

The Battalion Sports

November 1, 1982 Page 17

Mustangs' 'better half' aids victory

Kubiak may be ready to play in two weeks

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

IRVING — The SMU Mustangs really know how to strut their stuff.

Playing in front of Mustang Mania towels, Peruna flags and painted faces bearing the letters "SMU," the Mustangs did their best top hat and cane routine to the tune of a 47-9 victory over the unlucky Texas Aggies.

And when the team performs well, even the cheerleaders join the excitement. SMU's cheerleaders, decked out in their most patriotic attire, did pushups each time the Mustangs scored. And each time they hit the deck, the cheerleaders did pushups corresponding to the number of points their team had compiled after each score.

And on the other side of the field, Texas A&M continued to endure knockout after knockout to key offensive players. After watching Mark Lewis, Ernest Jackson, Johnny Hector, Thomas Sanders and Gary Kubiak sustain injuries during the course of the first seven games, Jackie Sherrill had to suffer through the agony of watching his No. 1 star laying on the field, screaming in pain.

Kubiak's combined ankle-hip injury on the Aggies' second series of the day left them with little offensive punch against the fourth-ranked Mustangs, who earned fumbles, missed tackles and defensive breakdowns into easy touchdowns. With the victory, SMU remains undefeated 8-0 on the season and 5-0 in the Southwest Conference.

In his post-game assessment

of Kubiak's estimated return to playing condition, Sherrill was optimistic.

"Gary's such a tough young man that he's not going to stop playing for any reason," Sherrill said. "We don't know for sure, but we think he'll be able to be back in two weeks. As tough as he is, he'll be able to do it."

Dr. Duane Lagan, the Aggies' team physician, said it's possible Kubiak will be ready for Texas A&M's game with the Arkansas Razorbacks in Little Rock Nov. 13.

"We're thinking he very possibly can (play in two weeks)," Lagan said Sunday. "The ankle injury is really a tiny, almost insignificant chip off one of his (left) ankle bones. It'll be very sore because any fracture bleeds."

"It'll be a matter of how long that takes to settle down. It's not a weight-bearing bone ... it's away from where the ankle bears weight and it's not where a ligament attaches. It's a very rare type of thing to happen. We'll just have to wait and see how it comes along."

Lagan said Kubiak's sprained hip seems to be less painful of the two injuries.

"On the field, it was his ankle that really hurt, but when we got him back in the dressing room, he was complaining about the hip," Lagan said. "But even later on, he was saying the hip felt better. His hip is sore but better — the ankle is what's painful. The ankle is the one that'll take more time, because we'll have to see when the swelling goes down."

The Kubiak-less Aggies, led by sophomore second-stringer John Elkins, ground out only 189 yards in offense, while the Mustangs used two long Eric Dickerson scoring dashes to emerge with a total of 421 yards. Without those runs of 80 and 79 yards, however, SMU would have finished the day with only 262 yards — a tribute to the Texas A&M defense.

After being pounded with criticism about their defensive play, the Aggies decided to put a stop to SMU's Lance McIlhenry and his "Dickerjames" duo. Texas A&M held Dickerson to 35 yards on 11 carries and James to 31 yards on 13 carries in the first half, but Dickerson's 80-yard score on the first play of the second half put the game out of reach at 33-0.

And look at this: in the second half, Dickerson carried the ball just three times for 165 yards and James carried the ball seven times for 34 yards.

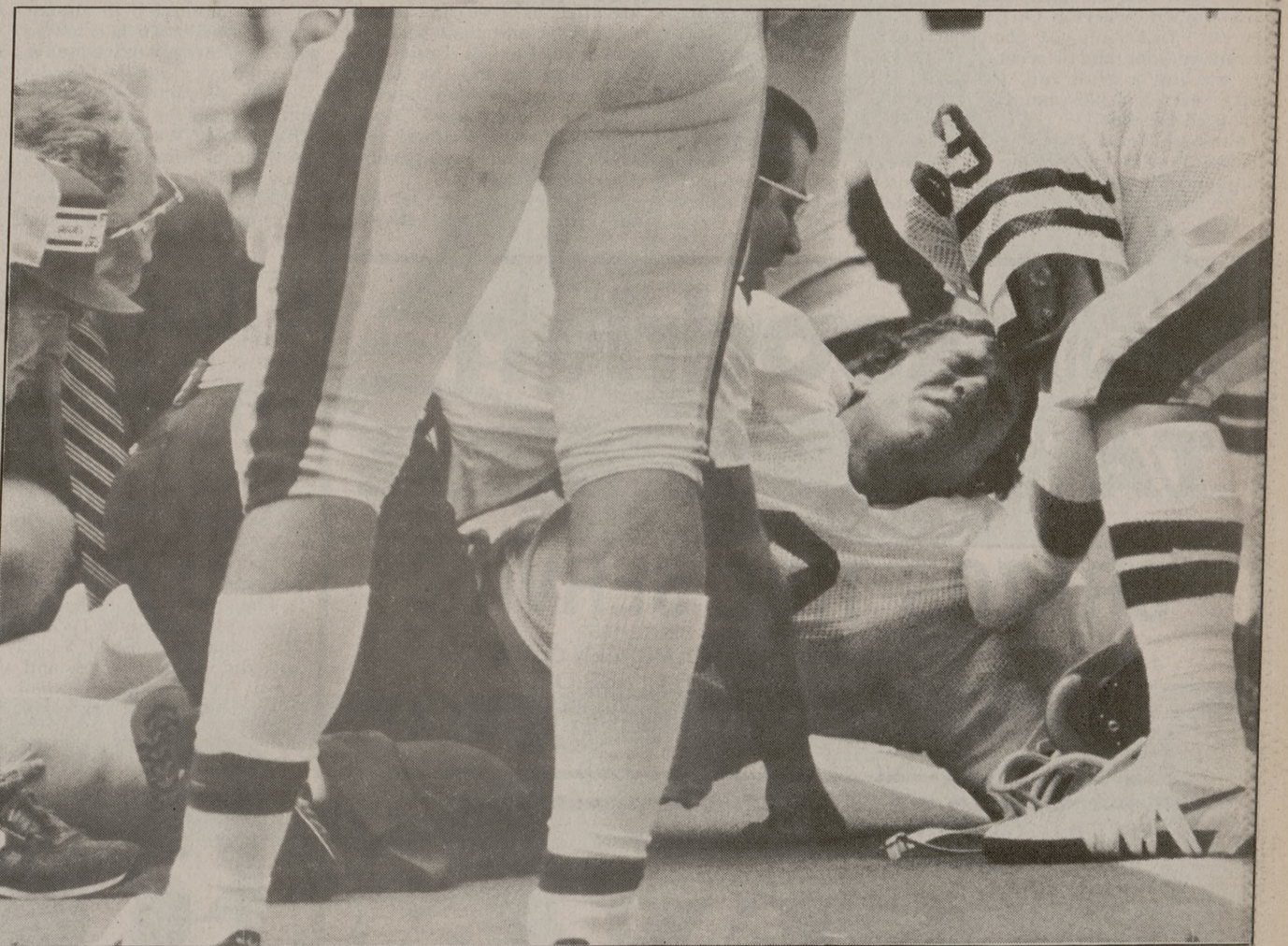
Take away those two big plays by Mr. Dickerson, the "better half" of SMU's tailback tandem, and he gains 41 yards on 12 carries.

Take away the tremendous hit by right defensive end Russell Washington on Kubiak and the Aggies retain their SWC-leading passing attack.

And take away three of Texas A&M's five turnovers and SMU doesn't score three easy touchdowns on 16-, 26- and 1-yard drives.

Regardless of the Aggies' offensive problems, Sherrill credited the team for its intensity.

See AGGIES page 18



staff photo by David Fisher

Aggie quarterback Gary Kubiak grimaces after being injured during the first quarter of Saturday's 47-9 loss to SMU. Kubiak was on the ground for about 10 minutes before trainers transported him off the

field and into the dressing room. Kubiak's injuries, which include a chipped ankle bone and a sprained hip, will keep him out for at least two weeks. It is not known if he will play against Arkansas Nov. 13.

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