

Ags Underdogs in Turkey Day Classic

Conference Champs Stampede into Kyle Field

Overflow Crowd Anticipated For 1:30 p.m. Thursday Kickoff

By KEVIN COFFEY
Sports Editor

The largest home crowd in A&M history is expected to jam Kyle Field for the annual Turkey Day football clash between the Aggies and the University of Texas Longhorns.

Texas has already clinched its sixth straight trip to the Cotton Bowl but a loss could tie the Longhorns with Texas Tech for the Southwest Conference crown.

For the Aggies the game is a matter of pride. Posting a 5-5 record to this point, A&M needs a win for their second winning season since 1956.

Texas Coach Darrell Royal has a little more at stake. The Longhorn mentor is one victory shy of tying Jess Neely's record of 144 wins as a SWC coach. Royal's record now stands at 143-35-4 in 17 years.

Texas is coming off a devastating performance against TCU. The Longhorns scored on five of six possessions in the first half against TCU and eight of 13 in the game while running up a 52-7 win.

A&M, on the other hand, suffered its most bitter defeat of the season, losing to Rice 24-20. The 53,000 plus fans will see some of the conference's top individual performers as both Texas and the Aggies have several all-SWC performers.

Heading the list is powerful Longhorn fullback Roosevelt Leaks. The junior from Brenham is a bonified Heisman Trophy candidate and probable conference offensive player of the year. His 105 yards against TCU boosted his season record to 1,328 yards, passing Bob Smith's of A&M 23-year-old mark of 1,302. Leaks has scored 14 touchdowns this season and needs one more to set a Texas school record in that department.

Bill Wyman of Texas and A&M's Ricky Seeker may be the two best centers in the leagues. Wyman is considered a shoo-in for all-America honors.

Top linebackers in action are Ed Simonini and Longhorn Glen Gaspard and stellar defensive backs Pat Thomas of A&M and Texas' Jay Arnold.

Leaks will present the biggest challenge of the year to Aggie linebackers John Paul McCrumby and Ken Stratton.

Aggie backers are hoping the Longhorns may be looking ahead to New Year's Day battle with Nebraska.

"We haven't even thought about Nebraska," swore Royal Monday. "I haven't even talked to our coaches about it. The game itself, Texas vs. Texas A&M, is plenty to keep everyone's mind on the game."

In 1976, when the University of Houston enters SWC play, the Turkey Day game will become history as the contest will be moved to the final Saturday of the season.

"The game will lose some of the tradition then," said A&M coach Emory Ballard, "but you really need a week to get ready."

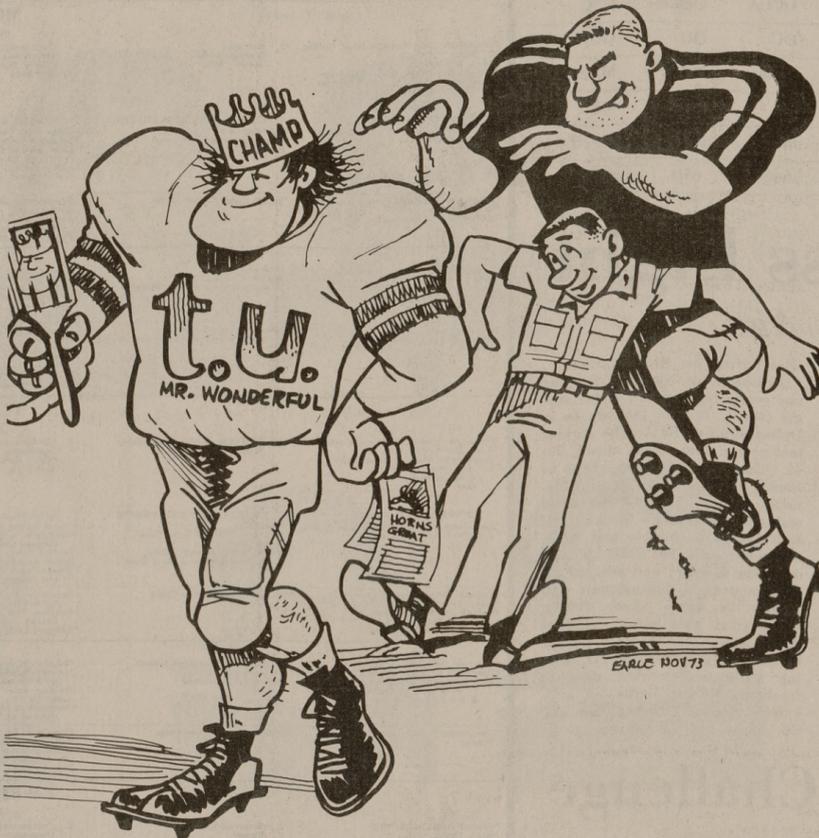
Royal and Ballard, cohorts in developing the Wishbone offense at Texas, will be on opposite sides of the fence for the second time. Royal won last year 38-3 on national television.

Trailing only 14-3 at halftime, the Horns hit some timely passes to overtake the Ags in the cold and rain in Austin.

"Last year A&M lined-up with us toe-to-toe," Royal said. "They held Leaks to 58 yards. A&M is big and they will battle us," he said.

In the last 33 meetings, Texas holds a 23-3-1 margin but only an over all 15-12-2 slate in Kyle Field.

Game time is 1:30 p.m. and Texas is a 14 point favorite.



'Just A Few Hours More'

Unpredictability, Upsets Rule Annual Thanksgiving Battle

By TED BORISKIE
Assistant Sports Editor

The annual Texas-Texas A&M football game has more tradition, more color and generally more excitement than any other game in the southwest.

Unpredictability and upsets are the rule rather than the exception when the Orange and Maroon squads square off against each other on Thanksgiving day.

Sadly, the tradition of using Thanksgiving Day as the date of the game is grinding to an end. 1975 will see the last Turkey Day Classic and it will be played on Kyle Field. The next year, the University of Houston will enter league play and due to scheduling problems, the game will be switched to the Saturday following Thanksgiving.

The first game in the series was played in 1894 in Austin. This was the Aggies' first year of intercollegiate play and Texas' second. The more experienced Longhorns defeated the Aggies, 38-0.

In 1915, Texas spend the first part of the season amassing a fearful record. The Longhorns were 8-1 and had run up a total of 328 points while allowing just 20. They came to College Station heavily favored to defeat a scrappy but untouted A&M team owning a 5-1 record. The Aggies stunned the Steers, 13-0, capitalizing on great punting by Rip Collins and recovery of fumbles. The 13-0 score, branded on the side of Texas' mascot steer by some overzealous Aggies, gave birth to the steer's name. By using more brands and inserting a "V", Texas managed to fashion "Bevo" from "13-0."

In 1922, D. X. Bible brought his 4-4 Aggies to Austin and staged what he later termed "one of the biggest upsets in the series." The Aggies threw only two passes in the game but completed both to set up both TDs in the 14-7 shocker. Texas was 7-2 for the year.

In 1938, the Aggies went to Austin with a 3-3-1 record heavily favored over the hapless Steers, who were struggling along with a 0-8 record. The 'Horns surprised the Aggies 7-6 with the winning margin coming on their only successful PAT attempt of the year.

In 1939, the Aggies drove past Texas, 20-0, on the way to a 11-0 record and a national championship under coach Homer Norton. The next year, Norton's Aggies, sporting a 19-game winning streak and a Rose Bowl bid were stunned by the Longhorns, 7-0, when the steers scored in the first minute of play and let its defense hold the line against the defending national champs.

In 1948, an 0-9 A&M team found its first at least partial success in Memorial Stadium by playing to a 14-14 tie with the Orange Bowl-bound Longhorns.

Under coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, A&M visited Memorial Stadium in 1956 and came back winners for the only time in its history with a 34-21 victory over the 1-8 Texas squad. The Aggies rode to victory on the heroics of Jack Pardee, John David Crow, Charlie Krueger, Bobby Joe Conrad, Roddy Osborne and Lloyd Taylor.

Texas turned the tables on much the same crowd the next year when rookie Texas coach Darrell Royal directed his Longhorns to a 9-7 squeaker over an A&M team that had earlier in the year been rated No. 1 in the nation and had a bonafide Heisman trophy winner (Crow) as a running back.

In 1963, Hank Folberg took his 2-6-1 Aggies to Memorial Stadium to meet the No. 1 nationally-ranked Longhorns. After three quarters, the Aggies surprisingly had a 13-3 lead but the fourth quarter saw a gritty Steer offense and some hotly contested calls by the officials give a 15-13 victory and a National championship to Texas.

A&M's last victory on Thanksgiving Day came under Gene Stallings in 1967 when the Edd Hargett-directed Aggies won the conference title with a 10-7 upset and kept the Longhorns from sharing the crown.

Thursday's game holds all the elements of a classic battle as the SWC's No. 1 offense (Texas) meets the No. 1 defense (A&M) while the No. 2 offense (A&M) takes on the No. 2 defense (Texas).

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