

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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High-scoring Mavs want more points

By Jaime Aron
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — After an active offseason, the Dallas Mavericks still don't have anyone who can handle Shaquille O'Neal, Tim Duncan or Kevin Garnett.

Then again, the Mavs figure, neither does anyone else.

So after being spurned by Alonzo Mourning, they gave up on their plan to find someone to anchor their inside game and instead decided to try improving what they already did best — scoring.

Dallas took the league's highest-scoring offense and juiced it up more, bringing in Antoine Walker and Antawn Jamison to join its Big Three of Dirk Nowitzki, Steve Nash and Michael Finley.

The message is clear: To beat the Mavericks, teams will have to outscore them.

"We've been able to add a lot of guys who can do a lot of different things and make a really dynamic lineup," said Nash, the point guard who will run the show. "I think it's a beautiful thing. We're going to be a great team to watch, and hopefully an even better team on the floor."

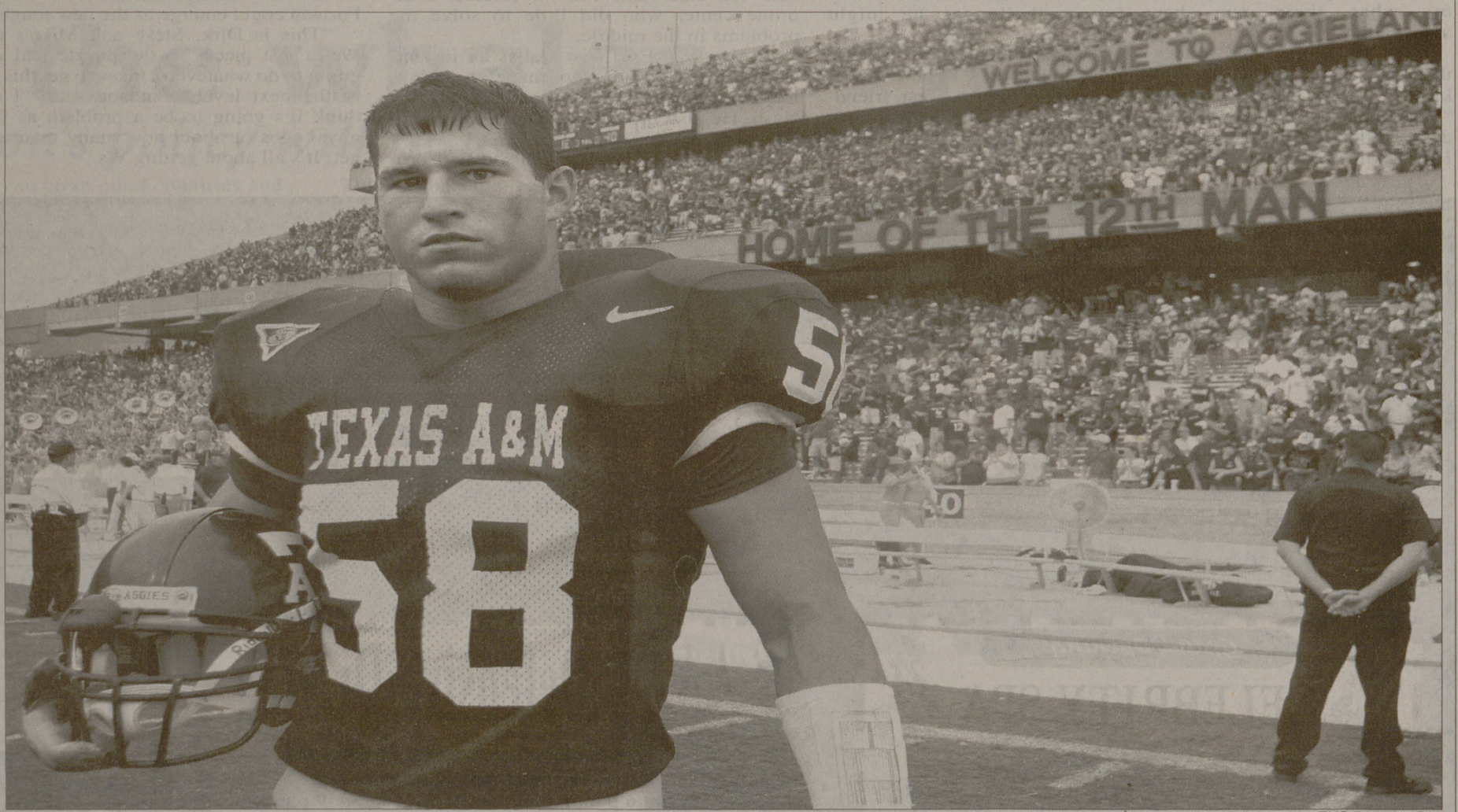
After winning 60 games last season and reaching the Western Conference finals, the Mavericks went into free agency hoping to make Mourning the center they've lacked for more than a decade. Then he signed with New Jersey and Dallas didn't land any other big man.

While other West powers reloaded, the Mavericks waited. They finally made a move in August, sending playoff star Nick Van Exel to Golden State for Jamison and Danny Fortson. Walker arrived from Boston midway through

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NOWITZKI



Texas A&M junior Blake Kendrick, shown here after the Baylor game, has seen action on the field during the past three seasons as a member of the Twelfth Man Kick-off team.

E. King Gill would be proud

Hard work landed Kendrick in A&M's most coveted role

By Michael Crow
THE BATTALION

When Blake Kendrick graduated from Willis High School, he knew he wanted to be an Aggie. The All-District linebacker had been immersed in Texas A&M culture from a young age, and he dreamed of playing football for the University from the time he first strapped on a helmet in the seventh grade.

Still, Kendrick nearly took a different route. Several smaller schools offered him full athletic scholarships, and he was strongly considering another option when his letter of acceptance from A&M arrived.

"I was actually going to go to a school in Colorado," Kendrick said. "But, then I got my acceptance letter to A&M, and I just couldn't pass up the opportunity."

While excited, Kendrick knew he would need to talk things over with his parents. After all, he came from a hardworking family, and he

knew attending A&M would mean turning down a free education elsewhere.

Unbeknownst to Kendrick, attending A&M was a decision his parents were already hoping he would make.

"I was ecstatic," said Kendrick's mother, Ann. "That's where we always wanted him to go, but we wanted him to make that his decision."

With his family's full support, Kendrick entered A&M in the fall of 2000 with every intention of making the football team.

But many of the people Kendrick shared his ambition with reminded him what a challenge it would be.

"I had plenty of people telling me I couldn't make it up here, so I was kind of intimidated by that," Kendrick said. "But then I said if I don't do it, I'm going to look back when I'm 40 and think, 'What if I would have?'"

Kendrick's father, Steve, said he remembered one visit in particular with his son's academic deans.

"They didn't really discourage him from (walking on), but at the same time, they were trying to impress upon him how difficult it was going to be academically," Steve Kendrick said. "But that's just the kind of person he is. When he sets his mind to do something, he's going to do it. And, he's going to do whatever it takes to be successful."

So, joined by roughly 60 other hopefuls, he made his way to the football tryouts. Kendrick was one of only three athletes to make it through the grueling cut process, and he earned a spot on the team.

After redshirting in 2000, Kendrick earned a varsity letter the next season and represented the student body as the Twelfth Man Kick-off team captain. He said this was particularly special to him.

"Here the Twelfth Man really supports us," he said. "I've been to stadiums the last three years where the home team gets booed, we get booed. Here the Twelfth Man is going to stand up and support us

whether we're in a losing slump or we're winning."

Still, there were plenty of challenges along the way for Kendrick. He was dedicating his days, nights and weekends to football, not for a scholarship or for name recognition, but to prove something to himself. At times, he said, this would wear on him.

"It's hard coming and doing it as a walk-on, just out of the pure joy of doing it and the love for the game," he said. "But, you just have to keep pressing ahead, and I had to tell myself just to keep going and everything would work out."

And, things have worked out. In 2002, Kendrick was on the field in every A&M game en route to his second straight season as the Twelfth Man captain.

This season, Kendrick has continued to see his playing time increase, and he has worked himself into the

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Little out as Boston manager

BOSTON (AP) — Red Sox manager Grady Little will not be back next year, paying the price for his decision to stick with Pedro Martinez in Game 7 of the AL championship series.

The Red Sox let Little go on Monday, less than two weeks after Boston blew a chance to play in the World Series when its ace couldn't hold a lead against the New York Yankees.

The Florida Marlins beat the Yankees in the Series that wrapped up Saturday, ending baseball's embargo on major moves and freeing the Red Sox to cut Little loose.

Little's contract expires Friday, and the team decided not to exercise its 2004 option.

Team president Larry Lucchino said team officials notified Little of the decision in a telephone conversation Monday morning.

"He took it very well," Lucchino said. "He was very gracious. There was no anger."

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8:00 pm - 11:30 pm

- * Costume Karaoke at 9:00 pm in MSC Flagroom
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- * Darkside of Oz at 7:00 & 9:45 pm in Rudder
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