

Mistakes hurt Ags

By PAUL MCGRATH
During the third quarter of the Texas A&M—Houston game, A&M linebacker Robert Jackson personally stopped a Cougar sweep, tackling the ballcarrier and an official at the same time. Seeing the referee take a spill provided almost all of the amusement Aggie partisans were to have as Houston defeated the ninth ranked Aggies 21-10 in Rice Stadium.

The surprising Cougars are now 2-0 in Southwest Conference play while A&M is 0-1.

The Aggies' sub-par performance was described by Head Coach Emory Bellard as "mediocre at best." The statistics support Bellard's comment as A&M totaled only 198 yards in offense, nearly 200 yards below their previous average. Texas A&M's other stats read like a Depression era stock report—three interceptions, five fumbles and 100 yards in penalties.

The Aggies made a succession of mental errors against the high-spirited Cougars. Safety Lester Hayes was caught out of position by UH quarterback Danny Davis allowing split end Eddie Foster to get clear for a pair of scores. Cornerback Mike Williams of A&M had single coverage on UH split end Robert Lavergne and failed to keep his eyes on the receiver, allowing Lavergne to get open for a 50-yard touchdown reception.

The defense was not alone in making mental miscues. Quarterback

David Walker pitched out to a back who wasn't there, causing a nine-yard loss. Later, with the score 14-3, a promising A&M drive was halted by an interception when split end Randall Teate ran his pass route too deep. The subsequent 44-yard return set up the Cougars' third touchdown. The A&M offense failed to take advantage of good field position in the second half (getting the ball on their own 41 and 45 and the UH 44), suffering fumbles twice on third down and short yardage.

Texas A&M Defensive Coach Melvin Robertson had warned against Houston's big play offense. "They didn't do a thing we didn't work on in practice," Robertson said. "Those plays (the three scoring passes) were the same ones they ran the seven years I was there. Same sets and everything. They just out-executed us on those three plays."

The A&M secondary can expect to see the ball in the air quite a bit this Saturday as the Aggies travel to Champaign, Ill. to play the University of Illinois. Fighting Illini quarterback Kurt Steger operates a diversified passing attack, one which struck for 132 yards against Baylor last Saturday in a losing effort. Baylor had one of the nation's best defenses against the pass in 1975.

Steger favors bootleg option plays and will scramble on occasion. Most of the Illinois pass plays are off rolls, designed to avoid the pass rush.

Steger's favorite target has been split end Frank Johnson, who has 9.4

speed to go along with good size (6-4, 215 lbs.). Tight end Marty Friel and tailbacks James Coleman and Chubby Phillips are also able pass catchers.

"They have an extremely good passing game," said Robertson. "It's very well conceived. They're going to put a lot of heat on us."

Defensively, the Illini put up an eight man front (five lineman, three linebackers) with a three man secondary. Texas A&M's Dennis Swilley will have to handle John DiFelicantio, a 6-3, 240 lb. defensive tackle who leads the Big Ten Conference in quarterback sacks.

The Illini are basically the same team the Aggies beat 43-13 last season, only wiser and more balanced says A&M defensive back Willie Thompson.

The Aggies have dropped completely out of the Top Twenty polls following the upset loss to Houston. Mental attitude certainly was a factor in the UH game as the Cougars controlled the tempo and momentum.

"It'll be interesting to see how everyone (on the A&M team) takes the loss," Thompson said. "The UH game) was a big loss, a shameful loss. I'm waiting to see how people take it... whether they'll lay down or go on and play out the season."

Reggie Williams, A&M safety, said the loss unified the team, making them feel closer to one another. "We still have a lot to prove to each other," he said. We just have to forget about last week and go on."



Battalion photo by Kevin Vemner

Hope springs eternal

Halftime found many Aggie fans viewing the band marching in its famous Block "T" formation. Many had hopes of the Ags

winning the game, but it was just not to be. A&M, behind at halftime 21-3, went on to lose to Houston 21-10.

Coogs had complete control

By MARLA GAMMON

The Texas A&M Aggies suffered their first defeat of the young 1976 football season Saturday as they were beaten by the Houston Cougars 21-10.

It was evident early who had control of the ball game as the Cougars scored two first quarter touchdowns and led at the half 21-3.

Cougar quarterback Danny Davis led the Aggies' defensive secondary apart as he completed 11 of 19 passes for 173 yards. All three of Houston's touchdowns came by means of the pass.

The Cougar defense was equally effective as they held George

Woodard, the Aggies' leading rusher, to 15 yards on 9 carries. Curtis Dickey led the Aggie rushers Saturday night as he carried 7 times for 54 yards. Most of Dickey's yardage came from runs around the end as Cougars' defensive line and linebackers did not allow any Aggie runners through the middle.

Cougar coach Bill Yeoman gave credit where credit was due.

"We worked really hard this week for this one," he said after the game. "I really appreciate the total effort of this team. We really have some super players. Playing Florida's wishbone really helped us get ready for this. Our defense was definitely

more knowledgeable of the game.

The Aggies hurt themselves most of the night with penalties and mistakes. They lost 1 of 5 fumbles and Aggie quarterbacks threw three interceptions. David Walker was intercepted once and David Shipman was intercepted twice. The Aggies were also penalized eight times for 100 yards.

The game was a disappointment for the Aggie fans in the crowd of 70,001 at Rice Stadium. The Aggies had been ranked ninth in the nation before the game and dropped from the Top Twenty in the AP poll after the loss.

Aggie head coach Emory Bellard

was also disappointed after the game.

"They did a good job and we played about as miserable as we could play," he said. "We didn't execute well on offense but you have to give the Houston defense credit. They played well. I wish there was some clever way I could put it, but there isn't. We just didn't do a good job."

Woodard summed up the team's feelings after the game.

"We just couldn't get it going," he said. "They got tougher as the night went on. We just have to stick together and do better next week. I'm confident we will."

Ali says will win within five

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Muhammad Ali, who promises he will win within five rounds, and Ken Norton, who insists to make Ali quit, will try and win their boasts Tuesday night at the Madison Square Garden.

Ali is the 8-5 favorite to win his 20th world heavy-weight championship appearance.

Another favorite is the weather, forecast to be good for the first fight at Yankee Stadium in 17 years and the first outdoor heavyweight title fight in the United States since 1962.

Should those who figure the weather be wrong, the rain date is Wednesday. Two days of rain, "and we all go to church and pray," said John F.X. Condon, the publicity chief for Madison Square Garden.

Ali is promoting the fight in association with Top Rank, Inc.

It rained in New York Monday as both fighters stayed in seclusion until the weigh-in scheduled for 11 p.m. EDT Tuesday at a mid-town Manhattan hotel.

The closed-circuit telecast to 30 nations in the United States and Canada is scheduled to begin at 9:30 p.m. EDT, with the main event set for 10:30 p.m.

"Don't be surprised if it only goes 11 rounds," Ali said at his Catskill training camp last week.

Sunday, following his final workout at a mid-Manhattan gym, the champion said, "It shall not go over five. It will be another miracle. Buy tickets."

"I'm makin' him quit. You wanna bet," Norton said at a training session. "He knows I can hurt him."

Norton rose to boxing prominence when he broke Ali's jaw and won a split 12-round decision March 31, 1973, in San Diego. Ali claimed the jaw was broken in the second round and that Norton still was not able to knock him down. Norton scoffs: "He broke the jaw in the last round."

Norton nearly ended Ali's career at Inglewood, Calif., Sept. 1, 1973. After 11 rounds, one official favored Norton, one Ali and one had the fight even. Ali won the final round and gained a split decision.

Since then, Norton went for a title shot in which he was stopped in two

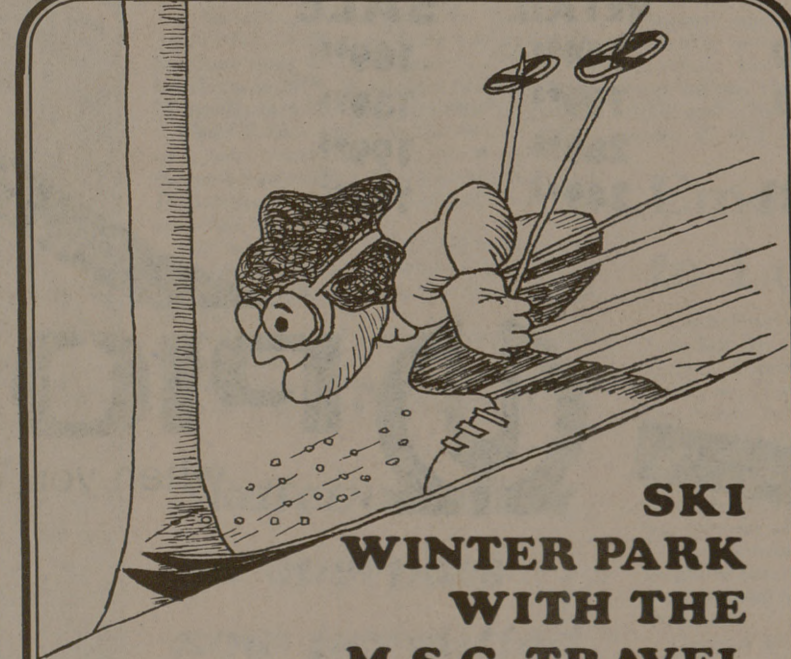
rounds by George Foreman in Caracas, Venezuela, March 24, 1974. Six months later, Ali met

Foreman and became champion a second time on an eighth-round knockout in Kinshasa, Zaïre.

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