

Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

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Practice makes perfect

Aggies end toughest week of season ready for Houston

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

It's been a rough week for the Aggie football team.

After Saturday's 24-15 loss to Texas Tech, Coach Jackie Sherrill and his staff wasted no time in busting down the Kyle Field gates to hold a rare Sunday practice session. Throughout the week, the Aggies have worn a path between Cain Hall and the stadium for their usual mid-afternoon workouts.

But this week's workouts haven't been ordinary, let's-run-through-each-phase-of-the-game workouts.

In fact, the players admit they haven't worked so hard since the fall began. But they'll remember an oft-spoken four words when they enter the Astrodome for Saturday's matchup with the Houston Cougars.

Hard work pays off.

And the players won't have time to pause for a break in the action, either. The hard work will have to continue through Saturday night if the 2-2 Aggies expect to defeat Bill Yeoman's 1-2-1 Cougars.

Quarterback Gary Kubiak

fully understands the situation.

"I know one thing," Kubiak said Thursday. "We've worked harder this week than we have all season, so we plan on going out there and playing our hearts out. There's no doubt that we're ready."

"You always hear other teams saying it's not hard to get fired up to play the Aggies, but at the same time, it's not hard for the Aggies to get ready to play, either."

Starting middle linebacker Jerry Bullitt said he and his teammates haven't had to push themselves to get ready for Saturday's game.

"We feel pretty good," he said. "It's certainly been the hardest week we've been through this season. We're going into this game with everything to gain and nothing to lose."

"We just have to go in and play our best. We think we're prepared for them. We'll definitely be fired up."

But the Aggies won't be the only incentive-driven team inside the air-conditioned confines of the Astrodome.

"Personally, I can't wait to play

the Aggies," UH junior flanker David Roberson said. "They beat us by one point last year and it was hard to accept."

Roberson, who has caught 19 passes for 258 yards, pinpointed in one sentence the Cougars' No. 1 sore spot and No. 1 motivator in their contest with the Aggies.

In last season's 7-6 Texas A&M victory, UH outgained the Aggies in nearly every category but lost when fullback David Barrett missed a two-point conversion pass late in the game. Kubiak scored the Aggie touchdown on a 43-yard bootleg during the third quarter.

Through their first four games, the Coogs haven't played like past Houston teams. Their offense has been inconsistent, committing turnover after turnover after turnover.

Case in point No. 1: In the Cougars' season opener, Miami-Florida turned two fumbles into 10 points. Result: a 31-12 Miami victory.

Case in point No. 2: Arizona State converted two fumbles and a blocked punt into 17 points. Result: a 24-10 ASU victory.

Case in point No. 3: In last

week's game with Baylor, Cougar quarterback Lionel Wilson threw two interceptions in the first half, and both led to Bear touchdowns. Result: a 21-21 tie.

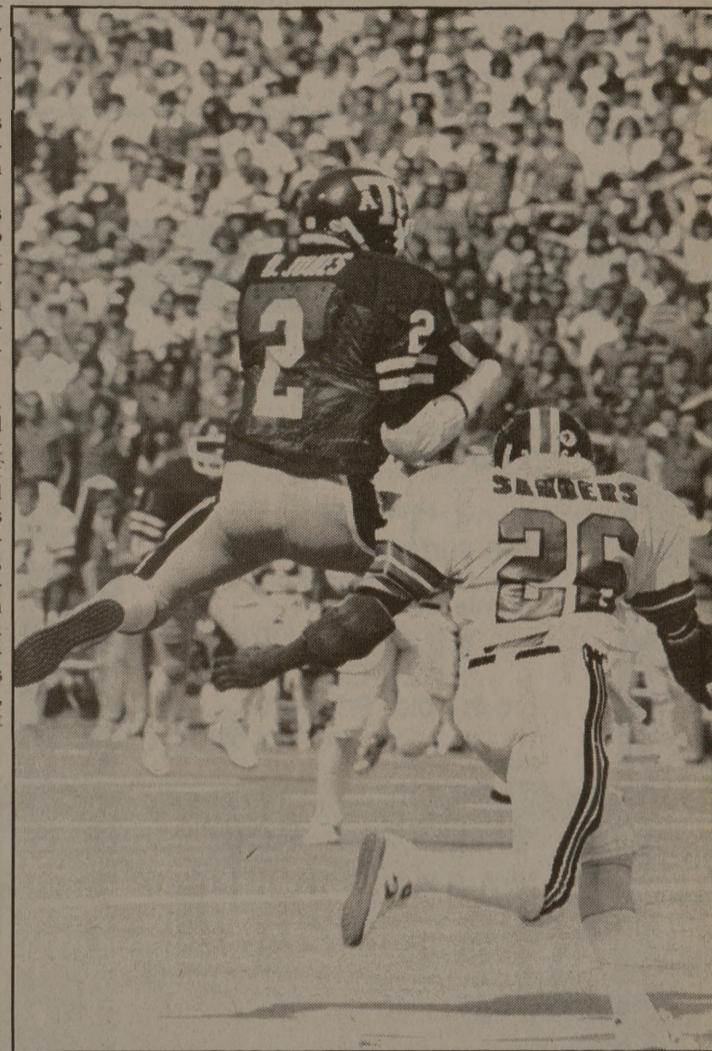
Summing it up, the Cougars have allowed 79 points this season, and 44 have resulted from turnovers.

On the other hand, Texas A&M has found inconsistency to be its greatest enemy. A torrent of injuries to key offensive performers has all but drowned a unit that once boasted an effective balance of rushing and passing.

At this point, the Aggies rank No. 2 in the conference in total offense at 409 yards a game, but last week's season-low output of 15 points found the team forced into placing near-total emphasis on Kubiak's arm. As a unit, running backs Mike Marshall, George Smith and Jimmie Hawkins found enough room to rush for only 36 yards on 29 attempts.

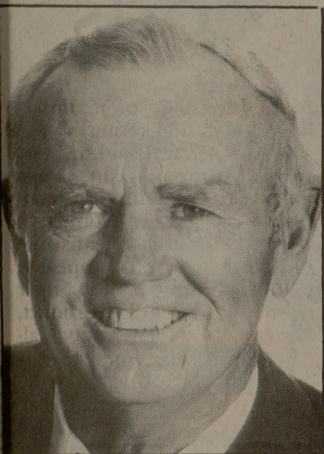
Running backs Johnny Hector, Earnest Jackson and Thomas Sanders are still nursing injuries, but Sherrill said this week that

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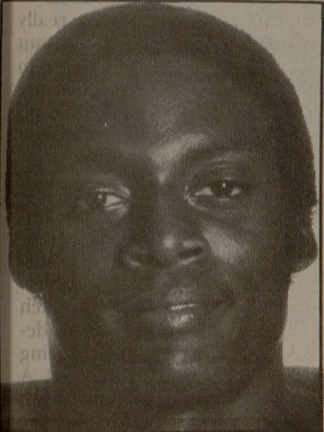


staff photo by David Fisher

The Aggies' Don Jones leaps high to snare a third-down pass from quarterback Gary Kubiak during last week's game with Texas Tech. Raider cornerback Ricky Sanders defends on the play. Texas A&M will play the Houston Cougars Saturday at 7 p.m. in the Astrodome. The Aggies are 2-2 for the season.



Houston coach Bill Yeoman looks for more consistency



UH flanker David Roberson leads with 19 receptions



Cornerback Butch LaCroix bolsters Cougar secondary

LaCroix says Cougars ready

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff

Butch LaCroix knows exactly what he wants. He knows what he wants from athletics and more important, he knows what he wants from life.

But LaCroix also knows what he wants Saturday night at the Astrodome in Houston.

The senior Cougar cornerback wants to help his team beat the Aggies.

"It's a very important game for us," LaCroix (pronounced La-qua) said Thursday in a long-distance interview. "Last year's loss is in the back of everybody's mind. We lost by only one point, which hurt us at the time, but it's been driving us to work harder this week. Our practices have been very emotional."

coaches love to have on their teams. LaCroix is a team leader who has a knack for being

around the ball and is capable of making a big play at any time.

Also, LaCroix knows that there's more to life than tackling charging backs and intercepting footballs. He complements his performance on the field by carrying a 3.3 grade point ratio in pre-law. LaCroix said that even though he thinks he can play pro football, he wants something to fall back on in case he doesn't make it in the NFL.

"It takes a lot of patience and a lot of discipline because when you come in from practice, sometimes you really don't feel like studying," he said. "But you have to push yourself just like you push yourself on the field. My personal goal is to always be the best in anything I do, whether it be athletics or academics. It all boils down to giving up a little if you want to get a

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Dallas

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