

2004 SEASON PREDICTIONS

	JORDAN MESEROLE	JON GILBERT	RYAN IRBY	KYLE DAVOUST	SHAWN MILLENDER	JONATHAN WALL	ANDREW BURLESON
UTAH					ATM		ATM
WYOMING	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM
CLEMSON	ATM		ATM		ATM		ATM
KANSAS STATE		ATM			ATM		
IOWA STATE	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM
OKLAHOMA STATE	ATM		ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	
COLORADO	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM
BAYLOR	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM
OKLAHOMA					ATM		
TEXAS TECH	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM		ATM
TEXAS		ATM			ATM		
REG. SEASON RECORD	7 - 4	7 - 4	7 - 4	6 - 5	11 - 0	5 - 6	7 - 4
BIG 12 SOUTH FINISH	3rd	2nd	Tie - 3rd	3rd	1st	3rd	3rd
COMMENTS	After a tough loss against Utah, the offense gets its act together and leads the Aggies to a decent season.	The Independence Bowl never felt so sweet.	The class of 2005 sees its first victory over the Red Raiders on Maroon Out.	Dramatic improvement this year still can't overcome a horrible schedule, but the groundwork is laid for a breakout in 2005.	EA Sports' games are so real I can confidently predict the outcome of every game based on how I perform on the 'varsity' level.	The first four games of this season will make or break this squad. It'll take one more season for the Wrecking Crew to return.	Tough games against Utah and Clemson strengthen the team and the Aggies take it to the wire in every game this season.

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DBacks

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The strong and free safety positions are at a premium and look to be two-deep going into the season. The free safety position will be covered by Appel, redshirt freshman Japhus Brown and senior Kevin Mangum. Appel is the definite starter, but look for Brown to have a solid year at the free safety position. Brown had an extremely solid spring that earned him a spot in the two-deep rotation, and he should help push Appel all season long. Mangum is coming off two injury-plagued seasons and hopes to add some depth and leadership to the position as well. Just like the free safety, the Aggies go into the season with three capable players manning the two-deep position of strong safety. Look for junior Ronald "Ray Ray" Jones to be the starter this fall. Jones was third on the team in tackles last season with 91 and was extremely reliable to the Aggies as the 2003 starter. Junior Bryant Singleton and sophomore Brandon Leone will look to push Jones for playing time. Both players shared time last year; Singleton was used mainly in nickel and dime situations, while Leone was used in spot situations. The cornerback position is going to be in

good hands this year. The secondary returns all of its starters from last season except four-year starter Sean Weston, who graduated and is now currently with the Kansas City Chiefs.

Cornerbacks coach Chris Thurmond has a tall task ahead of him with some of the best aerial attacks in the nation coming to Kyle Field this season. However, Thurmond said, his corners are up to the task.

Thurmond can rely on two veteran corners and a handful of underclassmen to shut down any team. Senior Byron Jones will be called upon to cover most team's top receiver. A starter for all 36 A&M home games, Jones possesses the skills and speed to be a true shutdown corner.

"I think Byron's been a good player for a long time," Thurmond said. "If you watch the tape, he played well against (Larry) Fitzgerald, (Rashuan) Woods and Roy Williams."

The rest of the cornerbacks look just as promising as Jones. Senior Jonte' Buhl, and a trio of redshirt freshmen, Broderick Newton, Stephen Hodge and Erik Mayes all look to share playing time at the right and left corner positions.

The one corner next to Jones who seems to stand out the most is sophomore Melvin Bullitt. A highly recruited high school player, Bullitt was thrown to the wolves last season in the sixth game and asked to fill in at the corner position. Needless to say, Bullitt exceeded everyone's expectations and looks to build on

POSITION REPORT

DEFENSIVE BACKS

RETURNING

Jaxson Appel (JR)
 Byron Jones (SR)
 Ronald Jones (JR)
 Bryant Singleton (JR)
 Brandon Leone (SO)
 Melvin Bullitt (SO)
 Kevin Mangum (SR)

LOST

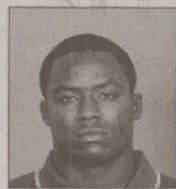
Sean Weston

NEWCOMERS

Japhus Brown
 Stephen Hodge
 Erik Mayes
 Broderick Newton
 DJ Davis
 Danny Gorrer



Appel



Jones

his freshman campaign.

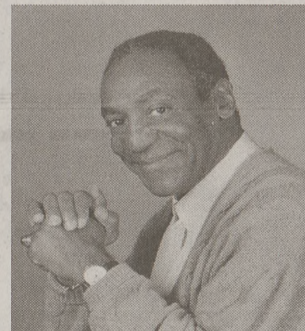
"Melvin is a competitor, had a good chance to play as a freshman last year," Thurmond said. "He had a good spring and fall camp. He is real competitive and has improved his technique. We're looking for him to do some good things."

The Aggie defense is moving in the right direction, and this group of guys seems poised for a breakout season.

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Special

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for anything anymore. I just think about wanting to perform and help out my team."

Even with this experience, Pegram does not seem to have sole possession of the kicking duties. This is because the coaches are intrigued with the leg strength of sophomore Layne Neumann, who connected on a 56-yard field goal in the Maroon and White game last spring and a 53-yarder in a fall scrimmage game. It looks as if Neumann will handle some of the longer kicks.

As punter, senior Jacob Young will enter the season knowing he

has the job. Last year he expected to see little action playing behind Cody Scates, a pre-season All American. Early injuries to Scates, however, threw Young into game action unexpectedly.

"Having a year under my belt and the real game experience, I guess I have more confidence going into it this year as opposed to last year," Young said. "I think I'll be able to keep a cooler head and just go out there and play the game that I know I can play."

All in all, the special teams must be an improved unit from last year, and the Aggies know that. Without improvement from this unit, it will be hard for the Aggies to move forward as a team.

OLine

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opener against the University of Utah on Sept. 2. To come away from Salt Lake City with a win, the offensive line must provide junior quarterback Reggie McNeal with the protection necessary to complete a pass or hand the ball off. Franchione said the attitudes of these men will inspire success.

"The guys have a good attitude, and they know they have to keep working to get better," he said.

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