sign a six-year contract for \$70.9 million or a seven-year deal worth \$86 million.

Other teams could pay him a comparable amount under the collective bargaining rules.

"It's not a matter of money," Duncan said. "I figure I'll make pretty good money anywhere."

## Big 12 Men's basketball tourney heading to Dallas

DALLAS (AP) — The Big 12 men's basketball tournament will come to Dallas in 2003 and 2004, departing its Kansas City venue for the first time in more than two decades, league directors decided yesterday.

In 2001, the conference championship football game will be played at Texas Stadium in Irving, home of the Dallas Cowboys.

The basketball games will be played at the American Airlines Center, scheduled to open in 2001. The women's hoops tournament during those seasons at Reunion Arena.

The conference hopes to heighten the exposure of league basketball programs in Texas, but stopped short of cutting ties with Kansas City,

which has hosted the men's tournament since the inaugural Big 8 event in 1977.

"There was a real strong feeling that Kansas City has done a remarkable job hosting the events through the years," Big 12 Commissioner Kevin Weiberg said.

Conference directors made no decision on future sites for the league baseball tournament, traditionally conducted in Oklahoma City, although they continue to consider the Texas Rangers' home.

"Our baseball negotiations are ongoing. I think that's about the only thing I can report today," Weiberg said. "Oklahoma City has done a wonderful job. I fully expect that we will continue to hold

baseball tournaments in Oklahoma City, but we're also interested in a proposal to have the baseball tournament at The Ballpark in Arlington."

A decision is expected in the next month.

The football championship, which will be in San Antonio this year, will move to Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City in 2000 before transferring to Irving the next year.

While pigskin venues after the 2001 game have not been decided, conference directors want to continue to rotate the games between northern and southern locations. Right now, the game is conducted in alternating years in San Antonio and St. Louis to reflect the league's northern and southern divisions.

How to ruin the moment #28

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