

# Offense sputters in squeaker

## Ag defense staves off upset

By PAUL McGRATH  
Sports Writer

Emory's empire almost came crumbling to the ground last Saturday as an insurgent Mississippi Rebel team came within inches of an upset.

The Aggies, ranked as high as third in the nation in some polls, squeaked past Ole Miss by a 7-0 count. The victory credits go to a defense that was on the field more than two-thirds of the game. Coach Melvin Robertson's 11-man wrecking crew came through with another superb performance especially in the pressure-filled final minutes.

While the defense was picking up where they left off last year, so did the Aggie offense. They managed to put the game-winner on the board on their opening drive and appeared ready to run the Rebels back to Dixieland.

After quarterback David Shipman's four-yard burst around the right side, the Aggie offense became non-existent. Despite a few fine individual efforts, the offense became as aggressive and as potent as a bowl of mashed potatoes.

Going back to last season, the Maroon and White has scored a total of ten points in the last two halfgames. Revisions were made in the backfield and offensive line to add punch to the Aggie attack. Apparently the changes were paying off as the first-teamers scored over a hundred points in a recent scrimmage.

But the old nightmares of fumbles and mis-execution came back to haunt the Ags. They lost excellent field position on a David Greeno fumble on the Rebel 45 yard-line.

Shipman got a case of the drops on the Mississippi six yard-line, blowing off scoring opportunity. The defense bailed out the offense once more after fullback Ronnie Hubby lost the ball on the A&M 32. Three plays saw Ole Miss lose seven yards before having to punt.

"I thought our defense played a helluva football game," said a visibly disappointed Emory Bellard, head coach of the Aggie gridders. Long faces were evident on the entire coaching staff, despite having won their third straight shutout home opener.

"I was disappointed in our offense and our kicking game. There wasn't any spark," Bellard said. "We looked sluggish and didn't get untracked."

Left tackle Glen Bujnoch offered an opinion from his view in the pit. "I think we relaxed a little after the first touchdown. We gave them a spark and they took it. We've got to set the pace, but today (Saturday) they set the pace."

Tom Wilson, A&M offensive coordinator, said the offense's performance "was very disappointing to all of us. The total offense, with the exception of David Shipman, did not execute."

The Aggies operated out of three basic sets, the I, the Wishbone and the Split-T but were ineffective in each formation. "On that particular day it didn't matter what set we were in," said Wilson. "We didn't block anybody."

The offense did, however, have some bright spots in the overall lethargy. Shipman provided a threat that was missing from the Aggie attack last year, that of a run-

ning quarterback. He bulldozed over two Rebels to score A&M's only six-pointer of the year.

Split end Carl Roaches showed his form as a punt returner, slipping around a wall of Maroon blockers for 32 yards on one occasion. He also grabbed two key passes from Shipman for 33 yards.

Tony Franklin brought his "sock-er" style to Kyle Field and was just short on a 56-yard attempt. He later had one kick blocked. His only extra point try was good.

"David (Shipman) played very, very well," Wilson said. Bellard concurred, saying, "I thought David played pretty solid."

Saturday's laurels however belong to the defense. "An inexperienced defense might have, no, would have folded under the pressure there near the end. Most of us have been here going on our fourth year and we didn't fold," said a prospectus All-American Ed Simonini.

"I had the jitters bad," said defensive end Blake Schwarz. "We had been waiting for it (the game) so long, 60 some-odd practices. I was a little queasy. I tell ya. It was almost too close for comfort."

The pressure was primarily on the Aggie secondary during that last-bid Rebel drive which ended on the A&M 11. A non-conference record setting crowd of 47,021 held their breaths when a Rebel receiver was overthrown while wide open in the endzone. On fourth down, Jackie Williams saved the chestnuts by knocking away the ball on a play that seemed reeking with interference.

"I was definitely going for the ball," said Williams. "Ole Miss came out to play ball today."

"I felt they were going to pass more than they did," Williams continued. "Willie (Thompson) played a real good game and the line rush was unreal. I knew he and Lester (Hayes) would both do well. It was just like old times." Thompson was the miracle-worker on Ole Miss third down pass to the endzone when he leaped to bat the ball away.

The Aggies' other All-American, Pat Thomas, slightly injured his ankle early in the game, an incident

which caused queries about why Ole Miss did not direct their passing attack at him. "When you're an All-American you can be hurt and still play a good ballgame," said Williams, Thomas' cousin and compadre in the backfield.

The defense dropped the Rebel quarterback 14 times and limited their total offense to 82 yards. Grady Wilkerson and Edgar Fields were each accredited with being in on ten tackles while Jimmy Dean followed with nine.

The defense completely dominated Ole Miss until the last drive with people like Fields, Schwarz and Robert Jackson constantly in the Rebel backfield. "They didn't realize we were going to stunt as much as we did," said Schwarz. "Their blitzbacks weren't picking up our blitzing linebackers."

Simonini summarized the game by saying, "We could have done better. It's just that simple. It wasn't the offense, it wasn't me, it wasn't the defense. It's just Texas A&M."

The Ags now prepare to meet the always dangerous LSU Tigers over in Cajun country. LSU was barely nosed out by a top-flight Nebraska

team, 10-7, in Lincoln.

Possible personnel changes in the offensive line may be in the air as Dennis Smelser and Billy Lemons are now working with the first team offense. The Aggies will face the Tigers with no critical injuries as they emerged virtually unscathed from their first contest.



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## Blocking is missing

Commentary

TONY GALLUCCI  
Battalion Sports Editor

There is always a tendency to rant and rave and throw accusations after a game such as the one played here on Saturday. More often than not the coaches have to sit back uneasily and take the blame.

I heard many comments after the game, but one which stuck is "Last year's here." But we didn't fumble the game away and it wasn't a disheartening season-ender.

Instead it was an outstanding defensive performance coupled with an inept offense. The blame should not be directed at the coaches — unless pinpointing them for not making changes earlier — but instead should be placed squarely on the shoulders of the blockers.

Mark Stanley's inability to get off a solid punt as he did so many times last year was due to a breakdown in the blocking which also allowed a Tony Franklin field goal attempt to be blocked.

Comments were also spread about the failure of Skip Walker and Ronnie Hubby to hit the line solidly but the object is to go through the line not into it. There were just not very many holes opened Saturday.

Hopefully by this Saturday the coaches will have made the necessary changes in the lineup so that accusations will not have to be leveled at anyone.

## Flag football popular

Participation in Intramural Flag Football is up 43 per cent over last year. Two hundred twenty-two teams entered before the closing date. Entries are being taken until September 16 for Tennis Singles. Bowling entries will be taken from September 15-23. Handball and Badminton entries begin September 22. To insure no one misses closing dates for entries, calendars are available in the Intramural Office, located in DeWare Fieldhouse.



Photo by Chris Statel

Here's Jackie Williams in that fourth down endzone play which had many a Kyle Field heart

stopped. Judge for yourself. Williams said he was going for the ball, referee agreed. See story above.

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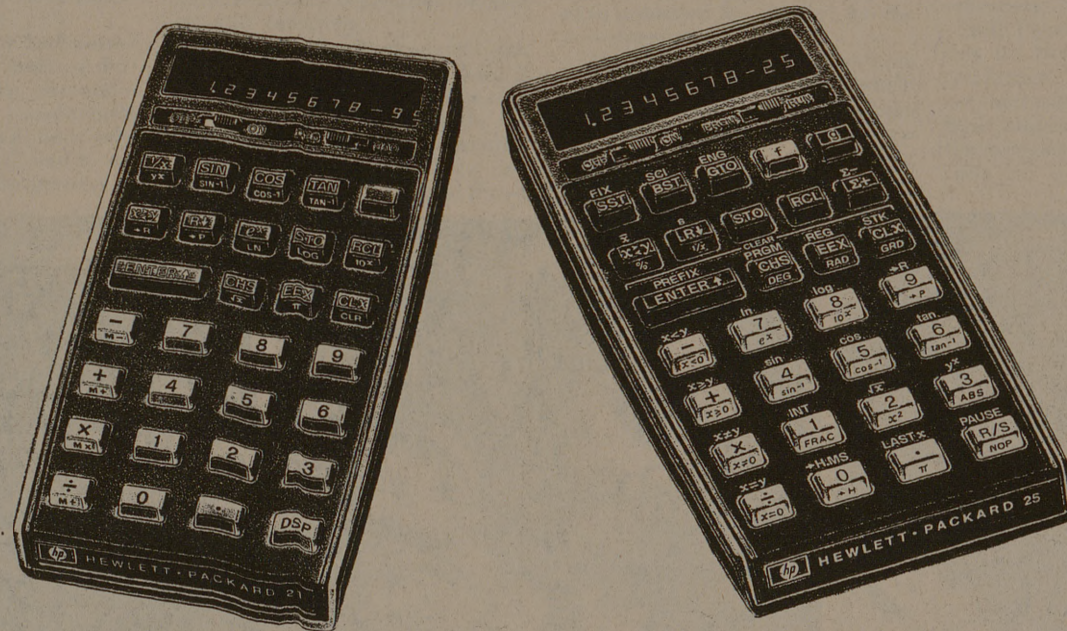


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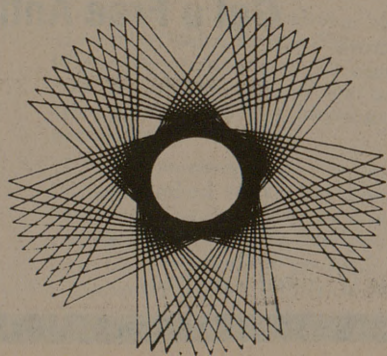
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