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By **TONY GALLUCCI**
Battalion Sports Editor
There comes a time when sportswriters must handle the criticism just like the players do all too often. Such a case is the past week, where Aggie (non-press) people have taken extreme delight in chiding the press after the LSU game. Being a member of the press has its advantages over being a player. I am about to demonstrate. You see, we writers can defend ourselves in print whether you want to read or not.
I don't plan calling everybody jerks, unless I call myself one also, I would just like to clarify some misunderstood and possibly misrepresented ideas. If you're already bored then skip to paragraph seven. The reading may be more to your liking down there.

In every available public service space, letter to the editor column or forum I have encountered this week as well as some directly related (to me) shouts of indignation, has been the recurring theme. "Where the hell are you now, you chicken-writer, now that the Aggies have proven they are for real."
The answer is right in the question. I said in my first pre-game column that I was excited that I would probably be watching the finest college football team that I would ever see. I obviously was not a doubting Thomas at that time, nor was I after the first game. But the performance of the offense in that first game left a bitter taste in everybody's mouth. Yet now the people who love A&M so much seem to blame the performance of the offense on the press. The press as a whole simply put the blame where it belonged. Those of us who had been fortunate enough to attend the Aggie workouts prior to the beginning of the season knew the potential was there. But as in the question, the Aggies merely had to prove themselves. The defense was also subject to proof: they just provided it a little earlier.
I could go on and answer some ridiculously silly charges made by those writing in, etc. but I prefer not to embarrass anyone, especially myself.
If I (I still am an Aggie) ever doubted the Aggies, then I am the turkey. I eat my words: gobble, gobble. But if you haven't doubted, then you cast the first stone.
In the past week, the Aggie offensive line has gotten just as much play as the previous week and for a better reason, they performed.
If you missed LSU, it's too bad, because it

may be forever recognized as the start of a dynasty. If I could I would've bronzed the whole schmalz and returned it to College Station. The Tigers could return the butter bowl (remember that old story) to the homeland if and when they had the guts to renew the rivalry after their most recent fall.
Illinois may be the next team to drop its rivalry with the Ags if they get a similar whipping. But Illinois is tough, and I am not throwing around the standard "don't want to make 'em feel bad" malarky. It gets to where you can't separate the "yeah they're really tough's" from the "not worth a damn's" these days. No one wants on anybody's blacklist.
But I've seen enough figures (relevant or not) to genuinely make me worry. One fact should stick in the mind of everyone though: the Fighting Illini were beating Missouri by ten at one point and lost by only ten.
If you'll remember Missouri is fifth ranked (the Bear-killers) and we're a mere eighth.
It is pleasant to know that ole Cholly Mac thinks the Ags are much better than Nebraska, who is ranked fourth.
The Illini (don't ask me I still haven't figured it out — maybe of Illinoian Iroquois Indian heritage) have a punter who can hang the ball for seven seconds. He may not get any distance or direction but you can be sure his partners will be there when it hits the ground.
They also have a super pro-prospect who will undoubtedly see some action and might start. That is Kurt Steger, a sophomore QB weighing in at 210. He's quick and, according to the information I got in the mail, was the most recruited prospect by the Big Ten.
They also have an extremely tough fullback who knows his assignments well when it comes to blocking.
But this matchup will be a bit different than the LSU hoedown (brungdown, druggedown) in that it will be the very strong Aggie defense against a good offense and the strong Aggie offense against a fair to middlin' defense. Could be lots of action.
From my seat next to the wall where the crystal ball is shaded from behind by a color TV showing replays of Aggie vs. Tiger (circa 1975) I see a faint score in lights. I will add one point to each for good luck and find my final calculation to be A&M 40, Illinois 9. My rabbit's foot is wearing out, but I don't think I'll need a new one.

Bonilla ousts starter Bostick
Associated Press
David Bonilla, a junior fullback from Corpus Christi, moved ahead of starter David Bostick Thursday as the Southern Methodist University Mustangs prepared to meet the Houston Cougars Friday in the Astrodome.
Bostick has been a two-year starter and Bonilla has never lettered.
Coach Dave Smith said, "David lost his starting job just like he gained it two years ago. Nobody wanted the job then and it looks like nobody does now."
Bostick, a junior from Fort Worth, gained 109 yards against Wake Forest three weeks ago, but picked up only 31 in a losing effort against Florida two weeks ago.
Senior fullback Pat McNeil of Killeen and junior linebacker Tim Black were listed as doubtful starters Thursday by Baylor Coach Grant Teaff.
Teaff said Black and McNeil are suffering from ankle injuries sustained in last week's 10-10 tie with Auburn.
The Bears will be at Michigan Saturday.
Ricky Wright, a freshman from Freeport, will make his third start as a halfback for Texas Christian University when the Horned Frogs travel to Lincoln to play Nebraska Saturday.
Another freshman, Raymond Woodard will be backing up senior Bobby Cowan at the other halfback position.
"I am no more nervous than before the first game," Wright said Thursday. "Going on a trip does not make that much difference, really, feel like I'm going to be in a hot game."

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Nets, Nuggets want to bolt; could be lawsuited to death

Associated Press
NEW YORK — The Denver Nuggets and New York Nets, claiming they cannot go on losing money, confirmed Thursday they want to bolt to the National Basketball Association. They immediately ran into roadblocks set up by a federal judge and their current league.
Sources high in both leagues told conflicting stories:
— That the Nets and Nuggets, convinced a merger was impossible, had decided to fight the suits that will come and try to join the NBA. They have the support of NBA Commissioner Larry O'Brien in doing so.
— That the maneuvering is a play to open merger discussions. O'Brien and ABA President John Y. Brown, long-time friends from politics, have met and discussed merger possibilities in recent months.
High ABA sources said if the Nets and Nuggets were going it alone and were successful, the two clubs and their players would face a battery of suits charging violation of anti-trust laws, breach of contract and violation of the league's constitution and by-laws.
Regardless, O'Brien, Nets owner Roy Boe and Denver president Carl Scheer issued separate but similarly and cautiously worded statements Thursday. Each statement said the two clubs had applied to the NBA. Scheer and Boe said they were losing money, couldn't continue that and that the only solution was the NBA and its television contract.
ABA Commissioner Dave DeBusschere, who reacted with anger to the announcements, said he knew nothing of the months-long dealings until Wednesday when Boe and Scheer dropped in to see him. Negotiations between Boe, Scheer and O'Brien have been going on for more than a month — Boe said months — and Brown has been aware of the talks.
Attorneys for the two American Basketball Association clubs and the NBA appeared Thursday morning before U.S. District Court Judge Robert L. Carter in New York to tell him the teams had applied for admission in the NBA for the 1976-77 season. Carter told them they couldn't do it without his approval and the approval of the NBA players' union.
"We don't understand what they're doing," said Larry Fleisher, counsel to the NBA Players' Association, who was quick to point out that neither his union nor Judge Carter have approved anything.
Announcements, rumors and threats of suit came from countless places Thursday as the ABA's two most attractive franchises went ahead with their intentions to bolt their league in a move that could seriously injure the ABA's chances of continuing in business.

Astros dying at box-office

Associated Press
HOUSTON — Home attendance for the Houston Astros this season failed to break the million mark for the first time since the Astrodome opened in 1965.
A crowd of 10,237 for Wednesday night's final home game brought the season total to 858,004 after 10 consecutive million-plus seasons.
The club record 2,151,470 was set in the first season in the Astrodome. The 1974 total was 1,090,728.
Prior to the opening of the Dome, the team played its first three National League seasons in the now demolished Colt Stadium and drew season totals of 924,456, 719,502, and 725,773.

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