Mistakes

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Banged up, Ray? More like down and out.

In fact, the Owls should have foreseen problems when starters Doak Slay and Donahue Walker were lost to injuries before the start of the season.

The Owls had lost starting tight end Deron Miller to a rib injury, but he played during the first quarter of the Texas A&M game. In addition, running back Charles Hester missed Saturday's game with a sore knee, running back Antonio Brinkley has been out almost the entire season with knee problems, cornerback Alvin Rettig played despite a bruised heel and running back Weldon Meeks sustained torn knee ligaments against Texas Tech.

"Everybody's got injuries," Alborn said. "The list goes on and on, and you have got to have that depth. I'm really disappointed for the players."

Alborn said mistakes spelled the Owls' defeat. The Aggies capitalized on six interceptions, two of which led to touchdowns.

"Early in the game, we dropped two (passes) across the pipe that were catchable," Alborn said. "Obviously, Gary Kubiak did a great job running their offense. Their linemen did a great job — they blocked well and opened up some holes. If they just stand in there toe-to-toe, they're going to be tough to get through."

Rice defensive tackle Clenzie Pierson gave the Aggie offense credit for its performance.

"They scored those two quick touchdowns on us, and we never could come back," he said. "We made some mistakes that were fatal to us.

"A&M has a good team, too. They had the opportunity to gamble more than we did and they were ready to play. There was a lack of concentration ... so we got burned on a couple of pass plays we shouldn't have gotten burned on."

Johnson, who completed 15 of 33 passes for 168 yards while throwing five interceptions, said he didn't expect the Aggies to be well-prepared to play an 0-6 team.

"We thought it would be hard for them to get ready for us," Johnson said. "We came out and drove the ball well and we thought that would set the tempo for the rest of the game.

"We had some breaks and some busts. That just seems to be the story for the whole season — someone up there just isn't looking after us or something."

Defense

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receivers with four receptions, and John Kellen, who caught his first official collegiate touchdown.

Kellen, whose apparent touchdown grabs versus Louisiana Tech and Houston were called back because of penalties, said he didn't start celebrating his score until he was sure the play was in the record books.

"After I caught it, I dangsure got up and looked to see if there were any flags on the field," he said. "It feels great to finally catch one that counts."

The offensive performance was so productive it nearly overshadowed the Aggie defense's best outing of the year. But Sherrill and Rice Head Coach Ray Alborn were quick to point out the importance of the Texas A&M defense in the outcome of the game.

Sherrill said the Aggies were "making things happen" defensively and were forcing the Owls to do things on offense that they didn't plan to do.

Alborn said: "Getting the lead enabled A&M to come at us more with their linebackers, and that helped them do better."

Defensive tackle Ray Childress, who led the Aggies with 10 tackles, including eight unassisted stops, said the defensive performance should help Texas A&M gain confidence going into the toughest part of its schedule.

"It feels great to win," he said. "I think the defense played real well. It should help us out in the rest of our games. I know this was one of the best games I've ever played."

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