

Coogs grab fumble, 20-14 triumph

Harmon's late recovery sends Aggies to defeat

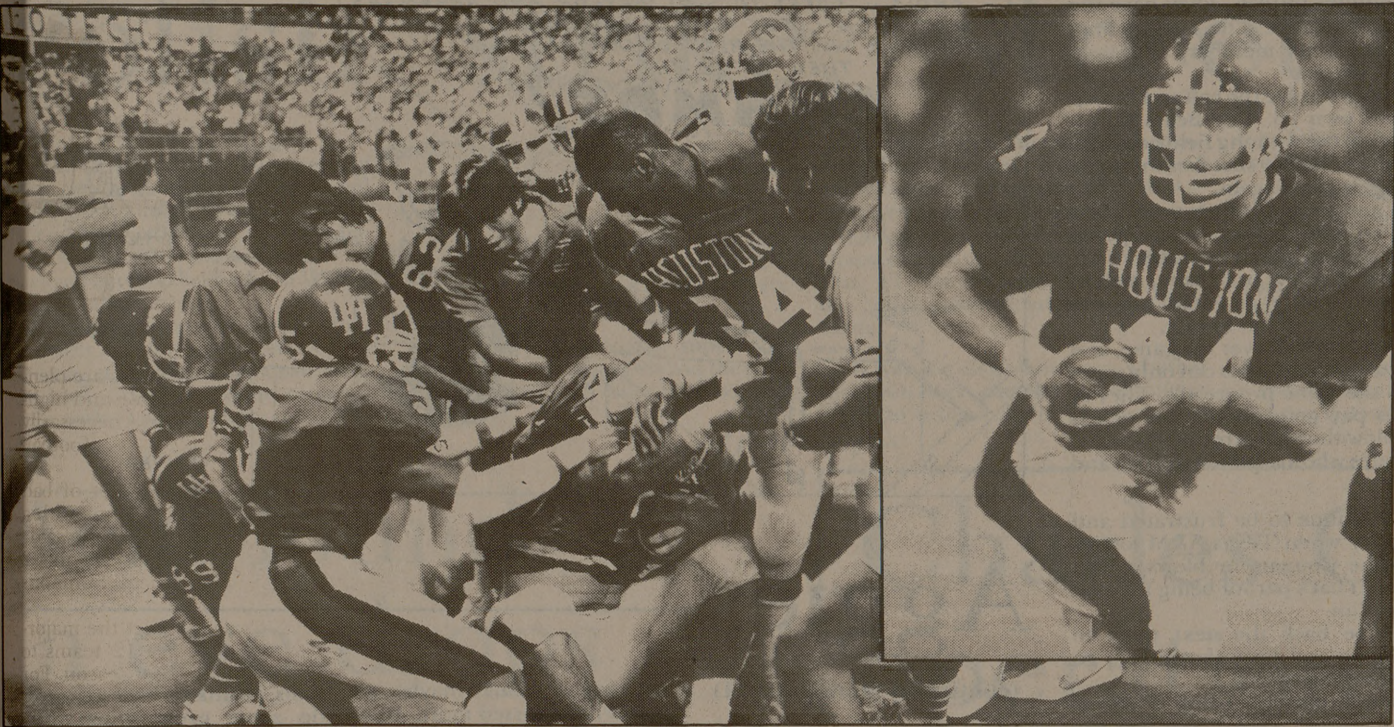


photo by C. Michel Chang

Houston Cougar defensive end Greg Harmon is buried by a host of teammates after he recovered a fumble and ran 20 yards for the winning touchdown against the Aggies in Saturday's 24-20 UH victory. In right

insert, Harmon runs untouched into the end zone for the Cougars' final touchdown of the night. Harmon and his teammates have a 2-2-1 record on the season, and the Aggies now stand at 2-3, 0-2 in conference.

by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor
 Greg Harmon gave a masterful performance Saturday night in the Astrodome.

It was short and to the point — six points, to be exact.

For the record, Harmon's performance lasted only nine seconds. But it was more than enough to warrant a standing ovation from any crowd of Houston Cougar fans.

The stage had been set in classic manner for this particular play. Harmon, the Cougars' starting left defensive end, had recorded only one tackle on the night until unveiling his true athletic genius.

Harmon's sack of Aggie quarterback Gary Kubiak for an 8-yard loss with less than a minute left in the third quarter stood as his only tackle of the night. So it's only natural that Harmon would figure in the most significant play of the game, which ended with the Cougars taking a 24-20 victory over the Aggies.

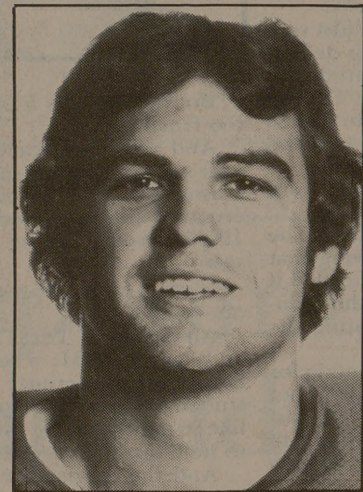
With 11:50 left in the game, Kubiak called for a counter play on first and 10 at the Texas A&M 19-yard line. But when tailback Johnny Hector didn't take the handoff, Kubiak was forced to scramble toward the right sideline, looking downfield for a hole through which to squeeze or for a receiver toward whom he could drill a pass.

Enter Mr. Harmon, actor extraordinaire and a specialist in one-act plays. He doesn't need the help of cue cards. All Harmon needs is an opportunity to make a contribution.

And what a key contribution this was.

While Kubiak ran right and faked a pass downfield, he was met by the Cougars' T.J. Turner and Craig McGallion. Upon contact, the ball popped loose into the air and into Harmon's waiting hands.

Nothing but open territory stood between Harmon and the goalline. The 20-yard touchdown put Houston ahead 24-17 and Harmon became a hero.



Houston end Greg Harmon scores winning touchdown

that the Cougars are capable of moving the football steadily.

"We're rounding into a little better shape with our offense," Yeoman said. "I thought that the offensive line did an excellent job, too."

"I feel a whole lot better because we won a hard-fought football game. This is the one we needed desperately."

"We played tough teams the first two games (in losing to nationally ranked Miami and Arizona State), and I think that's just now sinking into our kids. This win was just terribly, terribly important for us."

Running back Dallas Wiggins, who led Cougar rushers with 127 yards, said the victory should give the team incentive in this week's game with SMU.

"Anytime you win a big game it's a big boost, and it'll really make us feel a lot better against SMU," he said. "The Aggies could have come in here and shut us out without any points or offense. We didn't play all that well in the first half, but we knew we could polish our game in the second half, so we did."

UH quarterback Lionel Wilson, who completed 12 of 19 passes for 192 yards and rushed for 82 yards, said: "People had criticized us for not getting the ball in the end zone in the first quarter of any of our games. So we came out there with the intention of executing well and scoring some points."

Cougar nose guard McGallion said the Cougars threw off their early jitters during the second half of the game.

"We usually come out a little nervous and tight," he said, "but we settled down in the second half against A&M."

"So, maybe we can go out and play two second halves from now on."

Mistakes cost A&M victory

by John P. Lopez

Battalion Staff

There have been games in which the Texas Aggies have committed more turnovers than they did against the University of Houston Saturday night.

There have been games in which the Aggies have been penalized more times than they were against the Cougars.

But there have been few Aggie games where one fumble and one penalty directly determined the outcome — a 24-20 UH victory.

In the third quarter, Texas A&M had a 17-14 lead and was driving for what certainly would have been a crucial touchdown. The Aggies got the ball at their own 15-yard line and drove to the Cougar 9-yard line, where quarterback Gary Kubiak threw a perfect strike to tight end John Kellen for a touchdown.

Or was it?

There was holding in the Aggie offensive line, so Texas A&M was moved back to the 19-yard line.

The penalty proved to be catastrophic as the Aggie drive stalled and a David Hardy field goal attempt was blocked by Cougar defensive end Kevin Alexander. The Aggie drive lasted six minutes, went 76 yards and didn't change the numbers on the scoreboard.

The next mistake came in the fourth quarter with the score tied at 17. With the ball at their own 19-yard line, the Aggies missed an assignment in the backfield, forcing Kubiak to run with the ball. Houston defensive end T.J. Turner caused Kubiak to fumble into the hands of Cougar lineman Greg Harmon, who returned the ball 20 yards for the touchdown.

With 12 minutes left in the game, the Aggies never recovered from their mistakes. After the game, Coach Jackie Sherrill agreed.

"The fumble was a big, big play," he said. "But the holding down on the goalline really hurt us too. I thought we played well defensively — we only gave them 14 points. But the offense gave them 10 points."

"It just boils down to big plays. It was really a good game against a good team. (Houston) will be hard to beat. You just couldn't ask for a better game spectator-wise."

The sentiment among the players sounded like an echo of Sherrill's statements. Kubiak: "The mistakes killed us."

Defensive end Ray Childress: "Our mistakes killed us."

Running back Jimmie Hawkins: "Our mistakes were very costly."

Offensive tackle Bryan

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A&M's Bobby Stroger says Aggies still in SWC race

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