

Defeat Drops SMU From Bowl Picture First-Quarter Surge Lifts Ags Over Mustangs, 27-17



'GO, MAN GO'. Coach Emory Bellard cheers freshman halfback Skip Walker (23) as he rambles for big gain Saturday. Walker scored two touchdowns as the Ags beat SMU, 27-17. (Photo by Steve Ueckert)

By BILL HENRY
Battalion Sports Editor

Texas A&M's offensive machine found high gear Saturday afternoon in Dallas in what began as a rout and ended up as the usual, heart-stopping Aggie football game of 1972.

After the first quarter, A&M had amassed five first downs, 77 yards rushing, 34 passing and had a 17-0 lead. A&M's defensive unit had given up a total of 19 yards total offense stopping the famed M&M boys at will.

As that illustrious first quarter came to a close, it was 'end zone to end zone' smiling Aggie faces on a beautiful sun-lit afternoon in the Cotton Bowl.

By the end of the third quarter, those Aggie faces turned as cold as the north breeze as 36,109 fans watched the 17-0 lead dwindle to a 17-17 tie with 6:10 remaining in the puzzling contest.

Was it to be another Texas Tech, TCU or Baylor game? That was the question in everyone's mind as the heartless SMU fans kept screaming "Poor Aggies" as the game drew to a tie.

A little less than four minutes later it wasn't "Poor Aggies" but "\$%&? Aggies" being screamed from the SMU student section as little Pat McDermott booted a 37-yard field goal with 2:12 remaining to put A&M ahead for good 20-17.

The Aggies went 29 minutes and 11 seconds between their fifth and sixth first downs of the ball game. The fifth came with 2:38 left in the first quarter and the sixth came with 4:24 left in the third quarter.

The Mustangs could not move the ball on the first series from their own 11-yard line and punted the ball to A&M at the Aggie 45-yard line.

A&M moved for one first down into Mustang territory but could go no further than the 37 where McDermott kicked a school record field goal of 54 yards to put A&M ahead 3-0 with only four minutes gone on the clock.

SMU got the ball back at its own 10-yard line but again could not move against the fired up Aggie defense and punted to Carl Roaches who returned the ball to the Mustang 35.

Three plays later freshman Skip Walker got the pitch from quarterback Don Dean and scooted 24 yards for the touchdown with tremendous clearing blocks by fellow backfield members Brad Dusek and Ronnie Hubby. McDermott kicked the extra point and the Aggies led 10-0 with 6:58 remaining in the quarter.

A&M started its third scoring drive at its own 42-yard line. After a five yard motion penalty, Dean hit Roaches for 29 yards to the SMU 34. Seven plays later, Walker again went around the left side after snatching Dean's pitchout for the score from the 8-yard line with another fine block by Dusek. McDermott's kick was good and A&M led 17-0 with

1:26 left in the quarter.

The first play of the second quarter gave A&M another excellent opportunity to score with freshman linebacker Ed Simonini picking off quarterback Keith Bobo's first pass at the A&M 49. Two plays later Dean fumbled the exchange from center and SMU recovered at its own 49.

SMU got the ball back again after an exchange of punts and Bobo hit freshman split end Keny Harrison on a 43-yard bomb in the end zone for the Mustangs first score. Cornerback Robert Robert Murski had the speedster covered like a blanket but the talented end swept the ball away above last week's SWC player of the week. The kick was wide right as A&M led 17-6 with 12:04 remaining.

During that second quarter, A&M had gained only 22 yards total offense and had been penalized for 58.

Nothing at all happened in the third quarter for either team as both defenses played tough.

The fourth quarter's excitement was enough for both as SMU concluded a 97-yard drive in 12 plays with Bobo carrying over the final yard himself. The Mustangs went for two points with a pass from Bobo to tight end Roan making the score 17-14 with 13:36 left to play.

Seven minutes later, SMU drove 48 yards in 12 plays as Hackney kicked a 39-yard field goal after the Aggie defense stiffened. With 6:10 remaining, the Mustangs tied the score, 17-17.

It was to be now or never for the A&M offense. If they did not score on the ensuing drive, the chances of winning were slim. A&M began the drive at its

own 15-yard line after Roan's return of Hackney's kickoff at 6:04 to play.

A first down was achieved by Hubby. Two plays later, Bobo found himself with a third and situation with 4:30 to go.

With absolutely no one covering, Dean hit Homer May in a right flat for 41 yards to the SMU 20. After three straight plays from the 20, McDermott was called in to do his thing. Bobo sailed through for the 37 yards out. With 2:12 left, the ball sailed through for the winning points, 20-17.

With 2:06 left, SMU had a chance beginning a drive at 19 after the kickoff. Bobo was back to pass and defensive end Mike Bruton knocked the pass loose and linebacker Kent Farris recovered for A&M at the 37. Three plays later Hubby was over from the two and McDermott kicked the extra point to the 27-17 win.

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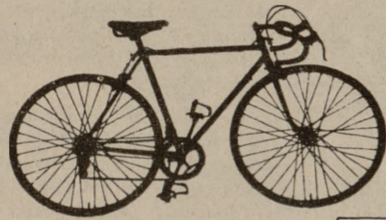
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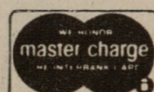
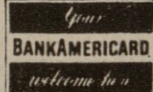


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