

This weekend — Texas

A&M, Hector knock off TCU, 13-10

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Battalion Staff

After a dry spell whose length varied last summer's heat wave, Texas A&M dipped in the well Saturday and brought up some surprise surprises to hold off TCU 13-10 in a showdown for last place in the Southwest Conference.

In contrast, the last home game A&M in 1980, had been billed as an offensive show featuring plenty of scoring, but that failed to be the case with the winning margin coming out to be a 21-yard David Hardy field goal. In fact, the majority of the Aggies' points were provided by the sophomore placekicker who booted two field goals and an extra point.

The other Texas A&M offensive highlights of the day were provided by sophomore tailback John Hector, who picked his way up and down the field for a career-high 81 yards on 37 carries. He wound up only four carries shy of the single-game record set by Mark Green in 1971 against SMU.

That performance also leaves Hector only 91 yards away from gaining 1,000 yards for the season. He would conceivably reach that mark with a good game against Texas in Austin Saturday.

It was Hector who became the centerpiece of the new Aggie split back offense unveiled by Head Coach Tom Wilson against the Horned Frogs. The formation is not really new to Texas A&M, since the team had practiced it last spring. However, its use had been nonexistent until the TCU contest.

We are now a split back team and will be a split back team next year," declared Wilson. "It is better suited for our personnel — with backs like Hector, (Earnest) Jackson and (Thomas) Sanders and I could not see wasting these last two games when we could be preparing for the future. Instead, I decided why wait, we'll give them

two spring trainings to work on it. "Not that I am throwing out this season, but we haven't really been too productive out of the T this year either. This is something we've needed to do for some time."

Wilson noted that his squad had tried to use the split back attack at the beginning of the year, but the ensuing problems with injuries and dismissals had caused a shuffling of players, especially in the offensive line. That forced the coaching staff to stick with the I since the team was more familiar with it.

Despite the sudden change, the Horned Frogs, who finished with a 1-7 conference record and 1-10 overall, didn't seem to be very fazed. They held the Aggies to one first down on their initial possession and managed to eke out a 3-0 lead until Texas A&M tied the game just before halftime.

"I was surprised to a degree," said TCU Head Coach F.A. Dry. "But we have faced it this year and it didn't appear to be upsetting to our youngsters."

That might not have upset Dry, but there were other incidents on the field that did bother him. Perhaps the most frustrating came late in the game when Frog offensive tackle Bill Butler was ejected and linebacker Kelvin Newton was later reprimanded.

Butler's ejection came after TCU quarterback Steve Stamp had tossed a 34-yard touchdown pass to flanker Phil Epps with 3:24 left in the fourth quarter. During the successful conversion attempt, the Frogs were penalized for a personal foul and Butler was supposedly ejected for something he said. The 15 yards were assessed on the kickoff.

Then, as the Aggies tried to hold their lead, Hector was dropped for a three-yard loss on a second down and eight play. The play was nullified by offsetting penalties and it

looked like the down would be played over.

Then the flak really hit the fan as TCU was penalized another 15 yards on a personal foul call because of something Newton allegedly said. That meant an automatic first down for Texas A&M.

Analysis

and helped wipe out any chance the Frogs had of getting the ball back. Incensed, Dry protested to officials, but it did no good.

"And play late like that is a big play," Dry sighed later. "It had a definite outcome on the game. They (the officials) said he (Newton) said something after the play, but they never said what he said." The penalties merely capped what had become a disappointing day for the Frogs. Their vaunted passing attack led by Stamp suffered all day under the rainy weather and only picked up 140 yards.

As usual, the TCU running game was almost nonexistent and accounted for only 94 yards. For his part, Stamp completed 12 of 23 passes but also threw two interceptions.

"It wasn't so much the rain as the wet ball," said Stamp. "I just couldn't grip it and force the ball in there like I usually can. The ball was really slick."

Meanwhile, Aggie quarterback David Beal was having problems throwing the ball too, but he had a strong running game to take up the slack. Texas A&M picked up 347 yards on the ground, including 52 by Jackson as well as Hector's effort.

"We controlled the ball well in the first half and we ran the ball well," said Beal. "That's what we had to do in the second half and that's what we did. I ran the split back

offense in high school and I felt real comfortable with it in the second half. I thought we did real well with it after running it only one week." There's no doubt ball control was in effect the first half. After a scoreless first half, the Aggies mounted a long drive to the TCU eight-yard line, but a 25-yard Alan Smith field goal attempt was blocked by Frog safety Ken Bener.

Following TCU's 36-yard field goal, Hardy kicked his 28-yarder with 12 seconds left to make the halftime score 3-3. Then came a dramatic 99-yard drive sparked by Beal's 44-yard pass to Jackson from his own endzone. The Frogs had apparently expected the run after nailing a punt on the Texas A&M one.

That drive was capped by a 31-yard scoring sprint by Hector. The Aggies made it 13-3 four minutes later thanks to Leandrew Brown's fifth interception of the year. Brown returned the ball 12 yards to the Frog 35, but the drive stalled and Hardy kicked a 21-yard field goal.

TCU came back on Stamp's pass to Epps, but as noted earlier, couldn't get the ball back. Beal then cemented the game with an "ad-libbed" play as the Ags ran the clock out with 1:23 left.

"We made the play (a bootleg) up," said Beal. "I noticed the backside defense had no consideration for me, so I talked to Coach Wilson about it and we decided to fake to Johnny (Hector) and I would carry the ball."

Beal's 12-yard run on the crucial third and seven play at the 50 gave the Aggies a first down and the game.

"It feels great to win a game; it's been a long time," said Wilson. "I think the big difference today was that our defense held a good TCU team to 10 points. Our players have overcome a lot of adversity and the attitude continues to improve. Today, I think we carried on where we left off in the second half against Arkansas."

Now 2-5 in conference play and 3-7 for the year, the improved Aggies still face one more tough match when they take on Texas (7-3, 4-3) in the traditional season-ending game Saturday in Austin.

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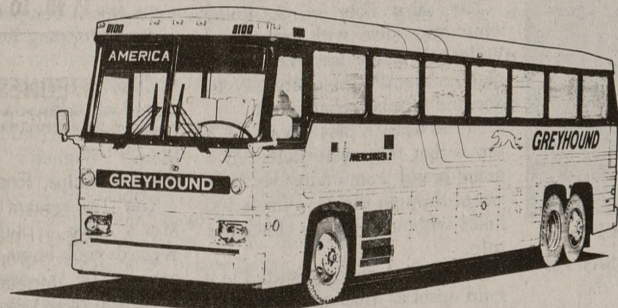
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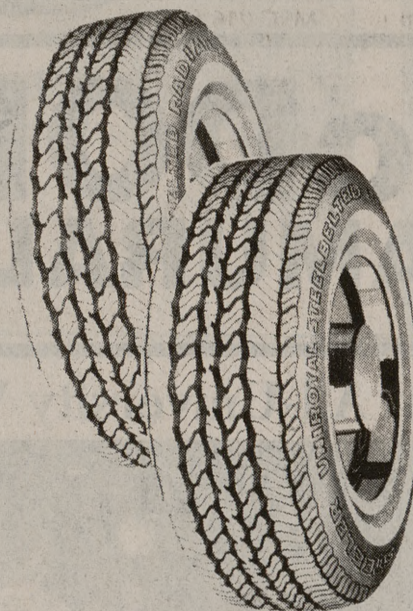
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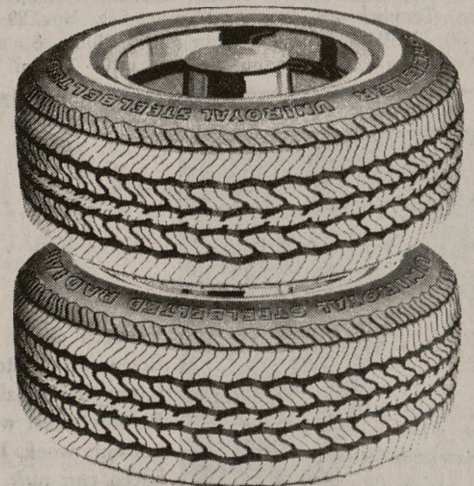
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