

Mark Patterson

Aggies' season had fitting finish

It is only fitting that the 1978 Texas A&M football season ended in disaster, a 22-7 loss to The University of Texas on national television Friday night. The nation saw the remains of what was a typical Aggie football season.

For 11 years in a row the Texas Aggies have finished as an also-ran in the quest for the right to be the Southwest Conference's Cotton Bowl representative. This season the ending to the story was the same but the middle chapters were different.

The Aggies did not hold their fans in suspense by waiting until one of their final games before blowing the season. The team did it early, dropping a 33-0 decision to the Houston Cougars in the fifth game of the year. From then on it was just a matter of where Texas A&M would finish behind the power teams of the Southwest Conference.

Now that the 84th season of Texas A&M football has come to an end Aggies around the world will look back at 1978 as one of the most unusual, if not disappointing seasons the Cadets have endured.

NOT DISAPPOINTING IN terms of their final record — 7-4 would be welcomed at schools from Oregon to Mississippi. But four losses for a Texas A&M football team is unacceptable in the eyes of Aggie fans. Not since the 1973 season have the Aggies lost more than three games in a season. And this year's setbacks came in a season when many were picking the Aggies to finally make it back to the Cotton Bowl.

In their first four games the Aggies played like their fans had hoped they would, running up scores of 37-10, 37-2, 58-0 and 38-9. The scores of those four games may be why this season has turned out to be so disappointing for Aggie fans.

As a result of the first four games a false sense of optimism was instilled in Texas A&M fans. After all, the team was rolling over its opponents with ease. Texas A&M was unstoppable, or so it seemed.

BUT THEN CAME the trip to the Astrodome, where the Aggie's 1978 bubble was burst by the Cougars. It was an embarrassing loss, one that would have serious repercussions two weeks later.

The loss hung with the Aggies through the next week, when the Cadets were shocked by the Baylor Bears 24-6 in Kyle Field. The alumni began talking and the students began complaining. It proved too much for Coach Emory Bellard. In a move as shocking as the back-to-back losses Bellard resigned as head coach and athletic director.

The season had begun to crumble and now the team as well began to splinter. Offensive Coordinator Tom Wilson was named as Bellard's successor in hopes of salvaging what was left of the season.

Working with what he had, Wilson did as well as he could in the final five games. He led the Aggies to three wins, and more importantly, the team received a bowl bid for the fourth time in as many years. To have a 7-4 team get an invitation to a bowl is a feat in itself.

THE AGGIES HAD a chance to salvage the season, at least in the eyes of Texas A&M fans around the country, with a victory over Texas Friday night. But that dream was shattered, as was the dream for a berth in the Cotton Bowl this season. The Aggies were outclassed by the Longhorns. The Cotton Bowl berth went to Houston. The year wasn't one for dreams.

But Texas A&M has one game left, against Iowa State in the Hall of Fame Bowl Dec. 20. There is a chance that the team could end 1978 holding a 8-4 record, equal to their final figure last season.

No matter what the final win-loss record this season Aggie fans will still utter the saying that has become synonymous with their team, "Wait until next year." And those people who try to explain that next year might be a repeat of years past will live through another barrage of Highway 6 attacks and "two-percenter" accusations.

And both will be welcomed. Without them it wouldn't be football season at Texas A&M University.

Aggie notes

Volleyball team ends season

Texas A&M's men's volleyball team wrapped up an almost perfect season at Southwest Texas last Saturday.

Going into the league championship tournament, the Aggies had won the University of Texas tourney, placed third at the University of Texas at Arlington, second in the University of Houston tourney and first at the Southwest Texas State tournament. The Aggies had a season record of 25-2 going into the league championship.

The 1978 all-league team was selected by the players. A&M was represented by center blocker and spiker Bob Bardsby and center blocker and spiker Mike Malley. Other selections were Texas' Ron Hermes, strong side spiker and Keith Cassell, setter and spiker; SWTSU's Bruce Whittley, center blocker and spiker; and UTA's Andy Halford, setter and spiker.

Texas A&M was seeded No. 1 for the tourney but fell to Texas by scores of 15-13, 8-15 and 15-7 in the finals.

The outcome of the pool play (two games with all opponents) left A&M and Texas tied with 8-2 records, but A&M was 15 points behind Texas on a point differential. That placed Texas first in pool play with a bye to

the finals while A&M (second) was pitted against third place SWTSU. Although the match was won by A&M in two games by scores of 15-5 and 15-10, the games were extremely intense, with the second game lasting thirty-five minutes and four full team rotations.

In the finals with Texas, the Aggies were definitely tired but spirited. The fresh Texas squad proved too much for the Aggies however, as the Longhorns won the championship in three games.

The Texas A&M men's bowling team finished their fall season this past weekend in Houston. Competing for A&M were Dave Illingworth, Jay Chester, Mark Myrick, Paul Merriman, and Steve Wright.

A&M's first three-game match of the day was against Lamar University. The Aggies won 20 and one-half points out of 24 with Myrick having high games of 584 and high game of 240. Illingworth had second high series of 577.

The second match was against Rice University where each team won 12 points. High series for A&M was Merriman with a 601 and Illingworth had high game of 218. Merriman also had high games of

210 and 202.

The final match of the day was against TSU where the men's team performed excellently. For the second game the team had a total series of 1038, an average of 207 for five men. High series was Chester with a 653 while Myrick had a 598, Illingworth had a 571, and Merriman had a 570. High games were Chester with a 232 and Myrick with a 229.

High average for the day was Chester with a 197. Merriman was one-half out of nine and Chester and Myrick each won six points.

The men and women's bowling teams final TIBC match will be at Lamar on Jan. 27. Both teams are currently far ahead of the other schools for first place and will represent the division at the state championship in February.

The Texas A&M lacrosse team avenged the football team's loss by defeating the Texas Longhorns Saturday in Austin. The Aggies won the hard-fought contest 7-4.

The A&M offense was led by Chris Desadier and Dave McDermott who each scored two goals and Ben Neal, Guy Grosgebauer and Brian McDermott each scoring

once. The defensive effort was led by goalie Jay Cooke.

Texas A&M is now 3-0 this season. The Aggies have also defeated SMU and Houston. They travel to Waco Saturday to play Baylor. A win there will assure Texas A&M of the pre-season pick as league champions of the Southwest Conference.

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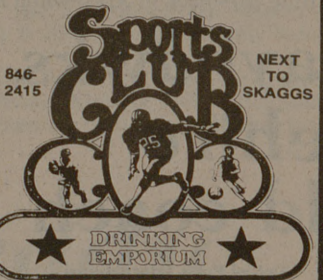
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Landry to rest key players

United Press International
DALLAS — With the division title neatly wrapped up for Christmas, Dallas coach Tom Landry said Tuesday he would be resting some of his front-line players during the final two regular season games.

But, Landry said, not at the expense of winning.

Winning is something the Cowboys have gotten used to again during the past month and Landry does not want it to stop before the playoffs.

"We're a contender now," Landry said Tuesday. "Four or five weeks we didn't act like one. But we are in a position to make a run for it now. I think it is important over the next two games to maintain the momentum."

There are not many clouds on the current Dallas horizon. Fullback Robert Newhouse, who has missed two games with a hairline leg fracture, will be held out of next Sunday's game against Philadelphia but should be ready to meet the New York Jets in the regular season finale.

If there is any hint of a problem, it has to do with a sore finger on the throwing hand of quarterback Roger Staubach.

"Roger is still having a little trouble with his finger," Landry said.

"We will curtail a little of his passing in practice this week. But he will be ready to start Sunday."

Just how concerned is Landry over Staubach's ailing digit?

"It really doesn't overconcern me," he said. "It's something that gets sore. If he hits it on a helmet or on a wrong spot it could be bad. Now it's just a matter of having some swelling after a game. It usually subsides during the week and he is ready to go on Sunday."

"How much it affects his throwing I couldn't say and, of course, he wouldn't say himself. I don't think it bothers him a whole lot."

"It's not a chronic thing. It hasn't been really severe. It's just the swelling in one joint that makes it sore and keeps it sore. Just the throwing of the ball doesn't bother him, but it is hard to pass the ball that many times without hitting somebody with your hand. That's what kind of triggers it."

Landry, however, does not plan to hold Staubach out of action, although his quarterback might wind up on the sidelines earlier during a game than he normally would.

"I might be quicker to substitute players than I have in the past," said Landry, whose team wrapped up the NFC East title with a 17-10 win over New England last Sunday.

"We will probably work our backup people more like (running back) Alois Blackwell, who hasn't played a whole lot."

"But I wouldn't jeopardize our chance to win. I think it's important to win."

Moncrief is only 'triple' remaining

United Press International
This is the fourth in a series of articles profiling Texas A&M's 1979 Southwest Conference basketball opponents.

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Things may not be quite as exciting as basketball season as they were a year ago around the University of Arkansas.

It's not all that often that a team has the chance to be one of the final two teams playing for the NCAA title and that's what Arkansas did this year — eventually capturing first place in the Southwest Conference's most historic year of competition.

Two of the three men who brought basketball success to the Razorbacks have moved on to other things, leaving Sidney Moncrief behind to try to act as the glue that will hold a young team together.

But Sidney Moncrief is pretty good glue.

With Moncrief — if he stays healthy — we are not going to be a team," said Arkansas coach Bill Sutton.

But just how good can Arkansas be with the loss of Ron Brewer and Kevin Delph? That's what Sutton is trying to find out these days.

It may not be as fun to coach this year," Sutton said. "But we have made a lot of progress. The trouble is that we have already been plagued by injuries."

Chris Bennett, a junior who figured to be a starter for Arkansas this year, is now questionable with a knee injury. But returning center Steve Schall, although perhaps not 100 percent following an operation during the off-season, is making progress and probably will be in the lineup.

"We have more question marks than at any time since I've been at Arkansas," said Sutton. "We've had to do a lot of teaching during our workouts. It's been boring to Sidney and the older players. We are working them harder and longer than at any time since the first year we were here."

Moncrief, whose spectacular slam dunks and leaping rebounds were a highlight in Arkansas' 32-4 season last year, admits workouts have been a little slow.

The coach is having to stop practicing a lot of times to tell people how to do things," Moncrief said. "Last

year things just flowed smoothly. But I don't see myself as having to carry the load. We have a lot of guys who can score on this team."

"Last year everybody expected us to be a good team and to go to the final four. Now, if we can do it again when people are not expecting it, it would really be something."

Sutton is counting on his school's recently acquired winning tradition to help the Razorbacks this year.

"We are not a good ball handling ball club right now," he said. "But we can be competitive. We are going to have to mature, we are going to have to have two or three newcomers come in and play consistently well and we have to have Schall healthy."

"Because of the renovation in

Barnhill Fieldhouse (which will hold 9,000 this year) we are having to travel to other gyms to practice."

"But that is what we did two years ago and we won 26 games. Maybe

that is what we need to give us mental toughness."

The Razorbacks presently have a 1-0 season record, having defeated Oklahoma 80-74 earlier in the week.

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