

the sports

Holtz must weave magic

Arkansas offense stifled

By MARK PATTERSON
Battalion Staff

It's a shame there had to be a rerun of last Saturday's Texas-Arkansas game. Both teams played games that made the ABC team look like geniuses, having scheduled this year's annual shoot out for national television. The public couldn't have seen anything better.

But the Horns weren't ready to go drink Gatorade in the locker room yet. After the kickoff Arkansas quarterback Ron Calcagni threw a pass that was complete, but to Texas defensive back Johnnie Johnson who returned the interception to the Arkansas 22-yard line.

Four plays later McEachern threw his second TD pass in 37 seconds and Texas took a 20-7 lead into the break.

"The entire first half we didn't play well," Arkansas head coach Lou Holtz said after the game. "The second quarter was a disaster. That was

a very costly mistake we made before halftime."

Arkansas was held to 42 yards total offense, all rushing, in the second quarter while Texas rolled up 145 yards, 110 in the air. The Hogs didn't complete a pass to one of their own players in the first half, missing on eight attempts as both Calcagni and Kevin Scanlon failed to break the Texas secondary.

"The difference in the game was that Texas got its receivers one-on-one with one of our defensive backs and caught the ball," Holtz said. "When we got one-on-one they broke it up."

"And I'm not surprised Texas came out throwing the ball against us, not when they were completing them."

The Hogs went into halftime a beaten crew. But Holtz worked his magic during the break and when the Hogs returned for the second half they promptly took their first two possessions in for touchdowns and a 21-20 lead. But that would be the extent of their scoring for the day.

Their last threat came with 2:13 left in the game, trailing 28-21 with the ball on Texas' 17-yard line. Calcagni's fourth down pass was broken up by Johnnie Johnson in the end zone and Arkansas had lost another classic game with the Horns.

"Texas deserved to win the football game today," a disheartened Holtz said. "We didn't play like we were capable of playing. We had our chance to win the game at the end. We had a man open and Ron couldn't get the ball to him."

"And we were going for two all the way if we would have scored. This is a disappointing loss, but I've never had one that wasn't. We got the lead but couldn't put it

away. They made their mistakes today but because of our penalties and errors we didn't make them pay for them. And you can't hope to beat a team like them without taking advantage of their mistakes."

One reason the Hogs were ineffective against Texas was because their leading ground gainer, Ben Cowins, was held to 67 yards on 15 carries. Cowins went into the game averaging 6.5 yards per carry, having only handled the ball 60 times all season. After the game Cowins drew an analogy between this year's loss and the loss to Texas last season.

"Texas was as tough as they were last year," Cowins compared. "Last year we made mistakes and lost (13-6) and we made the same kind of mistakes again this year. We can't afford to screw up and hope to beat them. We didn't perform up to perfection and we had to have a perfect game to beat them."

"We lacked consistency on offense. We'd look good at times and then we'd fall apart. We came into the game not afraid to try anything against them. We had a good, solid game plan. We just didn't execute it well."

Arkansas defensive tackle Dan Hampton summed up the problem the Hogs' have every year against Texas.

"If we prepared for Texas like we did for any other team, like TCU or Rice, we could beat them," Hampton said. "But because they're Texas we over-prepare, get tight for the game, and we lose everything we learned. We just choke when we play them."

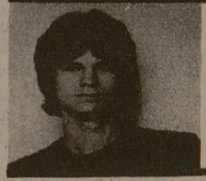
The loss drops Arkansas to 2-1 and into third place in the Southwest Conference, one game behind Texas and Houston. The Razorbacks can close the gap on the front-runners when they travel to Houston to face UH Saturday in the Astrodome. But in order to beat Houston, the Razorbacks have to put the loss to Texas behind them.

"I haven't had many losses since I came to the University of Arkansas, but I have to accept losing," Calcagni said. "We just have to put this one aside and come back like we did last year."

Cowins echoed the quarterback's thoughts. "I've had plenty of losses and I just have to take this one in stride," Cowins said. "I'm hoping we can dig deep down inside and let our pride carry us back next week."

"I learned today that I need to be more team oriented. I need to play more with the team and not as much as an individual. If I can, it can't do anything but help us from here on out."

The Razorbacks bounced back after their loss to Texas last year to finish 11-1 on the year and defeat Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl. But if they hope to duplicate last year's feat, their road back begins in Houston this week against the Cougars. It's time for Coach Holtz to weave his magic once again.



David Boggan
Sports Editor

Decisions, decisions

Decisions, decisions, always decisions. And nobody, but nobody has to make more crucial decisions at this time of the year than a head football coach. Nobody. Who else has to stand in front of screaming crowds numbering upwards of 50,000 and make split decisions that affect everyone in the stadium. These are decisions that could mean the difference between a winning or losing season, create or kill support for an athletic program and make or break some innocent gambler.

Nobody else has to be responsible for all of that. Not even the president of the United States. To hell with tax relief and the Middle East; what about top 20 polls and bowl bids? There are probably football fans out there who think that Camp David is a place where the Washington Redskins hold spring training.

What they say is true. When a team wins, all the back pats and butt slaps go to the players. When that same team loses, it's "Coach, go straight to the place of eternal third-and-long situations."

No sir, I don't envy plight of the Great American Gray-haired Football Coach. A few wrong decisions and bang—he's on the endangered species list.

After two straight losses, rumors of Texas A&M coach Emory Ballard's extinction in Aggieland have been heard in certain quarters. Tales of collections being started to pay off the coach's contract and send him on his way have surfaced. There has been a negative reaction to several decisions the Aggie coach has made lately.

There is no doubt in my mind that Ballard is an expert in his field and certainly he possesses more knowledge of football than I could ever hope to attain. But I too have to question some of the decisions the Aggie coach has made recently.

In his weekly television broadcast after the Kansas game, Ballard mentioned that the Aggies never won a coin toss last season. I believe it. Their coin toss strategy is atrocious. After winning the flip against Texas Tech and Baylor, the Aggies chose to take the wind instead of the football.

"We gave them the ball on the opening kickoff because we hoped to stop their initial drive and possibly get good field position," Ballard explained after the Tech game, "but they had a different idea." The Raiders marched downfield and kicked a 19-yard field goal after taking the initial kickoff. Baylor had a better idea. Only 29 seconds into the game, the Bears were ahead for good on a 78-yard touchdown pass from Steve Smith to Robert Holt. Common sense dictates that a team can't win a game unless it scores and it can't score unless it has the ball.

Against the Bears, the Aggies had unlimited success with their passing game. Mike Mosley consistently moved the ball in the air against the Bears. The Aggie sophomore passed for 140 yards, completing 13 of 22 passes with one interception. Doug Teague caught 8 passes for 87 yards. But even Baylor coach Grant Teaff could not understand why Texas A&M did not take advantage of its passing game more often.

"I was surprised that they didn't throw more in the second half," the Baylor coach said. "They were really hurting us with that bootleg pass in the first half."

But no. Ballard chose to go with the old reliable—and ailing—ground attack. Which brings up the biggest question in my mind. Why was Curtis Dickey, who suffered a sprained left ankle and strained right knee during Houston, allowed to return to the game twice after being helped off the field, if he should have been allowed to play at all?

"I felt like we had no choice but to play him," Ballard said. "Curtis felt like he could play."

I don't buy that. Who calls the shots, the coaches or the players? Dickey is now questionable for the Rice game. In addition to his leg injuries, the junior running back is also hampered by a groin injury.

The concern with Ballard's decision-making is growing on campus, if graduate student-senior ticket distribution is any indication. On the Monday before the Texas Tech game, 12,621 tickets were distributed. Last week, 12,212 Baylor tickets were handed out on Monday. In the rather short lines in front of G. Rollie White this Monday, 11,227 tickets were distributed.

Yes, Aggie fans are concerned about their team's performance, as they should be. As the Aggies were in the process of losing to 0-5 Baylor Saturday I was reminded of the New Orleans Saints becoming the first team to lose to Tampa Bay last year. And we all know what happened to Hank Stramm.

Longhorns prepare for tough Mustangs

United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas Coach Fred Akers said Monday the Longhorns played their best game of the year in upsetting third-ranked Arkansas 28-21 Saturday, but he said they face another tough test this week against Southern Methodist.

"That was a big win for us, but that thing is over and we're looking to SMU," Akers said. "We know anybody that plays in this conference has talent and is going to fight."

The Texas coaching staff picked quarterback Randy McEachern and wide receiver Johnny "Lam" Jones as the team's outstanding offensive players of the game and linebacker Robin Sendlein as the outstanding defensive player.

McEachern accounted for 236 yards total offense, including three touchdown passes. Jones caught two of the touchdown aeriels, and freshman tight end Lawrence Sampleton, playing with the varsity offense unit for the first time, caught the other.

Sampleton's four receptions for 108 yards against the Razorbacks made him Texas' fourth leading receiver for the season, but Akers refused to say if the Seguin freshman will nose out Les Studdard for the starting tight end job.

"We haven't set our lineups for the game, we'll have to see how things go this week," Akers said.

The Texas coach said SMU quarterback Mike Ford is easily the best passer the Longhorns have faced this year in compiling a 5-1 record, and he noted Ford passed for 253 yards against Texas last year.

"Ford is an excellent passing quarterback, and he doesn't have to have his feet set and be looking for five minutes before he throws it," Akers said. "He throws on the run, falling and off balance. If he sees a receiver, he'll usually get the ball to him."

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