Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

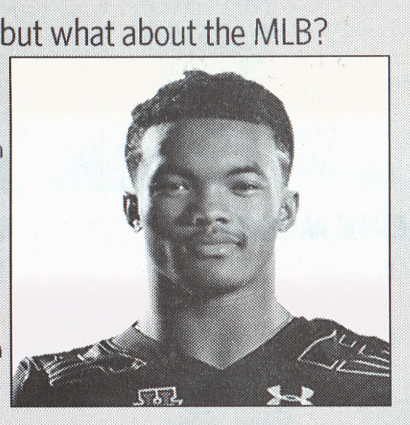
AT IT AGAIN

Sumlin bags another top-tier class crowned by three 5-stars

Signing Day takeaways

Thoughts from sports editor Brandon Wheeland

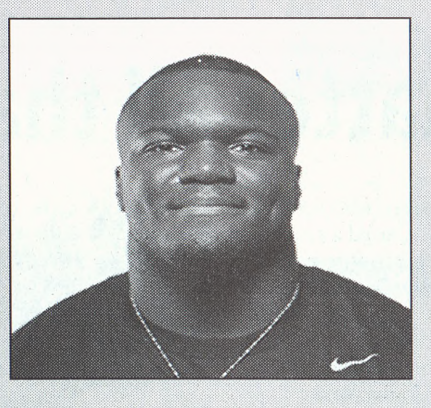
1 Kyler Murray signs — but what about the MLB?



Murray, son of former A&M QB Kevin Murray, had an interesting stretch run to his commitment. Though he never wavered from his verbal, Charlie Strong and the Texas Longhorns made a push for the dual-threat QB's services late, which included a promise to start as a freshman.

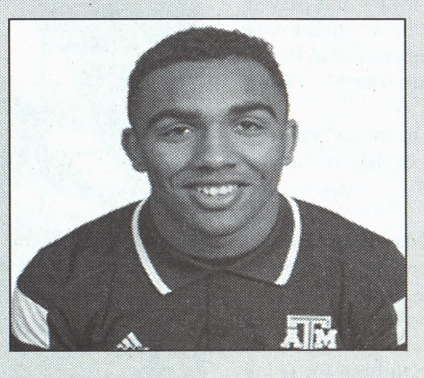
Murray possesses the talent to have succeeded at any school, but Kevin Sumlin has to feel better about his quarterback situation in the future. Kyle Allen had an impressive freshman year, and Murray will continue that success when it is his time to shine. Aggies now wait until June for the MLB draft, where Murray has a strong chance to go in the first round. Should he still choose college after the draft passes, he will be a two-sport athlete in his time at College Station.

2 Sumlin gets his man in Daylon Mack



Daylon Mack's recruitment has been a roller coaster, to say the least. After an original verbal commitment made to the Aggies fell through on the same day LB Malik Jefferson announced his intentions to play for the Longhorns, Mack eventually ended up where he started with intentions to play for Sumlin. Mack targeted TCU and LSU after decommitting from Texas A&M, a move Sumlin countered by hiring John Chavis away from the Tigers to replace Mark Snyder as defensive coordinator.

3 Christian Kirk makes back-to-back Arizona stars



Five-star wide receiver Christian Kirk hails from Scottsdale, Arizona. That's significant because of a 2014 signee, Kyle Allen, which makes two straight years in which Sumlin has swiped the top player in the state from Arizona. And because of their positions, it's not out of the question to imagine plenty of throw-and-catch connections on Kyle Field between the two Arizona natives. Another interesting tidbit: Kirk scored touchdowns from six positions his senior season. That's impressive.

4 Running the state

Rankings are subjective, and can only say so much. After all, Johnny Manziel and Mike Evans were both rated three-star recruits coming out of high school. A&M claimed commitments from the Gatorade National Players of the Year in Texas, Arizona and Louisiana. It gained the commitment of immediate impact players on defense such as Mack, Justin Davis, James Lockhart and more. Stars aside, these players will come in and solidify Sumlin's great ability to recruit.

5 Next Martellus Bennett?

The 6-foot-4 tight end from Clear Lake has the ability to create significant offensive production from the position. With new coaching addition Dave Christensen working as run game coordinator and offensive line coach, Davis will have the ability to develop as a run blocker as well. Davis is already enrolled at Texas A&M and has a great shot at contributing early.

6 The defense will improve

Talent like Myles Garrett, Otaro Alaka, Armani Watts and more emerged on the defensive side of the ball. Some that were expected to produce before injury such as A.J. Hilliard will be ready to go in 2015. Recruits have been brought in to help out lack of depth at the lineback position. On top of all that, defensive guru Chavis is ready to run the show. A&M could very well jump in the top 40 of defenses for next year, if not higher. Coupled with a high-powered offense that only got stronger, this team is set to make noise next year.

By Cole Stenholm

▷ Another year, another hard-charging class for Kevin Sumlin.

Texas A&M wrapped up National Signing Day with 25 signees — seven of which enrolled early and are already in College Station — and a class ranked No. 12 by ESPN.

While Sumlin and his staff already had a decent idea of who would be finalizing their commitments Wednesday, they still awaited the faxed letters of intent from a few key pieces in the class.

The recruiting rollercoaster of five-star, 6-foot-1, 320-pound defensive lineman Daylon Mack kept analysts guessing. In the end the Gladewater, Texas, product — who once decommitted from A&M — chose A&M over TCU and Texas live on ESPNU. The addition of defensive coordinator John Chavis helped land Mack.

"In his situation, defensively, schematically, from a coach who has a track record of playing not good defense but great defense and placing guys in the National Football League, he saw where the situation at Texas A&M got better for him personally. Again, he came here for all the right reasons," Sumlin said at a press conference Wednesday.

Kyler Murray, the three-time state champion who never lost a game at Allen High School, signed his letter of intent after having entertained the possibility of pledging to the University of Texas late in his recruiting process.

Murray, whose father, Kevin, played quarterback for the Aggies from 1983-1986, threw for 4,713 yards and rushing for 1,485 his senior season. Murray expects to compete with Kyle Allen for the starting job under center come this fall.

"We didn't even promise Myles Garrett he would start, which was hard for me to bite my tongue on," Sumlin said. "With Kyler it was the same conversation we had with Kyle Allen — if you win the starting job against Arizona State you've got to keep competing, because the other guy isn't going to give in; if you don't win it, you've got to keep competing because you're only one play away."

Murray will have several potential throwing targets joining him in College Station, including five-star wide receiver Christian Kirk and four-star tight end Jordan Davis, both of whom are already enrolled to partake in spring drills.

Kirk ranked as the top prospect in the state of Arizona, marking the second straight year the Aggies signed the top player from the Grand Canyon State. Kirk logged 1,187 receiving yards while rushing for 1,692 yards in his senior season at Saguaro High School. Davis rings in at 6-foot 4, 255 pounds and had 34 receptions for 535 yards and two touchdowns his senior season.

This year's recruiting class slightly favors the defensive side of the ball. A&M signed 13 defensive players who have their work cut out for them as they join a defense that ranked near the bottom of the NCAA in total yards allowed for two consecutive years.

Within the defensive group, A&M signed four defensive backs, all of whom are at least 6 feet tall. Four-star Justin Dunning, who hails from Whitehouse, Texas, is the tallest of the group at 6-foot-4. He is joined by Deshawn Capers-Smith, Roney Elam, Justin Evans and Larry Pryor.

All four of the defensive backs likely will have a shot at filling the shoes of graduated seniors such as Deshazor Everett and Floyd Raven in the fall.

The recruiting trail helped stoke a dormant rivalry with the University of Texas as the two teams battled it out for much of the state's top talent.

"We've got a lot of kids in this state that are tremendous student-athletes and a lot of great coaches," Sumlin said. "That creates opportunities for kids in this state to not have to leave [Texas] to go play. It creates trouble for us, but for student-athletes it couldn't be a better time to go a lot of different places and play at a high level."

BATTASKS

What do you think of the A&M recruiting class?

"I think the Aggies defense this past season could use some improvement, so I think Daylon Mack will help improve the team."

Macy Roberts, engineering freshman

"After all the hype, I have hope that Kyler Murray can return A&M where it was with Johnny."

Dakota Pirsa, engineering freshman

Shelby Knowles — THE BATTALION