

Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

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Aggies accept Baylor's gifts, 28-23

Bears' turnovers costly as A&M moves to 3-3

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Sports Editor

The Baylor Bears were all too kind to the Texas Aggies Saturday afternoon in Kyle Field.

Bearing many gifts for Texas A&M's struggling football team, Baylor let its generosity get out of hand in serving up a 28-23 victory to the victory-hungry Aggies. After having lost their previous two Southwest Conference games by scores of 24-15 to Texas Tech and 24-20 to Houston, the Aggies gobbled up Baylor's donations to earn their first league triumph of the season.

While allowing their sense of charity to slide into absurdity, the Bears also let a rather important item slip out of their hands — and into the waiting hands of several Aggies, who were more than happy to relieve Baylor of a load that seemed too heavy to handle.

As a result of the Bears' hospitality in providing nine turnovers during their 17 offensive possessions, Texas A&M escaped with its most unlikely — and unbelievable — victory of the season.

With the exception of its tendency to drop the football and to throw the football into the hands of Aggie defenders, the Baylor offense produced an award-winning show in compiling 466 total yards and 29 first downs. But it was the stars of this production who brought the curtain down on the Bears' heads.

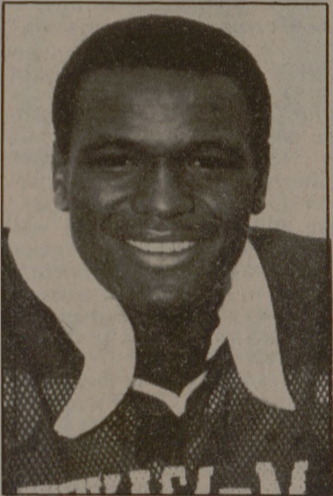
Fullback Allen Rice, who gained 150 yards on 22 carries, tumbled three times during the first half. Alfred Anderson, a tailback who wound up with 126 yards on 25 carries, fumbled twice.

David Mangrum, Baylor's starting quarterback during the past two games, fumbled on the first play of the Bears' opening offensive series.

And finally, split end Gerald McNeil couldn't handle a Kyle Stuard punt with 21 seconds left in the game, so the Aggies' Jim Jordan recovered Baylor's seventh lost fumble of the day.

Sandwiched between Texas A&M's sixth and seventh fumble recoveries were interceptions by Aggie middle linebacker Jerry Bullitt and cornerback Wayne Asberry.

The Aggies gave the two-hour, 50-minute show rave re-



Linebacker Jeff Fuller's 15 solo tackles lead A&M unit views, but Teaff and his squad would like to refilm the entire debacle.

"This is just a real frustrating way to lose a game," Teaff said in the Bears' locker room. "To do the job you have to do, and then to give it away is terribly frustrating."

Early Christmas presents, perhaps? Or maybe the Bears didn't realize that Jackie Sherrill's birthday isn't until Nov. 28.

Or maybe it wasn't really a case of bad hands or slippery fingers. Maybe Aggie senior linebacker Bobby Stroger had the right idea in the locker room after the game:

"The harder you hit them, the easier the game gets."

In any case, luck shined on the Aggies for the first time all season. Maybe a couple of moves by Sherrill forecasted Texas A&M's victory. Not the kind of

moves involved in shifting players from one position to another, but moves initiated by a coach who's trying to discover ways to muster up his first conference victory.

Instead of his usual white shirt and maroon jacket, Sherrill wore a blue shirt and maroon jacket. And to make one think he might be a bit superstitious, Sherrill and his players made their pre-game entrance from behind the Kyle Field stands instead of from the ramp that leads out of their dressing room.

Sherrill's probably not one to believe in such notions, but maybe he thought the changes would work to the Aggies' advantage.

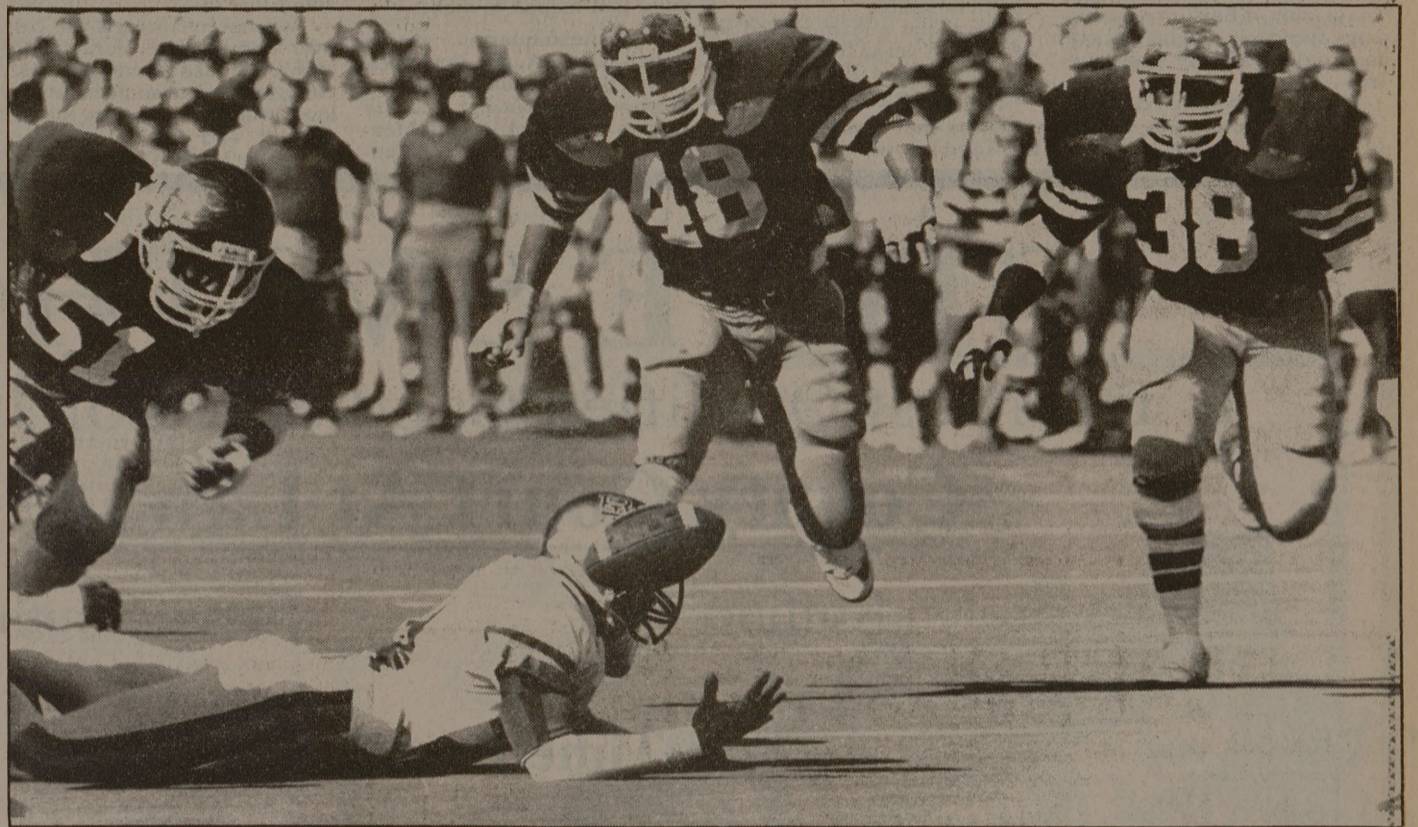
Whatever influences were involved, Texas A&M managed to raise its record to 3-3 for the season and 1-2 in SWC play. Although the Aggie defense allowed its second-highest yardage total of the season, Sherrill said he was pleased with the overall effort.

"I felt like we did made a lot of things happen defensively and we gave ourselves a lot of opportunities," Sherrill said. "But we just didn't do much with those chances. In the third quarter, our offense couldn't take the pressure off the defense."

"I was very pleased with the defensive players. They bent, but they never broke."

The Aggie defense, which has allowed an average of 427 yards a game, gave the Bears only 177 yards and nine first downs in the first half, whereas Texas A&M had 141 yards and seven first downs.

But after quarterback Gary Kubiak received a badly bruised shoulder with 3:17 left in the half, the Aggie offense could



staff photo by David Fisher

Which of these three Texas A&M defenders is going to recover the fumble by Baylor tailback Alfred Anderson in Saturday's game? The answer is that Jon van Sant, not pictured here, will recover the fumble,

Baylor's fourth of the game. The Aggies' Jim Jordan (51), Greg Berry (48) and Thomas Graham attempt to track down the the bouncing ball during Texas A&M's 28-23 victory over the Bears in Kyle Field.

sputter to a measly four first downs and 93 yards in the second half. On the other hand, the Baylor offense came to pile up 289 yards and 20 first downs in the final two quarters.

But Sherrill saw reason for optimism.

"I think it gives the defense an awful lot of confidence," he said. "They had not come up with the big plays in the past, but they did today."

Even with Baylor's high

offensive output, Sherrill said, the Aggie defensive performance was promising. The defense, led by Jeff Fuller's 16 tackles (15 unassisted) stiffened when the Bears were driving for a possible winning touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

The Bears, who lost to conference leader SMU 22-19 the previous week, might have come into Kyle Field with their heads buried in their shoulder pads. Indeed, Baylor's performance

throughout the game seemed to echo the motto "It is better to give than to receive."

But in rallying from a 21-3 deficit to make up for their humanitarian efforts, the Bears sent the 64,017 fans home wondering what would have happened if Teaff and Co. could have played just five minutes more.

"It was really a case of two teams who have had two tough weeks," Sherrill said about the

misfortunes of the Aggies and the Bears. "I don't know if it was very pretty, but you really don't care if it was pretty if you win."

As for any improvement noted in Saturday's game, Sherrill said: "I think we played harder both weeks (against Houston and Baylor), but as far as execution, we probably played better defensively in the first half."

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