

Ponies ride

Bowl fever upsets Aggies, offense suffers from dizzy spells

By PAUL McGRATH
Staff Writer

Ringo Starr's song "It don't come easy" could have been written for the Texas Aggies.

A victory over SMU coupled with the Baylor win over Texas would not have sewn up the conference race for A&M. However, things never seem to be so simple as the Ags lost 18-14.

Whether due to the "Sports Illustrated" jinx or not, the Aggies failed to look anything like the fourth-ranked team in the nation. Both offensively and defensively the Aggies played the first half like an old man getting out of bed on a cold morning. The offense would drive half the field and then fall flat on its face deep in Mustang territory.

The usually dependable Randy

Haddox missed on three field goal attempts. Meanwhile David Walker set the Ponies up with great field position with his second interception of the year right into the arms of SMU linebacker Ted Thompson.

Another example of ineptitude was the sequence following Blake Schwarz's fumble recovery on the SMU eight-yardline. Bubba Bean bobbled a pitchout and allowed Louie Kelcher to steal the ball away from him.

The defense was not doing much better as Mustang backs seemed to roam around the A&M flanks almost at will. SMU had 168 yards total offense in the first half. Besides Schwarz's play only Ed Simonini's deflection of a point after attempt salvaged what was otherwise a dreary first half.

A&M made a complete reversal the second half but it was a matter of too little, too late. "We waited too long to get started," said Jerry Honore who has scored the last four Aggie touchdowns.

The defense allowed only one first down and just 57 yards. The offense finally cranked up and put across two scores but they killed themselves doing it. It took them eight minutes to score the second six pointer when time was a deciding factor.

"It was just a long day," said Honore. "We tightened our belts, but it was just a little bit too late."

"We kind of dragged the first half," said safety Jackie Williams. "It's hard to narrow it down to one turning point."

There was a multitude of plays that lead to the Aggies demise. Missed tackles, field goals, pass interference penalties, failure to take advantage of turnovers, a safety and just overall sloppy play all contributed to deal a blow to the Aggie hopes for victory.

The strategy employed by the Aggie coaching staff leaves some questions to be answered. Why did head coach Emory Ballard replace Mike Jay with Walker after Jay made good on two third down situations and had the team moving?

Why were Honore and Jim Hartman not sent in until the second half (together they totaled 111 yards on 23 carries in their 30 minutes of play)? And why on the last

Wayne Morris sliced the A&M front wall for 112 yards on 19 carries. Another individual star for the Ponies was Oscar Roan who made one of the key plays of the game by scooping up a Morris fumble and rambling 14 steps for the first Mustang score. Shades of Carl Roaches and Baylor.

The key player for SMU was their middle guard Kelcher. He made 16 unassisted tackles and even caught

"Kelcher's good. SMU stacked their linebackers and just played good defensive football," said Dennis Smelser. Smelser along with center Ricky Seeker had the job of blocking Kelcher. Referring to the second half Smelser said "We knocked the enthusiasm out of them. We just took too long. We beat ourselves."

The defeat created some weird combinations as to who could eventually gain the SWC championship. A&M knows what they have to do. Two games remain and the Aggies will have to win both of them to be able to play on New Year's Day.

The team will just have to grit their teeth, do away with all of the mental errors and restore the health of the offense and accomplish that goal. "Don't count the Aggies out," stated Smelser, "we'll be back."

Sports shorts

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys of the National Football League waived second-year reserve linebacker Rodrigo Barnes to New England Monday.

Barnes, a former All-Southwest Conference performer with Rice, was taken off the roster following an argument several weeks ago with Cowboy Coach Tom Landry.

BUFFALO, N. Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Bills confirmed Monday that running back O. J. Simpson sprained his right ankle during the Bills' 21-9 National Football League loss to the Houston Oilers Sunday.

There was no word Monday whether he would be ready for Sunday's game against the same Dolphins in Miami.

Batt sports

A&M scoring drive did they stay on the ground when time was a vital factor? Despite two interceptions, the Aggies proved they could pass on the Mustangs, especially to backs coming out of the backfield.

These were not the only strange things to occur in the game. Snaps that slipped through quarterbacks' hands, 40 yard gains on third and long by both teams, lineman tackling split ends, and a 160 lb. quarterback making a monkey out of the second ranked defense in the nation.

Some of the Aggies played great individual games but as a team they may as well have gone to the State Fair as the Cotton Bowl. Honore, Hartman, Bean, Jay, Schwarz, and John Paul McCrumbley all played well," said safety Jackie Williams. "It's hard to narrow it down to one turning point."

SMU's field general Ricky Wesons used his quick feet and miniature size to play hide and seek with the A&M behemoths. He ended the game with only 39 yards but time and again he came up with a big play in crucial situations.

"He's smart, quick, and reacted well," said Schwarz. "He picked his holes and knew where to go."

Roaches from behind on an Aggie dippy-doodle screen pass. Kelcher and the rest of his cohorts were forever shutting the door on Aggie opportunities.

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Consol takes third in state water polo

La Marque won the state high school water polo championship Saturday at Texas A&M, beating St. Mark's of Dallas, 8-7, in the finals of the two-day tournament.

A&M Consolidated, the defending state champions, placed third, losing only to La Marque in the semi-finals.

Consolidated compiled a 5-1 record — same as for La Marque and St. Mark's — and had the most players selected for the all-tournament team. Bill Leland, David Stewart and Bill Kuvlesky were named to the first team and Bill Harper won second-team honors.

Leland shared "Most Valuable Player" honors with Vincent Travez of McAllen and Scott Harris of St. Mark's.

Joining the Consolidated trio on the first team were Juan Flores of McAllen, Don Hutchinson of St. Mark's, Mark Stern of Clear Lake and Mike Cragin and Kim DeJean of La Marque, along with Travez and Harris.

In addition to Harper, the second team included Craig Straw and Mike Straw of Humble, Bob Poirer of Clear Lake, Craig Brazer and Greg Elder of Clear Creek, Paul Locke and Bob Kingman of San Antonio Alamo Heights, Bob Logan of McAllen and Ed Joiner of La Marque.

Tim Shutt of St. Mark's was named "Coach of the Year" and received the Art Adamson Memorial Award. The La Marque team was coached by Don Boyd, an A&M graduate who received the award last year.

Consolidated opened the tournament with a come-from-behind win over Clear Lake, one of the pre-tournament favorites. The Tigers trailed 6-1 midway through the second quarter but came back to win, 10-8. They then blasted Humble, 18-5, McAllen, 6-4, and Alamo Heights, 9-5, to win their division and advance to the semi-finals.

Playing with only two hours of rest, Consolidated kept pace with La Marque in the first half of their championship bracket game, but the visitors — who got a rest break when Midland scratched from competition — broke the 2-2 tie early in the third quarter and coasted to an 8-2 win. Consolidated came back to drub McAllen again, 9-5.

TAMU Swimming Coach Dennis Fosdick, who served as tournament director, placed Consolidated on a par with the two finalists but said "they just crashed and burned" from fatigue in the second half of the La Marque game. Consolidated had split two games with La Marque earlier in the season.

Consolidated Coach Mary Leland attributed the team's ultimate downfall to lack of stamina resulting from lost workouts because of delays in the opening of the new city pool and subsequent periods in which the team was unable to practice because the pool heater was inoperative.

"It takes a lot of endurance to play six games in less than 24 hours, and our missed workouts came back to haunt us," she said. "Considering the amount of time we had in the water to prepare for this tournament, I think our boys played superbly."



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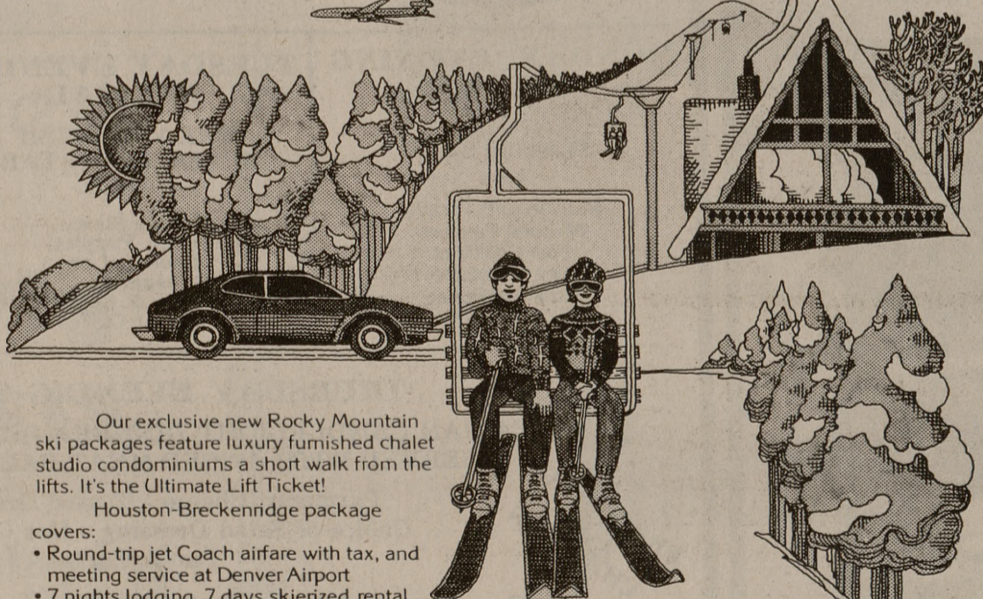
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