

Sports

Aggies travel to Waco to meet feisty Baylor

By RITCHIE PRIDDY

Sports Editor
The Texas Aggies invade the confines of Baylor Stadium Saturday in what can be billed as a must game for both sides.

The Bears are coming off an impressive showing against undefeated SMU Saturday. Although they lost the Bears were closer to the Ponies than the 37-20 score indicated.

The Bears have fallen on hard times this year and are 3-3 on the year, 1-2 in the all-important conference race, and they desperately need another conference victory soon to keep them in any kind of a bowl picture.

Meanwhile, the Aggies are 4-1, 2-0 in conference play, and need a win to keep their string of victories intact for a shot at a bowl bid. A win over Baylor this weekend would help things tremendously.

Baylor, last year's Southwest Conference champion, hasn't had the offensive punch that was characteristic of last year's 10-2 team.

Through six games the Bears have averaged 361 yards in total offense, 159.6 through the air and 201.2 on the ground, good enough for sixth place in the conference.

Senior running back Walter Abercrombie is currently in seventh place in rushing in the conference with 433 yards on 106 carries, an average of 72.2 yards per game, 4.1 per carry.

Abercrombie has traditionally been tough against the Aggies. As a freshman he rushed for 207 yards against A&M. His sophomore year he ran for 137 yards, and last year he had 143 yards.

Abercrombie will most likely be a marked man Saturday.

Dennis Gentry, the second half of last year's SWC's most productive backfield, has 370 yards on 72 carries, good enough for 10th place in the conference.

Last year that same backfield averaged 296.9 yards per game to lead the conference in rushing.

The Bears have lost the majority of their offensive linemen to graduation and starting younger players accounts for their lackluster offensive showing thus far.

Just who will start at quarterback for Baylor remains a mystery. Jay Jeffery is the regular but he had his share of problems against the Mustangs and head coach Grant Teaff pulled him for David Mangrum.

Jeffery is better at handling the run but inconsistent at passing, whereas Mangrum is better known for his passing.

Teaff said he would not announce who'll start until Friday.

The Bears return Gerald McNeil at split end and Alfred Anderson at wing back, two excellent players who can both run and catch. McNeil, at 5-7, 143, also returns punts.

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The Aggies are second in total offense with an average of 392.2 yards per game, 134 through the air and 258.2 on the ground. SMU is the offensive leader with an average of 419.6 yards per game.

Quarterback Gary Kubiak is currently ninth in passing, but third in total offense with 165.2 yards per game. Jeffery is fourth with a game average of 154 yards.

Defensively A&M is fifth, giving up an average of 320 yards per game. Baylor is sixth with 338 yards.

Against the rush A&M is fourth, giving up an average of 92.8 yards per game. Aggie opponents are averaging just 2.4 yards per carry. Baylor is sixth against the rush with a 172 yard average, giving up 3.4 yards a shot.

Their defense is inexperienced but it has made a great deal of

improvement. They had a much more solid defensive effort against SMU," head coach Tom Wilson said.

Wilson said that the Aggies have had a good chance to see the Bears this year as the Aggies have followed them in three games. Baylor played Louisiana Tech the week before the Aggies did, barely hanging on for a 28-21 victory. The Aggies beat the Bulldogs 43-7.

The Aggies also followed the Bears with Texas Tech. Baylor beat the Red Raiders 28-15 in Waco. A&M beat them 24-23.

Also the Bears played Houston the week before A&M did. Baylor

was demolished by the Cougars 24-3. A&M beat them 7-6 last week.

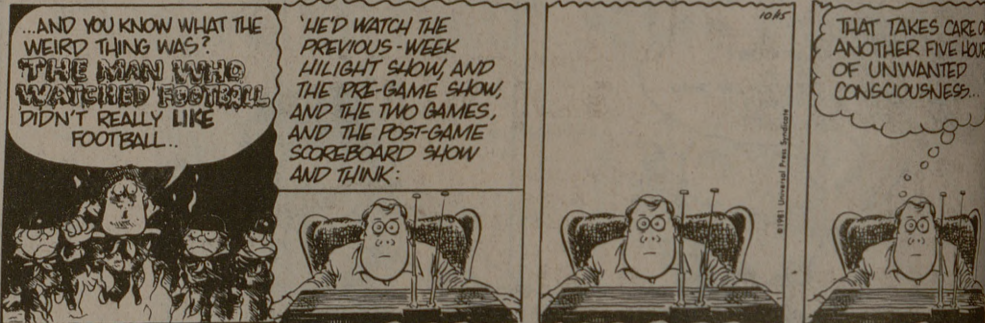
Wilson said that Baylor is a good team, despite their 3-3 record, and will most likely play the Aggies their finest game this year, something the Bears seem to do a lot against the Aggies.

Weather reports indicate a possibility of rain during the game, something that has become somewhat of a tradition of the Baylor-Texas A&M football game. So it might be a good idea to take the necessary precautions.

There are plenty of good tickets remaining for the game and will be on sale until 4 p.m. Friday.

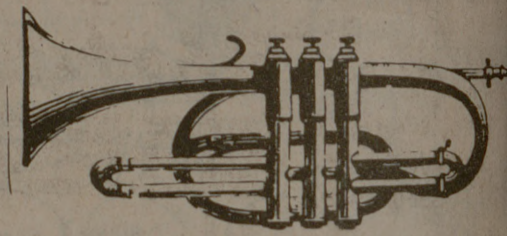
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by Jeff Millar & Bill Hill



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Martin, Piniella still confident

NEW YORK — He would've had to be deaf not to hear them and there isn't a thing wrong with Billy Martin's ears.

"Goodbye, Billy. Goodbye, Billy," they mocked him and his youthful Oakland A's only two outs away from a humiliating 13-3 back-crusher at the hands of the New York Yankees. "We hate to see you go."

Many of those in the crowd of 48,497 serenading Martin at Yankee Stadium after Wednesday's lopsided defeat, which left the A's a single game away from elimination in the American League's final playoff, were the same people who had given him such a warm, rousing ovation when he was introduced before Tuesday night's opening contest.

Martin couldn't possibly miss hearing them sarcastically telling him goodbye now, the obvious implication being his A's were dead even though they were going back home to Oakland for the remaining game or games, but if the suddenness with which the fans had turned upon him at all, he didn't allow it to show.

"That don't bother me," he said expressionlessly. "It ain't over yet. We'll win tomorrow and the next day and then we'll see who'll be singing that song."

Craig Nettles accounted for the most damage with his seventh-inning homer and three singles while Jerry Mumphy chipped in with a ground-rule double and three singles and Dave Winfield a double and a single, but it was the seldom used, 38-year-old Lou Piniella who really settled things with his three-run homer in the fourth after replacing Reggie Jackson in right field an inning earlier. Jackson had been forced out by a calf injury.

The Yankees, who trailed 3-1 at one point, were ahead 4-3 in the fourth when Piniella produced his three-run shot into the right field seats off righthander Dave Baird.

Piniella was batting in the clean-up spot. More than once during the 1978 season, George Steinbrenner would call Martin, managing the Yankees at the time, and urge him to bat Piniella fourth and use him against both right-handed and left-handed pitchers. Martin would usually disagree.

When the A's manager saw Piniella in the on-deck circle waiting to hit his first time up in the third Wednesday, he kidded the veteran Yankee outfielder by hollering over at him, "The boss' buddy has his dream."

Piniella merely laughed. Nor did he show any hard feelings toward Martin after the game.

"Billy is OK," he said. "He helped us get on our winning ways when he was here. He showed us how to play with intensity."

But Piniella got into only 60 games with the Yankees this year, usually as a designated hitter or pinch hitter, but the fans here still love him. They hollered for him to come out of the dugout and take a bow after his homer as some of the other Yankee players do, but he declined.

"I take baseball as a profession, not as show business," he explained later. "I don't believe in curtain calls. I don't say it's wrong if other guys want to do it but it's not my way. Why embarrass the other ballclub? Why embarrass the pitcher?"

Piniella said he was grateful to Yankee Manager Bob Lemon for using him after Jackson found he was unable to continue.

"I appreciated the fact that Lem had confidence in me to put me in right field," he said. "There were a lot of other people he could have put in instead of me."

During the past winter, when he was recuperating from an attack of hepatitis, Piniella thought of quitting. He was discouraged and that same feeling returned when after the strike was settled in July and he was told he wasn't going to play the outfield anymore.

"That perturbed me," he admitted. "I can still play. I think I can help a lot of clubs."

That's for sure. Just ask Billy Martin.



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