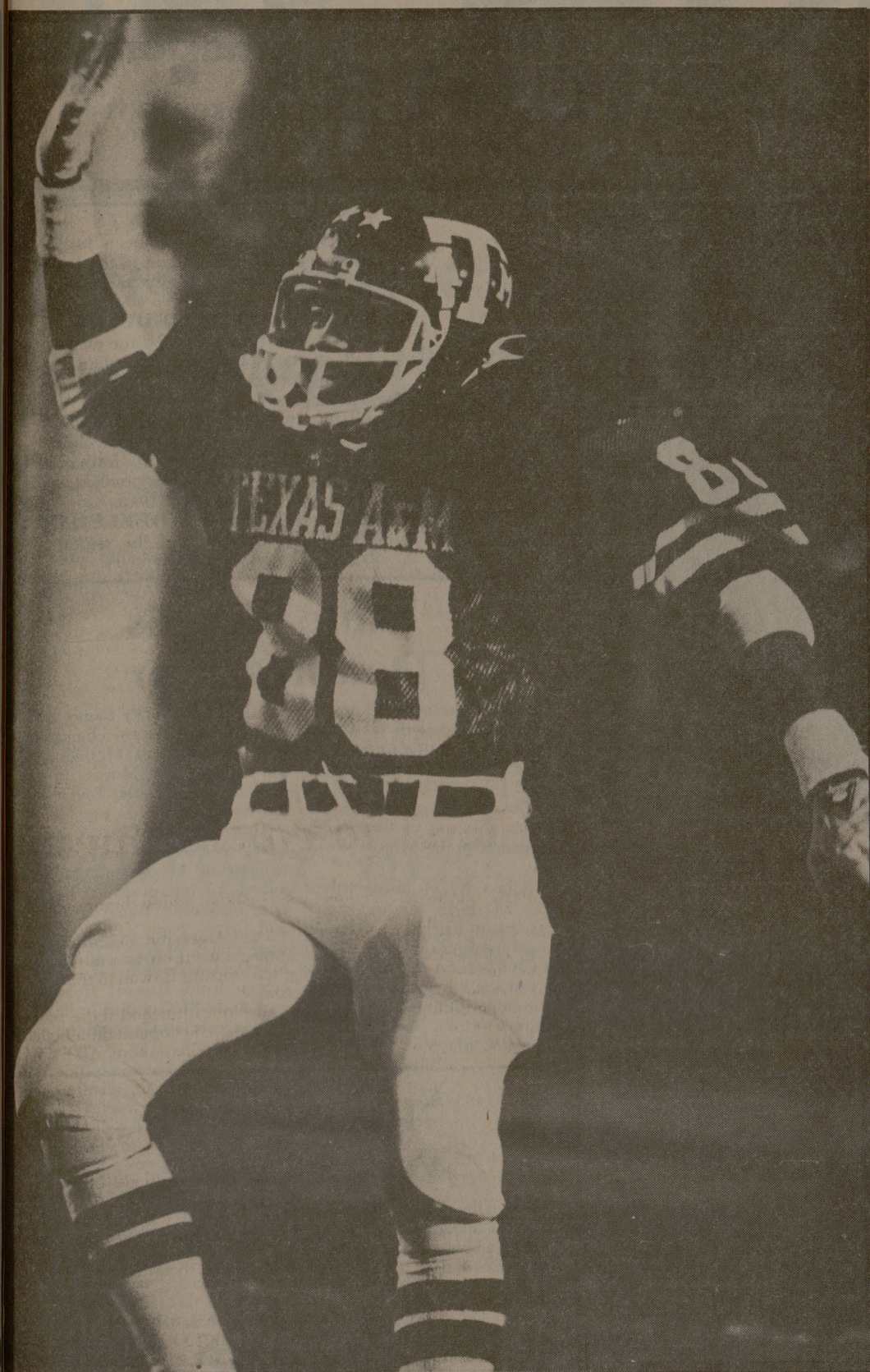


Sports



Staff photo by Greg Watermann

Touchdown excitement

Texas A&M wide receiver Jimmie Williams motions happily to a teammate after scoring on a 38-yard touchdown pass from Gary Kubiak late in the second quarter of the Aggies' 33-16

Independence Bowl win over Oklahoma State. Williams caught two touchdown passes during the game, with five receptions for 118 yards.

Kuhn's days as commissioner may be short, say NL owners

By MILTON RICHMAN

United Press International
NEW YORK — On Ronald Reagan's desk in the White House, there's an imposing looking glass paperweight that has these words inscribed: The buck-eroo stops here.

On Bowie Kuhn's desk in Rockefeller Center, he has a collection of autographed baseballs, yet he can empathize completely with the president in regard to where the buck stops.

Whenever things are going bad in the country, Reagan usually gets the blame and anytime they happen to be going well, everybody else immediately looks to take the credit. You know what that goes. Defeat is an orphan and victory has a million fathers.

Bowie Kuhn has grown used to that in his 13 years as baseball commissioner. It goes with the territory, he says. So he wasn't exactly astonished over the move by a group of owners at last week's baseball meetings in Hollywood, Fla., to have him replaced as commissioner. What surprised him more than anything else was that the minority movement against him originated among National League owners, when in the past, he generally was a target of dissidents in the American League.

All the details of what went on in Hollywood have not been made public yet. When they eventually do come out, baseball's entire structure very likely will be changed and Kuhn no longer will be presiding over it as its key central figure.

One of the biggest criticisms of Kuhn was his posture during last summer's baseball strike. The feeling among many was that he

didn't do enough to bring the strike to a quicker conclusion. The fact that he didn't have the power to do so under the iron-clad labor relations policy existing between the owners and the Players Association didn't seem to matter to his critics. They kept clamoring for him to "do something" even though they knew in their hearts he couldn't because he didn't have the authority.

Personally, I haven't agreed with all the actions Kuhn has taken since he first was named commissioner in February 1969, nor do I think he has the answer for all of baseball's problems. But on balance alone and in the face of facts, it strikes me he has done as good as job as could have been accomplished under the circumstances, and he should be lauded more than he has been skewered.

Think back to when he first re-

placed "The Unknown Soldier," Gen. William D. Eckert, if you can remember that far back. The cry at the time was: "Baseball is dying." Today, nobody says that anymore.

Nobody can. Before this year, which you can throw out because of the strike, baseball drew 43 million fans in 1979 and 1980, and for those who might be reluctant to attribute any of that success to Kuhn, they should bear in mind that baseball hadn't drawn as many as 30 million in any season before he became commissioner.

Don't forget television, either. Under Kuhn's stewardship, baseball's revenue from national TV has increased to where it is now, in excess of \$50 million annually. He certainly has to get at least a portion of the credit for that.

No matter what, and that takes in this year's 50-day strike, base-

ball is enjoying a healthier acceptance from the fans than ever before and in the final assessment of Kuhn, that should be the bottom line. Quite likely, it will not be, come Judgment Day.

Kuhn, it seems to me, has done his job as fairly and honestly as humanly possible, without showing partiality to either the owners or the players, and for evidence of that there are the suspensions he imposed on such owners as George Steinbrenner and Ted Turner and players like Ferguson Jenkins and Denny McLain.

So far, he has managed to prevail. The possibility keeps growing that he will not be re-elected five months from now. Even if he isn't, he can always look back with a wry smile and at least boast one thing — nobody was able to force him to put on his overcoat at a ballgame.

SWC schools must make decision by Jan. 11 on Cotton Bowl move

United Press International
DALLAS — The nine South-west Conference schools have until Jan. 11 to give an answer to a group of Houston businessmen who want to lure the Cotton Bowl out of Dallas to the Astrodome.

And although there was no indication that the attempt would be successful, those who attended the SWC's annual winter meeting last weekend said they were going to give the proposal serious study.

"This is a sensitive matter," said Dr. Jim Castaneda, faculty representative from Rice and current president of the SWC. "It was presented seriously and we should treat it seriously."

Lan Bentsen, son of U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, made his group's presentation to the conference officials.

"The media have not taken this too seriously," said Castaneda. "But this was the first time it has

been on our agenda. They (the businessmen) will get a reply safely ahead of their deadline.

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