

# Aggies lose three Cotton Bowls

By PAUL ARNETT

It was a cold, rain-swept day in Dallas back in November of '74. The setting was the Cotton Bowl; the football players were the Texas Aggies and the SMU Mustangs.

The Aggies were ranked fifth in the nation, and a victory over the Mustangs would all but clinch a Cotton Bowl berth on New Year's Day. But the victory was not meant to be, and the Aggies lost on that autumn afternoon, 18-14.

20 days and 20 nights later another cold and rainy day awaited the Aggies in Austin. The Ags needed a victory over the Texas Longhorns to wrap up the SWC championship and a trip to the Cotton Bowl.

But Bellard's bunch let that chance slip through their fingers, with two fumbles in less than a minute, fumbles that resulted in two Texas touchdowns. The final score: 32-3, and the green and gold of the Baylor Bears and not the maroon and white of the Texas Aggies advanced to the Cotton Bowl that January.

372 days and 372 nights later the Texas Aggies traveled to Little Rock with a perfect 10-0 record. The Ags were ranked second in the nation, and a victory over the Hogs would have assured them a trip to the Cotton Bowl and the right to play the Georgia Bulldogs.

Three agonizing hours later Coach Emory Bellard walked off War Memorial Field a dejected man. With his team's 31-6 loss went the Cotton Bowl, an outright SWC championship, and a probable national championship. Red and white delighted the Cotton Bowl crowd three weeks later; maroon and

white gloomily watched the festivities on T.V.

286 days and 286 nights later the Ags prepared to meet the Houston Cougars. The Aggies were favored, and the game was billed as both a first conference win for A&M and a first conference loss for the Cougs.

By the end of the first half the Ags wondered why they had even bothered to show up. Houston threw two quick touchdown passes and halted the Aggie Express before it ever built up steam. The score: 20-10.

14 days and 14 nights later A&M was eliminated from the conference race. Texas Tech raced to a quick 21-0 lead and held on to defeat the Aggies 27-16.

Since that fateful day in October the Aggies have not lost a game. With David Walker starting as quarterback the Aggie offense looks better than ever before. And conference coaches agree that right now A&M has the best team in the conference.

If A&M had won those two crucial games, the Aggies would probably be battling the University of Pittsburgh for the national title. Such a battle would pit two strong teams against one another: a team bent on using a strong rush against a team bent on stopping such a rush.

Despite the losses, Coach Emory Bellard has the best record of conference coaches for the past three years. Bellard has recorded 27 victories and only seven defeats, yet he's not yet made a trip to the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Day.

Why?

That same outstanding coach has made mistakes that have kept his

team away from greatness.

A lack of offensive variety allowed a stacked offensive line to shut down the rush repeatedly during 1974 and 1975.

But this year Bellard learned from his two-year mistake. He inserted trick plays and passed on first down to open up the offensive attack. His crucial mistake was starting David Shipman at quarterback, leaving Walker in the back-up position.

Shipman started the first five

games A&M played. The Aggies lost two of those contests. Walker got his chance against Baylor and since then the Aggie offense has performed well.

Next year A&M should again prove to be one of the best teams in the conference. If the defense can be shored-up, then the Aggies may realize their elusive Cotton Bowl dream. The Ags have played second fiddle three straight years. It is time for first chair honors come Jan. 1, 1978.

## Women slaughter Sam Houston 81-52

By CAROLYN BLOSSER  
Battalion Staff Writer

After getting off to a slow and sluggish start, A&M's women's basketball team put its offense into full gear to thoroughly crush Sam Houston State University 81-52 last night in G. Rollie White Coliseum. The Aggies' offensive attack was well balanced as Margaret Byrne, Karen Muskiet, Cindy Gough and Susan Kimbro all scored in the double figures. But it wasn't until near the end of the first half that A&M could generate much of anything. The game's opening minutes, characterized by bad passes, few rebounds, slow motion-like movement and overall sloppy play, was anything but impressive.

A big turnaround, though, occurred during the latter part of the first half as the Aggies started picking up the slow pace with aggressive playing,

good hustling and accurate shooting. Susan Kimbro looked especially impressive under the boards. The 5'10" freshman from Kyle gathered in 15 rebounds for A&M to lead the Ags in that department.

Freshman Von Bunn also made things difficult for Sam Houston State with her aggressive defensive playing and frequent ball stealing.

The Aggies made 42 per cent of their shots from the field, a great improvement over their last outing. Margaret Byrne led the way with 18 points, followed by Karen Muskiet who scored 12. Cindy Gough and Kimbro scored 11 and 10, respectively.

The win over Sam Houston brings A&M's record up to 5-3.

After a rest over the holidays, the Aggies will resume action here on January 15 against San Jacinto Junior College.

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