



Curtis Dickey (No. 22) breaks off tackle for an eight-yard gain. Dickey will need to do well in the Arkansas game if the Ags are to do well.

Kick off for the Saturday afternoon affair is 1:30.

Battalion photo by Fat O'Malley

Begin the countdown

By Mark Patterson
Battalion Staff

The countdown has begun. Though the A&M-Texas game is still three weeks away anyone near New Braunfels this weekend would have thought the game was being played this Saturday. The respective fans have already drawn their battle lines. It was as if their actions this weekend would decide the outcome of the football game. It was almost an impossibility not to be caught up in the rivalry and spirit displayed by the A&M-Texas fans this weekend at Wursthfest. Mixed among the smell of sausage cooking and the odor of spilled beer, was the constant drone of Aggie yells and Texas counter yells. Each school was well represented by loud, boisterous fans laying claim to a Southwest Conference football championship for 1977.

And unfortunately it sometimes went beyond a verbal battle. On a few occasions the yelling and festivities were interrupted by a confrontation between two fans who were squared-off ready for battle. Though fighting is unwelcomed anywhere people are enjoying themselves, it's a safe bet it will be in attendance when thousands of people consume hundreds of gallons of beer. But luckily the fighting was held to a minimum and the majority of the assaults between the football fans was verbal. I was fortunate to secure a position above the walking level, allowing me to view the congregation as it traveled in its oval path around the warehouse. And since I was wearing a "Kiss Me-I'm An Aggie" button I was greeted with the thumbs of fellow Aggies as they passed below

me. The Texas fans greeted me (with other hand gestures) with the "hook 'em" Horns sign. The Aggie fans came up with a cheer that the Texans greeted with a deaf ear. The rhyme of "Here we go. Three in a row" became one of the A&M crowd's favorite as the evening wore on. Texas, showing no originality, stuck with the traditional "We're number one." Their 35-21 victory over Houston that afternoon made the claim a little more legitimate. Anyone who has made the claim that football is a dull sport would have been overwhelmed by the Wursthfest crowd Saturday night. Aggie and Longhorn football fans have historically been bitter rivals and it was obvious by their actions and boasts this weekend. And this is only the beginning.



Paul Arnett Is playing worth it

Success is counted sweetest by those who ne'er succeed,
To comprehend the nectar requires a sorest need.
Emily Dickinson

We broke from the huddle with a high pitched, "break!" I sauntered wide right, confident that this play would win the game for my fifth grade flag football team.

Quarterback Scott Clark barked the count like a baby chihuahua. "Down, set, hup one, hup two, HIKE!"

The magic word had been spoken. I bolted to the right side of the field, then broke my pattern over the middle leaving the defender grasping at air.

Looking back over my shoulder, I saw a Bobby Lane style end over end pass falling in my direction. A surge of excitement welled up in my body as the pass neared my out

stretched hands.

But excitement was replaced with sickening despair. The ball fell through my 10-year-old fingers, bounced off my knees and skittered harmlessly to the rock-hard turf.

I had lost the game.

My father was the only friend I had for the next couple of weeks. The following day at practice my friends named me "Choke." Fear of being called a quitter was the only thing that kept me in football for five more years. Those long afternoons were the worst ones of my life.

Some 12 years later I stood behind the Texas A&M football team as the final seconds of the Michigan-A&M game ticked away. Some players shuffled imaginary dirt underneath their feet, others looked at the scoreboard in hopes that the 41-3 reading would disappear.

"This is one week I don't want to go to any classes," quarterback

David Walker said after the game. "It's really embarrassing to lose so badly. It's times like these that make me wish that I'd never picked up a football."

Shades of that fifth grade game danced in my head. I asked myself then, and I ask it now. Is it really worth it?

Here are a group of guys facing this horrible pressure week after week. A game that is supposed to be fun, has transformed into a pressure cooker. Fun has been replaced with win.

"There is nothing more glorious than the thrill of winning," coach Emory Bellard said. "Likewise, there is nothing more sickening than losing."

Bellard is not the only coach with this belief. If he and other coaches like him are to keep their jobs, then they must produce. But because of this pressure to produce, coaches throughout the country have ruined

the game of football. This is not something that happened yesterday. It occurred as coaches started recruiting. With birth of that horrible word came death of college football.

So who is to blame for this noble demise? Certainly not coaches. If they weren't under constant pressure to win, the doubt that the college football Frankenstein would have ever been born. So who is the guilty culprit?

He is you and me. Yes we are the ones, the selfish fair weather fans. The game has become a business in our hands, not Bellard's, not David Walker's, even Richard Nixon's.

Can anything be done to stop this? It wasn't worth it to me in the grade to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. I feel the same way some 12 years later.

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