

Texas A&M

# The Battalion Sports

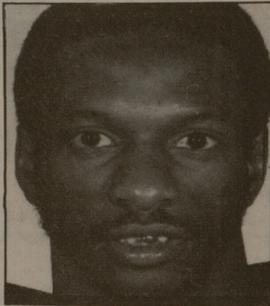
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## Sherrill satisfied with 'best effort'

by Frank L. Christlieb  
Sports Editor



Jackie Sherrill pleased with Aggies' effort against UH



Bears' Gerald McNeil may be key in Saturday's game



BU coach Grant Teaff says Bears must control Kubiak

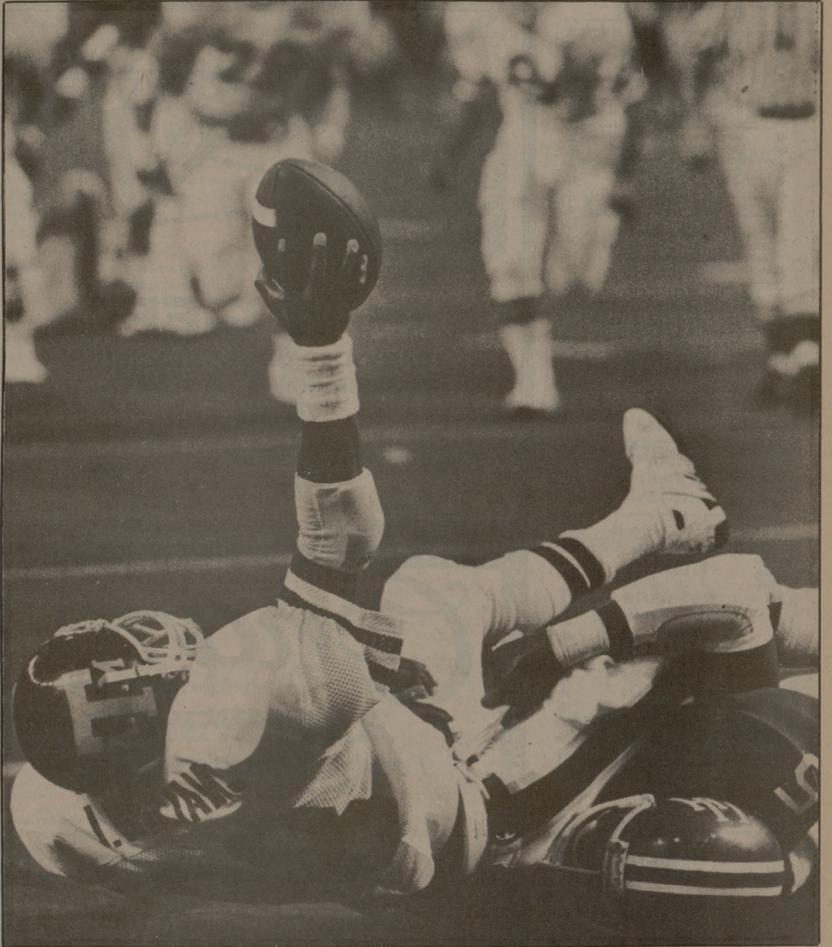


photo by C. Michel Chang

Effort. Jackie Sherrill demands it from his players. The Aggie coach won't put up with a player who doesn't give 100-plus percent every time he steps on the football field.

Sherrill and his staff members aren't ecstatic about the results of the first five games of the season, after which Texas A&M has a 2-3 record. But Sherrill says he liked what he saw during the Aggies' 24-20 loss to the Houston Cougars Saturday.

"I felt like the effort was the best we've had," Sherrill said during Monday's press conference in Cain Hall. "I felt like we did some things game plan-wise very well and executed well in spots."

"Our defense played well with the amount of pressure put on it. The defense gave us a chance to win, and we should have won."

Against a team with the overall talent of Houston, Sherrill said, the Aggies played with more intensity than they had in their 24-15 loss to Texas Tech the previous week.

"From top to bottom," Sherrill said, "Houston probably has the best (team) in the conference, ability-wise."

Sherrill said the players' effort has been lacking at times during the first five games.

"I'm pleased with some of the effort, but I'm not pleased with the way some of them have played," he said. "They're probably not pleased with some of the things I've done, either."

"But they're not out there to please me as much as they're out there to please themselves. Some of them are not pleased with the way they've played."

Sherrill said running backs Johnny Hector, Earnest Jackson and Thomas Sanders should be near full strength for this week's game with the Baylor Bears. Hector and Jackson are slated as the starters behind quarterback Gary Kubiak.

Hector rushed 12 times for 37 yards and caught eight passes for 51 yards against the Cougars, but

Sherrill said the coaches may have played the senior tailback too much.

"Hector and Jackson were rusty," Sherrill said. "Hector played well, but probably played too long. Jackson made some mental mistakes, but is physically ready to play, and so is Sanders."

George Smith, the Aggies' freshman fullback from Georgia, may not be ready for this week's game after aggravating a recurring ankle injury.

Sherrill said the Texas A&M defense performed well in allowing the Cougars to sustain a scoring drive only once. That drive came in the first quarter, when the Cougars drove 75 yards in 11 plays to take a 7-3 lead on Dallas Wiggins' 6-yard run.

Houston's other scores came on a 51-yard pass from quarterback Lionel Wilson to David Roberson, a 35-yard drive that resulted in a field goal and a 20-yard return on a Kubiak fumble in the fourth quarter.

"No one's going to shut down Houston's offense," Sherrill said. "You can slow it down, but it's a very reckless offense and it can really hurt you."

Sherrill said the Aggie defense, which allowed 486 yards to the Cougars' option attack, may have tired during the second half. He said the defense faced a double-

duty task in pursuing Wilson and Wiggins, the pitch man in UH's option attack.

"When you're playing against that kind of (veer) offense, you have to be very disciplined," he said. "Our defense got tired in the second half and the players' confidence level went down."

"We don't have a defense that is that physical... or that has a lot of outside speed. If the offense can hang on to the ball, then the defense would have a chance to hang in there."

Sherrill said the recent play of freshman running back Jimmie Hawkins has been a buffer to the Aggies' backfield problems. Sherrill said, however, that the team might have benefited more with Hawkins on defense. Hawkins played safety, running back, place-kicker and punter for San Antonio Holmes during his three years of varsity action.

"He's one of those who's a football player — not only an athlete, but a football player as well," he said. "If we knew earlier what we know now (about his defensive talents), we'd be a whole lot smarter."

Baylor, which led SMU for three quarters before losing 22-19 Saturday, has several strengths, Sherrill said. One of the players the Aggies will have to watch is split end Gerald McNeil, a 5-7,

142-pound lightning bolt with sure hands.

And Sherrill's strategy for covering the diminutive McNeil?

"We're going to put 12 men on the field and two people on him," he said.

Baylor coach Grant Teaff said it's unknown whether McNeil, who sustained a bruised shoulder against SMU, will be ready for Saturday's game, which starts at 2 p.m. in Kyle Field.

"But I would bet the farm that Mr. McNeil will be in the proper place at the appointed time," Teaff said in a long-distance telephone hookup during the press conference.

Sherrill hinted that more changes are in store for the Aggie defense this week. After starting Billy Brown and Darrell Adams at cornerback, Billy Cannon at free safety and Jeff Farrar at strong safety against Houston, Sherrill said, Saturday's starting secondary may feature Greg Williams and Wayne Asberry at the corners, Cannon at strong safety and freshman Domingo Bryant back to his starting free safety spot.

However, Sherrill said, he and his coaches will continue to shuffle players in and out of the backfield.

Sherrill said the Aggie defense will have to work hard to find its way into the Baylor backfield. See SHERRILL page 10

A happy Jimmie Williams lets everyone know he's made a touchdown reception after diving for a 12-yard catch during the second quarter of the Aggies' 24-20

loss to Houston Saturday. Williams and the Aggies, now 2-3, host the Baylor Bears Saturday in Kyle Field at 2 p.m. Baylor lost to SMU 22-19 Saturday.



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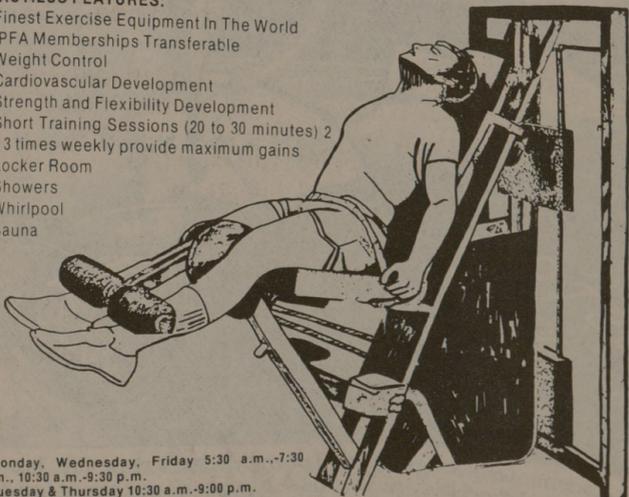
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