

Sports

Second one-point win of '81 season

Aggies take cardiac win over Tech

By RITCHIE PRIDDY
Sports Editor
And they call the St. Louis Cardinals cardiac?

Call it what you will, the Texas A&M 24-23 victory over Texas Tech Saturday night in Jones Stadium in Lubbock was anything

but dull. The Texas A&M Aggies went to Lubbock prepared to play a tough Texas Tech team in what had all

the makings of just 'another' exciting game in the young 1981 season.

The result added years to the lives of Aggie and Red Raider players and fans alike — not to mention the coaches.

The Red Raiders, under first year coach Jerry Moore, came out of the firing blocks early in the game and appeared ready to hand the Aggies their second loss of the year — their first in the ever-important Southwest Conference race. On more than one occasion it seemed that just might happen.

The Aggies held the Raiders on the opening series of downs and took over at their own 29-yard line. The first two plays of the series each netted a first down and the Aggies seemed to pick up right where they left off last week against Louisiana Tech.

Tight end Mark Lewis, used sparingly thus far this season, took quarterback Gary Kubiak's hand-off and raced around left end for 11 yards and a first down at the 40. Kubiak then hit Whitwell for 15 yards and another first down at the Tech 45. From there on, however, Tech shut the Aggies down — until their next offensive series.

Following a 52-yard Buzzy Sawyer punt Tech quarterback Ron Reeves teamed up with I-back Anthony Hutchison and took the Raiders 80 yards in 13 plays and a touchdown. Reserve I-back Robert Lewis ran the ball in from the 4 for the score. Tech's lead was brief, however.

After Jesse Garcia's kickoff into the endzone the Aggies were eager to show the Raiders that they weren't going to have an easy time of the game.

On first down Kubiak handed off to running back Johnny Hector who took the ball up the middle through the Raider line and 80 yards to paydirt.

"I didn't think it was going to go that distance. I ran into the back of one of my linemen and I thought somebody was going to catch me from behind," Hector said. "After I got into the open field and was sprinting I was thinking that, 'well, I've never been this distance before.'"

Tech fumbled on their next possession at their own 27 and line-backer Will Wright recovered for the Aggies, giving them a chance to take the lead. Place-kicker David Hardy connected on a 28-

yard field goal and give the Ags a 10-7 lead with 2:43 left in the first quarter.

The score remained 10-7 until 1:29 left in the half when Reeves and Hutchison again led the Raiders 80 yards in 10 plays. This time Hutchison took a Reeves pitch and scampered around right end for the score. It was Hutchison's last play of the game as he suffered a slight hamstring pull on the run.

The Raiders held the Aggies and got the ball back with 18 seconds left in the half. Reeves passed long to split end Leonard Harris, who was interfered with, giving the Raiders new life on the Aggie 7-yard line with no time remaining. The half could not end on the penalty and place-kicker John Greve connected from 24 yards out for a Tech 17-10 halftime lead.

Although the Aggies outgained the Raiders in the first half (241 yards to 218 yards) the Raiders took a seven-point lead into the lockerroom.

The Aggies tried several things offensively but Tech somehow seemed to rise to the occasion and stop the big plays.

The Aggies came out in the second half and quickly made some mistakes that could have easily cost them the game.

On second down at the A&M 30 running back Earnest Jackson fumbled the ball and Tech recovered. Seven plays and 35 yards later Tech was again on the scoreboard when Reeves hit wingback Renie Baker with an 8-yard scoring pass.

On the next offensive series Kubiak threw the ball up and free safety Tate Randle collected his second interception of the night. However, three plays later line-backer Bobby Stroger intercepted Reeves' pass and the Ags were back in business at the Tech 44.

"I turned around and it was there," Stroger explained. "We were running our cover three (zone) defense and I was in the right spot at the right time."

After the turnover the Raider defense stiffened and shut the Aggies down on fourth-and-three at the Tech 37.

On their next possession the Aggies drove 74 yards in 10 plays

to pull within six points of Raiders.

The Hector and Jackson came to stage in that drive. First down Jackson hit for 22 yards. Hector followed with a first down and a first down at the A&M. Kubiak then hit Jackson for 12, a first at the 49. Jackson again set up the middle for nine yards for Tech 42. Two plays later Hector went around right end for 11 yards to the 20. Following a Tech penalty reserve running back Thomas Sanders went off right tackle for yards and the score.

The Aggies held and took the ball at their own 28 following a 61-yard punt by Maury Biles and drove to the Tech two before they ran out of gas.

The Ags had four shots at a goal, three times going up the middle. On fourth-and-four the Raiders stopped two yards short.

The Raiders took over but excitement wasn't finished yet. On fourth-and-eight from the own two Danny Davis ran through and tipped Buford's pass. The result was a 22-yard pass which gave the ball to the Aggie Tech 26. Five plays later Aggies took a 24-23 lead with Hector scoring from two yards out.

With four minutes remaining the game Reeves brought the Raiders to the line of scrimmage his own 10.

On first down he hit tight end Curt Cole for 14 yards over the middle and a first down at the Tech went to the shotgun formation in the remaining time — something used sparingly and effectively during the game. Reeves next pass was incomplete as a host of Aggies were in pursuit. However, on third-and-ten Reeves' pass was tipped to free safety Chris Brown into the arms of wingback Bryan Williamson for a 20 yard gain and a down.

However, the Aggie defense rose to the occasion and stopped the Raider drive as cornerback Greg Williams picked off an overthrown Reeves pass and returned it 46 yards to the Tech 15 with 1:11 left in the game.

The Aggies appeared to have the game iced when Hardy connected on a 24-yard field-goal attempt. Hardy missed the kick, much to his disbelief, and the Raiders took over at their own 20 with 2:08 left.

Reeves went long on first down and Davis intercepted out of bounds. On second down Reeves hit Smith for 18 yards and a first down at their own 38. The Aggie defense, pressuring Reeves all night, forced him out of the pocket and he overthrew Baker.

On second down, again under heavy pass rush, Reeves missed. Williamson and the Raiders were facing a third-and-ten situation — something they couldn't overcome.

Reeves next pass, intended for Williamson, was low and out of reach. On fourth-and-10 with 1:11 left in the game Reeves' pass skimmed off the hands of Baker and ended the threat.

Wilson, although disappointed in his team's offensive breakdown, was, nonetheless, proud of his players:

"We played a very poor game. We did not take advantage of a lot of opportunities that we had, but, at the same time, it was a win. This game says a lot for our players and I'm proud of them."

Wilson pointed out the lack of scoring punch in the Aggie game line offense and breakdown in the kicking game. Something, he said, would not happen again.

Hector and Jackson combined for 240 yards rushing on 28 attempts. Hector alone had 164 yards on 16 carries but it was Jackson Moore who was concerned about the game.

"I kept seeing Jackson get hit hard and just keep coming back for more. That's a sign of a good football team."

"Texas A&M is the best football team we have faced this year. They are a good, legitimate football team. When you can line up and pound on people and keep the ball away from the offense as they did us you are going to be good."

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