

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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BATT SPORTS

Fish make big splash in first game

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

For most Texas A&M freshmen, the first week of classes is a time to try to find the right classroom and not look lost in the process. For freshmen Justin Warren and Earvin Taylor, this is just another grueling week at the office — or field, in their case — with class on the side.

Taylor and Warren played in their first-ever college football game at A&M, which is unusual for freshmen in college football. Usually a redshirt year is needed to transition to the speed of the college game, but these two are already beyond redshirting. Warren earned the starting nod at linebacker against Arkansas State and is likely to start again when Utah visits Kyle Field on Saturday.

"(Warren's) been very consistent all through the fall," said A&M defensive coordinator Carl Torbush. "He's played extremely hard and he's a ball of energy, and I like that. He's the type of linebacker you like to recruit. He's got some speed, he's got some quickness, he's got some size and he's got the tools to be a really

solid football player."

Warren was overjoyed after learning he would start against Arkansas State.

"I was shocked," Warren said. "I called my best friends back in Tyler and told them I was starting."

Warren had a solid day on the field against Arkansas State, backing up his coach's decision to start him. In his first taste of NCAA football, the Tyler Lee product made six tackles, one sack and forced a fumble.

"Justin has closing speed and instincts," said A&M coach Dennis Franchione. "He's special for a freshman."

Playing time was not always the first goal on Warren's mind. In high school he played defensive end, and the transition to linebacker wasn't without its typical bumps and bruises.

"In my second or third week I was like, ship me back to Tyler right now," Warren said. "That was when I was

really having trouble with the plays and I didn't know where to go."

Warren told the coaches he needed more repetitions in practice so he got them, and now he finds himself in the starting lineup.

Taylor, a receiver from Mission, Texas, was able to transition more easily over the summer since he arrived in College Station early with his brother, senior wide receiver Jamaar Taylor.

"He was here all summer with Jamaar," Franchione said. "I think that sometimes eases the transition process for a freshman. He has been pretty efficient since day one."

Even with the extra training time with big brother, the younger Taylor had a formidable task ahead of him if he wanted playing time. Receiver is easily the deepest position on the Aggie roster, and arguably the most talented.

"There's a lot of credit missing there," said sophomore quarterback Reggie McNeal. "We have some of

the best receivers in the nation, or in the Big 12. As an all-around group we've got possession receivers and speedy receivers, and they've all got size. They are going to be a fun group to throw to."

Taylor has wowed teammates in practice with his athleticism and catching ability. Big brother Jamaar is equally impressed.

"He's made a lot of plays," Jamaar said. "I think he's earned the respect of his teammates and the coaching staff. He's been in the program for a whole summer, got stronger, got physical and is playing good football right now."

Although the younger Taylor did not get a pass thrown his way against Arkansas State, he took a lot of great memories from his first game in the maroon and white. Playing high school ball in Mission is a bit different than playing at Kyle Field in front of the 12th Man.

It is the same for Warren, but playing in front of a Kyle Field crowd is one of the reasons they became Aggies.

"Compared to 9,000 people in high school, and then 75,000 people the other night," Taylor said, "it was just unbelievable."

Top 25

1. Oklahoma
2. Ohio State
3. Miami (FL)
4. USC
5. Michigan
6. Texas
7. Georgia
8. Virginia Tech
9. Kansas State
10. Pittsburgh
11. Florida State
12. LSU
13. Tennessee
14. North Carolina State
15. Virginia
16. Purdue
17. Wisconsin
18. Notre Dame
19. Arizona State
20. Washington
21. Florida
22. Auburn
23. Colorado
24. Nebraska
25. Alabama

Big 12 filled with non-conference matchups

Big 12 fans will have to wait a few more weeks to see another marquee conference matchup like week one's Nebraska-Oklahoma State tilt. Week two in the Big 12 features 11 non-conference games. Texas is the lone league team with a bye week.

No. 23 Nebraska (1-0, 1-0 Big 12) plays its first non-conference game of the season Saturday when Utah State (0-1) visits Memorial Stadium in Lincoln. Nebraska holds a 7-0 all-time record against Utah State. Utah State is coming off a 40-20 loss to Utah in its opener. Nebraska's season-opening 17-7 win over Oklahoma State was the



BIG XII
NOTEBOOK
True Brown

Cornhuskers' 18th straight season-opening win, the longest such streak in the nation. Despite claiming 79 season-opening wins, two other Big 12 teams have more. The University of Texas tops the list with 91 and is eight ahead of Oklahoma, which is second

on the list. Texas A&M is fourth with 78. Nebraska's win over OSU also gave coach Frank Solich his 50th win with the No. 23 Huskers.

Rocky mountain high

The Colorado Buffaloes, who posted a 42-35

upset win over rival Colorado State on Saturday, own one of the league's premier games of week two.

UCLA will visit Folsom Field in Boulder for a matchup that will be televised on ABC.

Colorado will turn to sophomore quarterback Joel Klatt to try and post its first 2-0 record since 1998. Klatt grabbed headlines nationwide by passing for 402 yards and four touchdowns against Colorado State last week.

Colorado beat UCLA last season in the Rose Bowl, but the Bruins lead the all-time series 4-1.

The Oklahoma Sooners will play in the Big 12's other high-profile game, traveling to

See Big 12 on page 3B

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