

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 11

Thursday, March 23, 2000



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M freshman running back **Richard Whitaker** carries the ball during spring practice on Wednesday. The Aggies practiced in pads for the first time on Wednesday.

Ags have first practice in pads

BY DOUG SHILLING
The Battalion

Spring practice kicked into high gear Wednesday as the Texas A&M football team had its first practice in full pads. After spending Monday and Tuesday in shirts and shorts, the Aggies donned the pads for the first time since the Sylvania Plamo Bowl.

A&M coach R.C. Slocum said he was pleased with the enthusiasm the team showed.

"Always the first day you put the pads on, things pick up a little bit," Slocum said. "It was a fun day, and I thought they bounced around and I saw some good things with the level of enthusiasm and competition out there today."

On the injury front, junior running back Ja'Mar Toombs sat out practice after injuring his hamstring on Tuesday.

Junior linebacker Christian Rodriguez injured his knee during practice, but the extent of the injury was not known. Junior defensive lineman Evan Perroni left practice to have his nose stitched up.

Several Aggies had surgery in the off-season and have not yet practiced during the spring.

Senior linebacker Roylin Bradley had arthroscopic surgery on his knee, sophomore offensive lineman Michael Mahan had surgery on his shoulder and sophomore tight end Michael de la Torre had surgery on his back and is not expected to practice in the spring.

The start of spring practice has also meant position changes for some A&M players.

Junior Lonnie Madison switched from defensive line to tight end. Junior Amon Simon moved from linebacker to running back.

Redshirt freshman Ellison Collins, who worked with the defensive backs last year, will now see action at wide receiver.

An old face has also rejoined the team as place kicker Russell Bynum has returned to the Aggies.

After sitting out last season, Bynum received his medical clearance and practiced for the first time on Wednesday.

Some A&M players will suit up this season with different numbers than they had last year.

Bradley will wear No. 3 instead of No. 40. Simon moves from No. 52 to No. 36. Madison switches from No. 97 to No. 85.

Freshman linebacker Jason LeDoux will now wear No. 52. Sophomore wide receiver Greg Porter will wear No. 44, the same number he wears for the A&M baseball team. Previously Porter wore No. 85.

With the season more than five months away, Slocum said spring practice is more about looking at players rather than trying to lock game plans.

"There's a whole lot of things that you do in the spring," Slocum said. "You're trying to identify players and guys who can help the team next year."

"You're trying to identify who the competitors are, who the team players are and who the team leaders will be. It's also about trying to improve the level of performance daily."

Doctors prescribe rest for Olajuwon

HOUSTON (AP) — Doctors are recommending Houston Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon not play basketball for several weeks because of respiratory problems that have plagued him.

"He is still having problems so we asked him to take some time off," Dr. James Muntz, the Rockets' team physician, said Wednesday after Olajuwon visited him for a follow-up examination of breathing difficulties that have hampered his play.

"We told him he would probably be out two to three weeks and that's getting toward the end of the season."

Earlier this month, Olajuwon, 37, was diagnosed with a restrictive airway disease that restricts the flow of air through his bronchial passages during heavy exercise. The condition leaves Olajuwon's lungs in spasms. Medications prescribed to Olajuwon have not yet solved the problem.

The breathing problem has limited his playing time. Since he was diagnosed March 1, the most he has played was one half of a game, and that occurred only once.

For the season, however, he is averaging only 24 minutes a game. He missed seven weeks earlier in the season to recover from hernia surgery.

Muntz said the physical exertion required of an NBA player is at the heart of the problem.

"If he was not playing basketball, he would not even know he has this condition," Muntz said. "If he were working at the bank or the news station, he would never know it. If he were jogging with me, he would never know it."

The physician said Olajuwon was agreeable to the hiatus. "He would never say he couldn't play," Muntz added. "We had to tell him."

Olajuwon, the NBA's all-time leader in blocked shots and the Rockets' leader in virtually every offensive category, has said next season would be the last of his career. It also is the last of his contract and worth \$16.5 million.

Muntz would not speculate Wednesday on Olajuwon's prospects for next year. The Rockets have only about four weeks remaining in their season.

"The best way to answer that is to say everyone in the organization is concerned and just wants what is the best for Hakeem," he said. "We want to make sure that he is healthy."

The PERFECT CHECKING ACCOUNT for faculty and students!

We understand limited budgets and time constraints so we got together and came up with an account to make your life easier - our **SERVICE CHARGE FREE CHECKING ACCOUNT** (other accounts available)! There's no monthly service charge fee, no matter how many checks you write. You can access your account day or night through our website or automated telephone teller; or call one of our live tellers during office hours. All for **FREE**. And just in case you forget to balance your checkbook, **Overdraft Protection** is available. If that's not enough, we will give you your first 50 checks **FREE!** (We think **FREE** is a good word). So take just a few minutes out of your busy life, and let us open a Checking Account for you!

Brazos Valley Schools Credit Union

2298 Longmire
College Station, TX 77845
(979)693-1818

Faster Faster Faster

The speed you need to get the work done!

FREE Ethernet!

When you sign a new lease by April 15, 2000

Be a part of THE MELROSE LIFE!

- Your OWN private bedroom/bathroom suite
- Individual leases (Provides YOU financial independence from your roommates.)
- FREE 24-hour monitored alarm
- Gate house with dusk-to-dawn courtesy officer
- Furnished and unfurnished units available
- Ethernet in every bedroom by August 2000
- ONE MONTHLY BILL
- NO utility deposits
- Keyless lock system
- FREE standard cable
- 9-month leases

Melrose APARTMENTS
www.melrose.com

COOL MONTHLY PARTIES!
FREE food, live music & DJs

*See Leasing Specialist for details. No other discounts apply. Equal Housing Opportunity

601 Luther St. West • College Station, TX • 979-680-3680

313 S. COLLEGE
846-3343
846-1724

This Friday, March 24th

Hurricane Harry's Spring Broke Party

FREE CONCERT

Mark Winston Kirk
w/ Special Guest Brent Blaha

\$1 pints
\$1 longnecks

Doors Open @ 8 pm
No Cover Charge for anyone 18 & over
For more info. call 846-3343

DESIGNATED DRIVER ALWAYS RECEIVES FREE SOFT DRINKS!
DRINK RESPONSIBLY!

MSC Film Society presents ...

BRUCE WILLIS
THE SIXTH SENSE

NIGHT SOUND SMALL TASTE TOUCH

NOT EVERY GIFT IS A BLESSING

March 24th, 7:00 & 9:30pm

Tickets: \$3.50 at the door or \$3.00 in advance at the MSC Box Office (845-1234).
Avoid long lines and buy a season pass for \$10.

All films shown in Rudder Theatre Complex.

Questions? Call the Aggie Cinema Hotline - 847-8478.
Website: <http://films.tamu.edu>

Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your special needs.

Visit the Holyland with the Pope.

This week.

myhollyland.net