

# Sports

## Aggies finish up-and-down season as winners

**By RITCHIE PRIDDY**  
Battalion Staff

The Texas Aggies wrapped up the 1981 football season Saturday night in style. Not only did they finish on a winning note a season that some people termed "mediocre," but they also set a solid foundation for the future.

The Aggies, under the leadership of Head Coach Tom Wilson, finished at 7-5, much better than most people predicted.

Last summer, nobody picked the Aggies to finish better than 5-0. Now that the season is over, wonder what the forecasters are thinking.

But I also had doubts about the season when the team started spring training. Coming off a 4-7 season, which saw everything from a drug investigation to a benched quarterback, I couldn't see hope for the 1981 season.

But during spring training, Gary Kubiak began to emerge as a legitimate quarterback, something the Aggies lacked. Other players began to show the talent that brought them into a major university athletic program.

Team leadership, a crucial factor in any winning team's program, finally started to surface.

The seniors who were here over the summer took charge and the others began to listen. The team was tired of losing and the seniors were determined to do something about it.

By summer's end the leadership and character of the team started taking shape.

The team's goal at the start of the season was to go to a bowl game. And the Cotton Bowl was within the Aggies' grasp during

much of the season.

Texas A&M first took the field Sept. 5 against the Golden Bears in Berkeley, Calif., where the Ags fell behind 28-16 at halftime. The run-and-shoot offense of California accounted for 337 yards, 280 of it coming in the first half.

After halftime, the Aggies began to assert themselves, rallying for a 29-28 win and limiting the Bears to five first downs and 56 total yards during the second half.

The Aggies traveled Sept. 19 to meet the Boston College War Eagles and lost 13-12. Once again, Texas A&M outplayed the opposition, but the smaller BC squad came out on top.

On Sept. 24, Athletic Director Marvin Tate was asked by several members of the Texas A&M System Board of Regents to resign. It appeared Wilson's job was next in the line of fire.

Wilson turned his offense loose Sept. 26 on the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs, and the result was a 43-7 win.

Kubiak completed several key passes, including a 92-yard, SWC record touchdown pass to Don Jones. Although the defense gave up 286 passing yards, it yielded only three yards on the ground.

On Oct. 3, the Aggies defeated the Texas Tech Red Raiders in Lubbock and won 24-23. This was their third one-point game of the season.

Johnny Hector's 80-yard scoring run following an early Tech touchdown was awesome. But what really showed the team's character was the fact that the Ags rallied for the win after trailing 23-10 at the start of the fourth quarter.

The Aggies played their best game of the year Oct. 10 when they held off a late Houston surge for a 7-6 win over the Cougars. Kubiak accounted for the Aggie touchdown on a 43-yard run late in the third quarter. Despite being outgained 333 to 265 yards, the Ags were 2-0 in conference play and had a legitimate shot at the Cotton Bowl.

However, on Oct. 17, Baylor beat the Aggies 19-17 with a last-minute field goal. Aided by questionable officiating, the Bears handed the Ags their first SWC loss.

They bounced back the following week with a 51-26 win over the Rice Owls in Houston. Kubiak was again the hero of the game with six touchdown passes and one 42-yard touchdown run. Kubiak's six TDs set another SWC record.

With the win the Ags were again were back in contention for the Cotton Bowl.

The next two weeks, however, destroyed that dream.

The SMU Mustangs whipped Texas A&M 27-7 on Oct. 31, despite being outgained offensively by the Aggies 371 to 362.

Two weeks later, the Ags lost to Arkansas 10-7. Kubiak was again the hero, hitting 19 of 21 passes for 233 yards, another SWC record. This loss eliminated the Aggies from the Cotton Bowl race.

TCU was next and the Aggies needed a win to secure a bid to the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La.

During the 37-7 win over the Frogs, fullback Earnest Jackson rushed for 219 yards on 19 carries.

The team produced its finest offensive performance of the season, gaining 512 yards. The win was dampened by the loss of safety Chris Brown and flanker Burnis Simon. Kubiak also went down with a severely bruised right shoulder and was questionable for the Texas game.

The pressure was off everyone but Wilson. As the team prepared to meet Texas on Thanksgiving, rumors again surfaced about the stability of his job.

Texas defeated the Aggies 21-13.

Kubiak started, but left the game in the second quarter after reinjuring his right shoulder. Before he left the game, Texas was penalized twice for roughing the passer. Backup quarterback John Elkins replaced Kubiak and threw a TD pass in the third quarter.

The Aggies defeated the Oklahoma State University Cowboys 33-16 in the Independence Bowl Saturday in Shreveport, despite falling behind early in the game.

By the middle of the second period, Texas A&M was dominating the line of scrimmage. The OSU defense, ranked ninth nationally, gave up 438 yards. Kubiak accounted for most of that, hitting 15 of 20 passes for 225 yards and two touchdowns. He was named the game's MVP.

Placekicker David Hardy kicked four field goals and three extra points to take scoring honors.

The Aggies finished the season with a 7-5 record. The team finished as the second best offensive team in the league behind Arkansas and Kubiak emerged as one of the nation's top quarterbacks. The defense upheld its reputation as one of the hardest-hitting units in the SWC.



Photo by Greg Gammon

Texas A&M Johnny Hector keeps his eyes on University of Houston defenders Kelly McDonald (41) and Calvin Eason in the Aggies' 7-6 win over the Cougars earlier in the season. Defensive end McDonald and free safety Eason are set to meet the Aggie tailback after he receives a pitchout from quarterback Gary Kubiak. Texas A&M finished the season with a 7-5 record after Saturday's 33-16 Independence Bowl victory over Oklahoma State.

## Rams overcome adversity to slip past Falcons, 21-16

**United Press International**  
ANAHEIM, Calif. — The once-dreaded defense of the Los Angeles Rams had turned to pudding.

Opposing ball carriers who once feared broken bones against the Rams' defensive line were now concerned with developing stomach cramps from running long distances.

Receivers who used to stay awake at night fretting over crushing blind-side hits from the Rams' All-Pro secondary now worried about developing blisters on their hands from having a football snapping into their palms so often.

And quarterbacks who once asked if they could carry guns to protect themselves from the Rams' vicious pass rush now took up hobbies to pass all that free time while waiting for their receivers to get open.

From the 1979 Super Bowl to the 1981 Stupor Bowl. That was the two-year story of the Los Angeles Rams.

So Monday night against the Atlanta Falcons, the 5-9 Rams — out of the playoff picture for the first time in nine years, mired in their worst season since 1965, embroiled in controversy with team management, dragging a five-game losing skid behind them and just playing out the final two dreary weeks of the miserable season — were expected to go belly-up before a national television audience.

Instead, they summoned spirit and emotion that didn't seem to exist anymore, throttling a powerful Atlanta offense en route to a 21-16 victory.

Wendell Tyler rushed for two touchdowns and went over the 1,000-yard mark to pace the Ram attack while Dan Pastorini completed 11 of 22 passes for 111 yards and was intercepted twice.

Atlanta quarterback Steve Bartkowski hit 14 of 36 passes for 160 yards and was intercepted twice, while William Andrews rushed for

115 yards on 23 carries to become Atlanta's all-time leading career rusher.

Atlanta took a 7-0 lead late in the first period on Lynn Cain's 2-yard TD burst, but the Rams tied the score in the second period on Tyler's 6-yard touchdown run. Pastorini completed a 46-yard pass to Billy Waddy during the drive.

The Rams scored the game-winner on Tyler's 7-yard TD run, which was set up by pass interference penalties of 25 and 49 yards against Atlanta's Bobby Butler and Kenny Johnson.

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