

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Kicker Pegram confident for La. Tech game

By True Brown
THE BATTALION

Last Saturday against Virginia Tech, Texas A&M placekicker Todd Pegram regained what is most important in his job: confidence.

Pegram scored A&M's only points against the Hokies, connecting on a 43-yard field goal in the first quarter.

The kick was exactly what Pegram needed.

In the Aggies season opener against the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, Pegram was just 1-of-5, missing from 37, 39, 45 and 47 yards. He did not have any attempts against Pittsburgh the next week.

"It wasn't so much being nervous as it was being anxious," Pegram said. "I got a little bit too anxious out there. I was going too fast at the ball, trying to get it off too fast. That's what screwed me up."

After the ULL game, Pegram said he went back to the basics by concentrating on keeping his game rhythm the

same as his practice rhythm. The result was his 43-yarder against the Hokies.

"All the next couple weeks, we've been working on my tempo with Coach (Shawn) Slocum, and he's helped me out a lot," Pegram said. "Now, everything is pretty much down and ready to go."

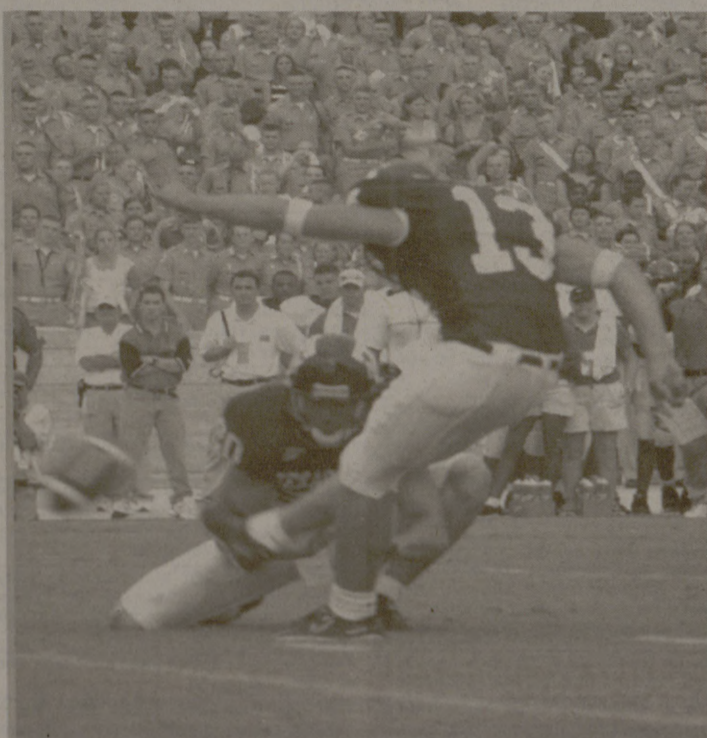
That is good news for Aggie fans, especially considering the offense's lack of ability to find the end zone. A&M failed to venture into Virginia Tech's redzone last week.

Success against Virginia Tech translated into success in practice this week.

Following the game, Pegram had one of his best practices of the season, and credits it to Saturday's game.

"All it takes is just that one," Pegram said. "I went out in practice right after that and hit six out of six, so now I'm feeling much better. I can't wait to get out there next Saturday and

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ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION
Freshman kicker **Todd Pegram** has regained confidence and is ready to put it to the test against Louisiana Tech on Saturday.

New offensive era begins on Saturday

By Kevin Espenlaub
THE BATTALION

Days after re-organizing his offensive staff, R.C. Slocum's Texas A&M football team (2-1) will square off against the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs on Saturday at Kyle Field.

Assistant head coach Kevin Sumlin will be calling the plays in his first game after replacing Dino Babers as the offensive coordinator on Monday.

"I have been concerned and disappointed with the production of our offense," Slocum stated in a press release. "I am hopeful that these changes will help us move the offense in a more positive direction."

The Bulldogs (2-2) enter the game on the heels of a 49-17 loss to Penn State last Saturday.

"(The game at A&M) is obviously another tremendous challenge for us," said Bulldog head coach Jack Bicknell. "A&M is the best defensive team in the country. On offense, I think they are going to get it going."

The Aggie defense is currently ranked No. 2 in the nation in total defense, allowing only 228.3 yards per game.

The Wrecking Crew has forced 13 turnovers in its first three games this season and will look to keep the pressure on against a Bulldog team that has allowed 11 turnovers while only forcing four.

"(My interceptions) are the only way we turn the ball over," said Bulldog quarterback Luke McCown. "We don't run the ball enough to fumble."

The game is scheduled to kick off at 6 p.m. and will be shown regionally on pay-per-view.

Volleyball team hopes to find its way against Iowa State

By True Brown
THE BATTALION

Two consecutive losses have put the Texas A&M volleyball team in an unfamiliar position.

The No. 20 Aggies (9-3, 1-2 Big 12) are now faced with overcoming a losing record in conference play, something that has not happened since the Aggies were 0-1 after their first league game in 2000.

A&M plays Iowa State tonight at 6 p.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

"(Our players) are tired of losing," said A&M

head coach Laurie Corbelli. "Two in a row is more than they are used to losing ever. It's hurting pretty badly."

Both losses have come to competitive teams on the road, something Corbelli said has served as inspiration for the Aggies.

"That is going to protect us from being unprepared," Corbelli said. "I think the losses just make this team more motivated and more determined. It is a dangerous match because Iowa State does have some very fine players."

After struggling in the early part of the season with blocking and defense, A&M had one of its

strongest blocking performances of the season during Wednesday's loss to Missouri.

After averaging 4.5 blocks in their previous two games, the Aggies broke through with 17.5 blocks, a team high for the season.

However, the improvement in blocking may have caused a letdown in other parts of the Aggies' game. "We'd discussed how much we've worked on blocking and how it hadn't been showing in games," Corbelli said. "They may have put all their focus on their blocking at the expense of some of the other parts of the game. The blocking was incredible, though."

Part of what the Aggies are going through is a form of growing pains, Corbelli said. A&M's roster for this season returned just two players with starting experience. All five players who graduated from the 2001 squad held down starting roles.

Over half of A&M's roster is sophomores and juniors, and three of those are in starting roles.

The youth factor, Corbelli says, has contributed to A&M's losses.

"With the inexperience, we've gotten a little nervous at tight points," Corbelli said. "We're still trying to figure out all that our team can do and when we can do it."

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