

THE BATTALION

'Championship Vision' receives donations

Bright gives \$5 million for the completion of the south end zone expansion of Kyle Field

By BLAINE DIONNE
The Battalion

In March the Texas A&M Athletic Department and the 12th Man Foundation announced plans to overhaul all Texas A&M athletic facilities over the next 10 to 15 years. After only five months the dream for Aggie athletics is approaching reality.

The overhaul was dubbed the "Championship Vision" and is the Athletic Department's answer to Vision 2020, A&M's plan to be a Top-10 public university by the year 2020. The announcement also kicked off a two-year fund-raising campaign that would raise \$35 million to begin constructing phase one of the project, a West Campus training room and locker room center to be located between the Anderson Track and Field Center and the Aggie Soccer Complex.

The young campaign is already within sight of its original \$35 million goal.

"We've been very successful so far," said Miles Marks, the executive director of the 12th Man Foundation.

"We announced the campaign in March, and we've gotten commitments from various donors totaling \$20 million — and that's just over the past five months."

According to Marks, that kind of success is exactly what the 12th Man Foundation had hoped for.

"We've still got 19 months to get to the \$35 million mark," Marks said. "We're not going to stop there, either. We're going to keep raising money until the end of that two years. Hopefully, we can get to \$50 million."

Even \$50 million will not fulfill the Championship Vision. Marks said that more than \$100 million will eventually be needed to finance all the planned renovations.

The plan covers more than just the "Big 3" — football, baseball and basketball. There is an indoor tennis facility on the horizon, plus upgrades to the softball, soccer and track facilities. Not all these sports are traditional money makers, but are included in hopes of setting a new standard for Aggie athletics.

The Athletic Department plans to upgrade literally every facility that has anything to do with athletics, from the stadiums to the residence halls.

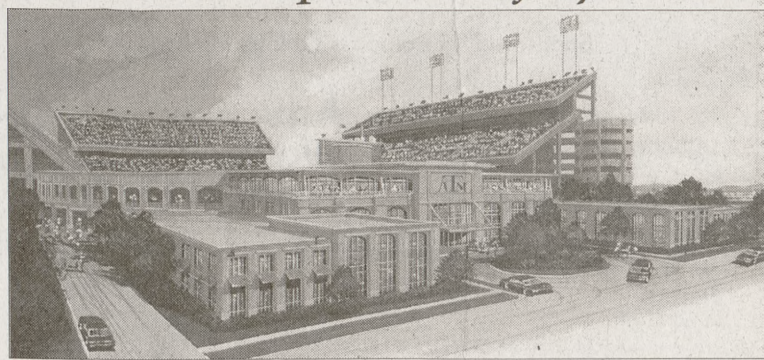
To ensure these facilities will top all others in the country, Marks said, representatives from the foundation and Athletic Department toured schools that are widely regarded as home to the nation's premier sports facilities.

"We went to Tennessee, Alabama, Florida State, Texas and North Carolina," Marks said. "A&M's facilities will be better than all of them."

On Aug. 7, the campaign received its biggest boost from H.R. "Bum" Bright, a 1943 graduate. Bright donated \$5 million toward the Championship Vision, specifically closing in the south end zone, a reality in the near future.

"[Bright] had always been a great supporter of the program," Marks said. "R.C. told him [a donation] would be important to the south end zone expansion."

Slocum was pleased when he and



COURTESY OF TEXAS A&M SPORTS INFORMATION/THE BATTALION

The south end zone, part of the Championship Vision, is becoming financially feasible thanks to a \$5 million donation by H.R. "Bum" Bright.

Marks received the donation.

"This gift is a major step forward for our football program," Slocum said. "This south end zone football complex will be the premier facility in the country. It will include a player's lounge overlooking Kyle Field, new dressing and training rooms, coaches offices and an academic center with a state-of-the-art computer lab."

Bright is the former owner of the Dallas Cowboys and a longtime financial contributor to A&M. He has served public education in Texas in various capacities, most notably as chairman of the Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System and a member of the Special Commission on Higher Education Financing in Texas.

Top 25 College Football Poll

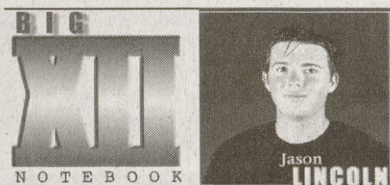
- 1- Nebraska (35)
- 2- Florida St. (30)
- 3- Alabama (3)
- 4- Wisconsin (1)
- 5- Miami Fla.
- 6- Michigan
- 7- Texas (2)
- 8- Kansas St.
- 9- Florida
- 10- Georgia
- 11- Virginia Tech
- 12- USC
- 13- Tennessee
- 14- Washington
- 15- Purdue
- 16- Ohio St.
- 17- Clemson
- 18- Mississippi
- 19- Oklahoma
- 20- TCU
- 21- Illinois
- 22- So. Miss.
- 23- Colorado
- 24- Michigan St.
- 25- Texas A&M

Source: AP

The top is not a comfortable place for the Big 12's elite teams

Florida State did it in 1999. The Seminoles completed an entire season ranked No. 1. A year earlier, Ohio State fell short after spending the first 10 weeks on top. Now the Seminoles get to be on the other side, trying to unseat the No. 1 seed ... watch out, Nebraska.

There is little doubt that the top spot in college football polls is not a very comfortable place to be. Not only is there an overwhelming history of failure in fulfilling preseason



expectations, but there is also the pressure of facing every team's best game as they try to unseat the giant.

Two Big 12 teams enter the 2000 season high on the nation's polls. Nebraska tops the Associated Press list at

No. 1 while Texas rides the hype of two back-to-back top-five recruiting classes to earn a No. 7 national ranking. In the process the Longhorns have built

enough expectations for the upcoming season to earn a pair of first place votes; Nebraska has 35.

Both teams will require a season without blemishes if they are to live up to their pre-season expectations.

For Nebraska to make it to the national title game, it will not only require an undefeated season, but a string of 12 straight wins that leave no doubt about the Cornhuskers' right to be the nation's top team. And that will only get them into the Orange Bowl, where they be pitted in a 60-minute showdown between the nation's best two teams.

The Cornhuskers last won a national championship in

1997. That was also the year the nation said goodbye to Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne. In 1998 Nebraska assistant Frank Solich took over the reins in an attempt to continue the legend.

After two seasons of shortcomings, Solich and the Huskers appear to be poised for another run at the title. All the ingredients are there.

Eric Crouch returns to continue executing the Nebraska option to near perfection. Experience at I-back, re-

ceiver and the nation's best offensive line leave little room for questioning the Huskers' ability to score points.

But the adage will hold true for Nebraska — defense wins championships. That means the weight of it all is on the Blackshirts.

Inside linebacker Carlos Polk promises to lead a defense worthy of champion status. It would be hard not to

See RANKINGS on Page 10.

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