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Inoffensive Owls Thwart Ag Comeback

Swierc's 95-Yard Kickoff Return Kills Bowl Hopes

By KEVIN COFFEY
Sports Editor

HOUSTON—To say that Rice University's football team is offensive would be a lie. To say their band is offensive would be an understatement.

But, those inoffensive Rice Owls fought off the Aggies' second comeback of the afternoon here for a 24-20 Southwest Conference win, dashing all hopes for an A&M bid to the Peach Bowl.

Carl Swierc did the final damage to the Ags. After fighting backs from a 17-0 halftime deficit to a 20-17 lead with just over two minutes remaining Swierc dashed 95 yards for a touchdown with the Ags kickoff.

It then became a clear case of A&M's offense against Rice's defense and the clock.

Having just 2:14 to move 80 yards, A&M got behind the arm and scrambling of freshman quarterback David Walker.

Reaching the nine yard line with 0:27 and no timeouts, the Ags left their successful passing attack and tried to push the ball over with two runs. Bucky Sams and David Walker made valiant efforts but the clock ran out with the Ags on the three. Three yards away from a guaranteed winning season and a good chance to travel to Atlanta, Ga., for the Peach Bowl.

Head Coach Emory Bellard said he thought the interference

was called in the end zone and that the Ags had the ball on the one and not the nine.

A&M drove to their 20-17 lead with a 59 yard nine play effort. Haddox booted the extra point and the Aggies pulled themselves from the deepest hole of the season.

Swierc's runback was indeed a-dandy. Starting at his five, he seemed swarmed under at the Aggie 30. Willie Thompson nailed the speedster from behind, but Swierc regained his balance and romped the remainder unmolested.

"I've been trying to break one for three years," said Swierc. "But this is the first one I've gone all the way. I regained my momentum when I was hit from behind."

Thompson, whose shot would have knocked down most ball carriers just said, "he scored."

The Rice Band parodied the military marching of "The Fighting Texas Aggie Band", drawing mixed emotions from the 45,000 fans and a police escort after the game as a crowd of Aggies waited afterwards.

You could say that A&M dug its own hole in the first half, falling behind 17-0. The Owls' Preston Anderson returned an intercepted pass to the nine. Fred Geisler hit Ed Lofton for the final three steps and a 7-0 Rice lead.

The Owls then took advantage of another A&M miscue as Cornelius Walker batted the ball from

Bubba Bean and Rice recovered on the A&M 21.

The hapless Owls could move but three yards but that was plenty for Alan Pringle to boot a 31 yard field goal and a 10-0 Rice lead.

A&M's offense was stopped by what Bellard called "sloppy" ball handling as mistakes rubbed out any gains.

Cornelius Walker was also throwing a wrench into matters as he always seemed to be around Aggie ball carriers.

The Ags had Rice bottled up with second and 25 on their own 25 but Geisler hit Swierc for 34 yards and a first down. Two plays later the substitute for highly touted freshman Tommy Kramer pulled some fireworks of his own. Dropping straight back, Geisler threw for Lofton in the endzone. Aggie defensive back Tim Gray and Lofton went up together and the ball went between Gray's hands and Rice had another touchdown.

A&M started its second half comeback with a six-play, 46-yard effort with 6:14 left in the third quarter. David Walker kept for the final yard after passing to Skip Walker for 12 and Richard Osborne for nine. Randy Haddox booted the extra point to close the gap to 17-7.

The defense continued to hold Rice to three plays and a punt. Greg Landrum averaged 37.7

yards on 10 punts. David Walker hit Carl Roaches for 27 yards to spearhead the Aggies next effort. David traveled the final three yards and A&M was within four at 17-13.

A&M wasted what later turned out to be a valuable time out when Bellard sent the extra point team on the field, but later decided to go for two points and failed.

A&M took the lead on their next touchdown and held it 13 seconds before Swierc's runback. It was almost unbelievable that

Rice won the game. The Owls had the ball almost 36 minutes. Rice had 39 total offense the second half just 160 for the game to 392.

Turnovers and bobbles were deciding factor as the Aggies fumbled seven times, losing 10 yards.

There are still student tickets left for the Texas Game on Friday. The ticket office will be at 4:30 p. m. and those left will be sold to the general public starting Wednesday.

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Owl Band Offers Apology For Halftime Performance

HOUSTON (AP)—The Rice University band, besieged inside Rice Stadium last Saturday by irate Aggies who took offense to Rice's halftime show, issued an apology to A&M's band Monday.

The Rice band, called "The Mob," did an on-the-field imitation of the A&M marching band Saturday night in which they played an off-tune version of the Aggie fight song and did an out-of-step block-T, an Aggie tradition.

The Owls band also gave a salute to the Aggie mascot Revellie by forming a fire plug on the field.

Police had to restrain the Aggie cadet corps from running onto the field at the halftime performance. After the game, the Rice band huddled under the south end of the stadium two hours while Aggies milled about outside waiting for the band to leave.

"We certainly did not intend any offense to Aggie traditions last Saturday," Rice band Director Bert Roth said in the letter of apology. "But if our presentation was offensive to anyone,

we wish to extend our sincere and genuine apology.

Roth also pointed out it had been the policy at Rice to parody current events and the band programs of Rice football opponents for the past three years.

The University of Texas band prides itself by marching behind a huge drum which is called "The world's largest." At the halftime of the Rice-Texas game in Austin, the Rice band marched onto the field behind a tiny snare

drum pulled by a child's wagon.

"We consider these programs to be a tribute to our fellow schools, because only strong traditions and colorful individualistic activities are subject to parody," Roth said in the letter.

At the halftime of the Rice-Arkansas game two weeks ago the Rice band performed a tribute to the banana, complete with a simulated strip-tease by band members at the end to show that the band had gone bananas.

Leaks Maintains Rushing Lead Over Arkansas' Dickey Morton

DALLAS (AP)—Texas fullback Roosevelt Leaks holds a 23 yards per game average lead on Arkansas' Dickey Morton going into the final regular season Southwest Conference games this week for both players.

Leaks, who owns single game and single season SWC rushing records, has compiled 1,328 yards.

He has averaged 147.6 yards per game or 6.2 steps per rush.

Morton, who has the career SWC mark with 3,262 rushing yards, has 1,243 yards this year, an average of 124.3 per contest. He has averaged 5.9 yards per try.

Leaks is just a junior while Morton closes out his sparkling career at Arkansas Saturday against Texas Tech.

Baylor's Neal Jeffrey is the passing leader with an average of 12.3 completions per game. Teammate Charlie Dancer is the leading receiver with 43 receptions. Dancer has averaged almost five catches a game.

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