

# Sports

## SWC tie-breaker pits Aggs against Mustangs

By FRANK L. CHRISTLIEB  
Battalion Staff  
The Texas Aggie football team has a streak on the line in Saturday's game with the SMU Mustangs. If Head Coach Tom Wilson and the Aggies have their way, two things will happen in Kyle Field: the streak will remain intact

and Texas A&M will be alone atop the nine-team Southwest Conference.  
The Mustangs, entering the game with a season record of 6-1, 3-1 in the SWC, haven't won a game in Kyle Field since 1967.  
Although Ron Meyer's SMU squad isn't eligible for post-season

competition, the Mustangs can retain some credibility by winning the 1981 conference championship.

However, the Aggies plan to stop SMU in that quest by defeating the Mustangs in this weekend's SWC first-place tie-breaker. While both have identical 3-1 SWC records, Texas A&M has an overall record of 5-2.

SMU's first loss of the season last week to the Texas Longhorns didn't completely dampen the Mustangs' spirits, but the 9-7 score indicates the toughness of the game. Meyer said his team knows the Aggies' strengths and will be ready for them.

"We're down, but it won't be tough to get back up," Meyer said. "A&M is going to be tough. We'll come back and play hard, just like the Longhorns did after they got beat by Arkansas (42-11 two weeks ago). We have too much competitive instinct."

"We're still in the race, but saying that after such a loss is like drinking a quart of buttermilk. We'll take this loss and build from it. A&M has some momentum after the Rice game and they know that they have a chance to be in Dallas on Jan. 1 (for the Cotton Bowl). We're standing in their way and they'll be fired up," Meyer said.

While the Aggie offense, averaging 398 yards a game, is led mainly by quarterback Gary Kubiak, fullback Earnest Jackson and tailback Johnny Hector, the Mustangs also rely on a talented quarterback and two strong running backs. The Mustangs are led by tailbacks Craig James and Eric

Dickerson, who as juniors already rank numbers three and four on the all-time SMU rushing list. Quarterback Lance McIlhenny also strengthens an SMU offense that averages 371 yards a game.

The Mustang defensive unit is anchored by end Eric Ferguson, free safety James Mobley, tackle Kevin Chaney and tackle Harvey Armstrong. Mobley said the Aggies' offense will have to be stopped in its tracks for SMU to win.

"They put a lot of points on the board against Rice and Kubiak had a field day," the senior said. "I like to play against a team like that because we're a big-play defense and there are more chances for turnovers. It'll be a good test because they can do a lot of things."

"You've got to worry about Kubiak passing and running, Hector running and Jackson running. They can hit you with a lot of things," Mobley said.

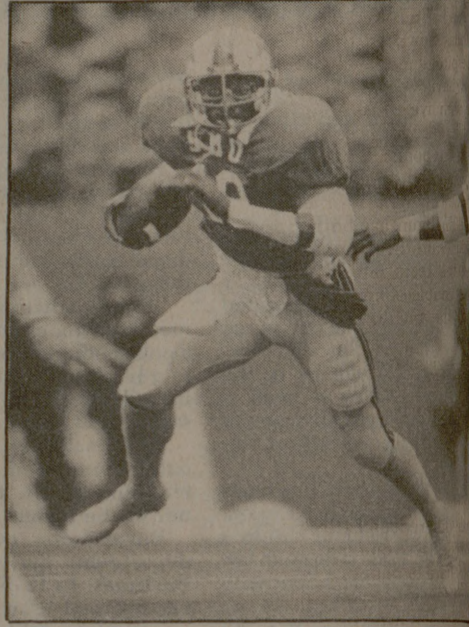
Ferguson still remembers last year's 27-0 Mustang win over the Aggies in Dallas, and hopes that he and his teammates can repeat their strong performance.

"Two things stick out in my mind about last year's game against Texas A&M: the specialty team play and Johnny Hector," Ferguson said. "Our specialty teams won the game for us (compiling 255 yards in returns). And Hector had a real good game (rushing for 126 yards). He ran hard, but the Aggies beat themselves in that game."

"Once last year I remember three or four guys hit Hector and he just folded up like he was in a ball and stuck out his hand and



Craig James



Eric Dickerson

came back up running. You have to tackle him, you can't just go up and bump him," Ferguson said.

In the 1980 game, the Aggies outgained the Mustangs in first downs 17-16 and 273-257 in total offense. However, two punt return touchdowns, two field goals by Eddie Garcia and a touchdown pass from McIlhenny to Mitchell Bennett gave the Mustangs the shutout.

If running backs Dickerson and James are in the starting backfield as they were in the 9-7 loss to Texas, the Aggies will have to shut down a rushing duo that has gained 1500 yards through the first seven games of the season.

The Mustangs are averaging 265 yards a game on the ground, while totaling only 106 yards passing each game.

The Texas A&M defense has been effective against the rush, giving up only 105 yards rushing each game, along with 222 yards passing. The breakdown of the Aggies' 398-yard a game offensive attack includes averages of 235 yards rushing and 163 yards passing.

Kubiak, whose 1,143 passing yards rank him 10th in the nation, has thrown for 10 touchdowns during the first seven games of 1981. His passing total is the most by an Aggie quarterback since

Edd Hargett led Texas A&M to the Cotton Bowl in 1968, passing for 2,321 yards.

The junior quarterback's elite wide receiver has been split between Mike Whitwell, who has caught 497 passes for 497 yards.

In Saturday's game, Wilson will use fullback Jackson and free safety Billy Cannon as kickoff returners, replacing running backs Thomas Sanders and Ronald Watkins. Watkins, who suffered a bruised knee in Texas A&M's 26-0 defeat of Rice last week, is at full speed for the SMU game. Cornerback Darrell Adams, who led the Rice game because of an injury, but may see limited action against the Mustangs.

Four former Aggie athletes will be inducted into Texas A&M's Athletic Hall of Fame in ceremonies before the Aggie-Mustang game, which starts at 2 p.m. Saturday.

The inductees are Pat Dwyer, basketball and baseball, Class of '22; Martin O. Ruby, baseball, Class of '42; Peter K. Watkins, track and baseball, Class of '43; and Richard F. Hunter, swimming, Class of '57.

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