

Sports

But season not over yet; Texas game Thursday

Aggies smash Frogs 37-7 to gain bowl berth

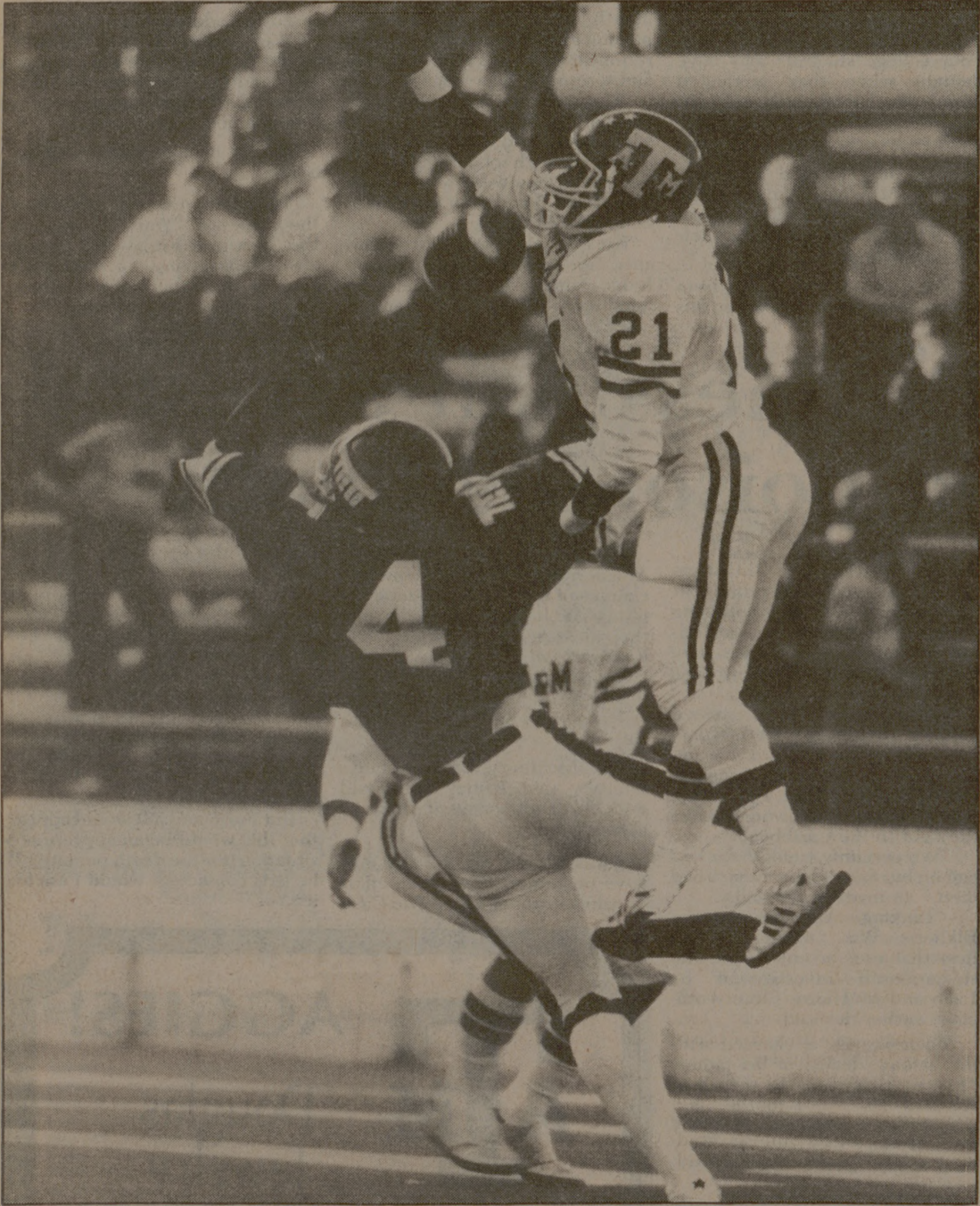


Photo by Mark Berrier

Senior cornerback Danny Davis (21) leaps high to block a Reuben Jones pass to Russell Bates (4) during Saturday's game with TCU.

Davis and the Aggies beat the Frogs 37-7 to earn a spot opposite Oklahoma State University in the Independence Bowl.

By RITCHIE PRIDDY
Sports Editor

It was a costly victory for the Aggies, but one well deserved.

The Texas Aggies not only took care of the TCU Horned Frogs and gained a post-season bowl berth, but they also ensured themselves a winning season with a 6-4 record.

The Aggies thumped the Frogs 37-7 in Fort Worth Saturday and were greeted in the locker room with an invitation to face Oklahoma State University in the Independence Bowl Dec. 12.

But, the victory was a costly one for the Ags. Quarterback Gary Kubiak suffered a bruised right shoulder and could miss Thursday's game with Texas. His status may not be known until gametime Thursday.

"We won't know for sure about Gary's shoulder until we get back," coach Tom Wilson said after the game. "The doctors say it's a bad bruise. As to how much he'll work out or play is up in the air."

The most serious injury, however, occurred when backup free safety Chris Brown was tackling a TCU ballcarrier and fractured his first cervical vertebrae. Brown was taken to a Fort Worth hospital where doctors said the injury would end his football career.

In addition, backup quarterback John Elkins suffered a mild concussion. Elkins, who was hurt when he ran around left end in the fourth quarter, could not remember that he was in the game.

Split end Mike Whitwell, who broke his thumb last week, played most of the game and will play against Texas. Safety Mark McQueen, filling in for Cannon, suffered a broken finger and concussion but will also be ready Thursday.

Wilson said the victory was well deserved, and the opportunity to play in a bowl was a just reward for his team.

"I think our football team deserved a bowl bid and I'm excited for the players that we were invited to play a fine Oklahoma State team in the Independence bowl." Wilson said that a bowl game

was one of the team's goals going into the season. He said the Ags were in the Cotton Bowl picture until losing to Arkansas Nov. 14 and that he was disappointed with that loss, but added the team didn't fold.

Wilson spent little time celebrating the convincing victory and immediately began preparations for Texas.

"We are looking forward to the bowl game - everyone understands that," he told his players after the game. "But, we've got a little business to conduct first. You've got to get your minds off this one and get ready for Texas."

Wilson held several players out of the game because of injuries.

Safety Billy Cannon didn't make the trip because of a shoulder injury.

Cannon got into a fight Wednesday in Huntsville and cut his right shoulder, requiring 14 stitches. Wilson said that no disciplinary action will be taken against Cannon and that he should be ready for Texas.

Linebacker Mike Little suited up but did not play Saturday because of a pinched nerve in his neck. In addition, tailback Johnny Hector did not play. Wilson said Hector injured his foot but could have played if needed.

He was not needed though, as teammate Thomas Sanders took up the slack, gaining 72 yards on 18 carries.

The big story of the day, however, was the running and receiving of fullback Earnest Jackson. Jackson rushed for 219 yards on 19 carries for three touchdowns. Jackson's last score came on a 80-yard run late in the game. In addition, he caught a pass for 40 yards.

"Jackson is a quality back," Wilson said, "there's no doubt about that."

"We used him a lot. They were oversifting their defense to our strongside and that gave him the opportunity to carry the ball many times," he said.

"Everybody in the line blocked well on my 80-yard td run," Jackson said. "We just kept hitting at them and finally the holes began to open up."

The offensive line performed admirably almost the entire game, creating huge holes in the TCU defensive line.

"The only time their defensive line looked good was when we missed our assignments," offensive tackle Tommy Robison said.

The Aggies played their most productive game of the year, gaining 512 yards in total offense. The Ags finished the day with 414 yards rushing and 119 yards passing. TCU ran for 90 yards and passed for 211 for a total output of 301 yards.

TCU all-SWC receiver Stanley Washington did not suit up for the game because of a rib injury. His presence was missed, but most likely he would not have played a major role in the outcome of the game.

"We were surprised that Washington didn't play," Wilson said. "We did not know he was hurt. But, I think we were in control the whole game."

The Aggie defense put pressure on TCU quarterback Reuben Jones to cause an interception and several bad passes.

"We were struggling offensively in the first half," TCU coach F.A. Dry said. "Mainly because that Guthrie kid (defensive tackle Keith Guthrie) had number."

"A lot of people have underestimated our defense this year," Guthrie said. "Everybody expected teams like Arkansas to 500 yards against us, but we've been lucky to get 100."

The Aggies took a 13-0 lead in the half and Wilson said that cause of the explosiveness of the third quarter was going to be tough.

"I felt like it was going to be a big quarter. We took the control that our offense could control the ball and that our defense could control them. Plus, we did want to let TCU have the win in the fourth quarter."

Bowl game likely to be sellout

The Texas Aggies will face the Oklahoma State Cowboys in the Independence Bowl Dec. 12 in Shreveport, La.

The Cowboys secured the bowl berth by defeating Iowa State 27-7 Saturday. They Cowboys own a 7-3 record going into their season finale against Oklahoma. The Aggies are 6-4 with Texas remaining.

Independence Bowl committee members Orvis Sigler and Norm Hodgins were in the Aggie locker room after Saturday's game to extend the invitation.

"We are extremely pleased to invite you all in our bowl," Sigler said amid cheers from the Aggie players.

The stadium in Shreveport holds approximately 50,000 people

and will most likely be a sellout since both schools are away from home for a five-hour drive to Shreveport.

Students interested in going to the bowl, to be held the Saturday before finals, are asked to purchase their tickets.

Tickets are \$15 and \$12. Ticket applications are being accepted in a six state area according to Interim Athletic Director Wally Groff.

"We'll be mailing applications to Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Aggies in northeast Texas in addition to our season ticket holders and the Aggie Club," Groff said. The team will leave for Shreveport Wednesday, Dec. 9.

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