

James impressed with defense

# SMU praises A&M effort

by John Wagner  
Battalion Staff

IRVING—It was over so fast. What was shaping up to be a saber-sharp grudge match between the Southwest Conference's leading rushing offense and the leading passing offense turned out to be as one-sided as a butter knife.

The SMU Mustangs were able to live up to their reputation as a high-powered offensive machine, piling up 421 yards and six touchdowns as they buried the Aggies 47-9.

But with Gary Kubiak under the X-ray machine at Irving Community Hospital, Texas A&M's hopes for an upset and a chance at a bowl bid were buried in a sea of red, white and blue uniforms.

Kubiak left the game with 11:47 left in the first quarter, and the Aggies never recovered. Despite a valiant effort by the Texas A&M defense to try to keep the Aggies in the game, turnovers and the Mustangs' relentless attack wore them out. SMU coach Bobby Collins echoed the statements of nearly all the Mustangs when he said the outcome of the game was greatly affected by Kubiak's ankle and hip injury.

"Losing Gary put them (the Aggies) at a tremendous disadvantage," Collins said. "He's

such a gifted football player. He can really throw the ball, and they have tremendous confidence in him.

"It was a severe blow at the time. I'm sure it changed their game plan."

The Mustangs, however, never deviated from their standard style of play. Eric Dickerson, the Heisman-candidate half of SMU's Pony Express, rushed for 200 yards and three touchdowns. And when the Aggies jammed the line of scrimmage with seven or eight players, Mustang quarterback Lance McIlhenny went to the air, completing nine of 16 for 133 yards and two touchdowns.

Collins said the Ponies' passing attack is still in the development stages.

"We see our players have more confidence in our passing game. Its been improving each week. We see our players have more confidence in our passing game. Its been improving each week, and they now think we're going to make the big plays off the pass," he said.

"As long as people keep crowding us on the line with eight or nine men-lines, we're going to continue to make the big plays."

To Collins, the victory was as important as the Mustangs' 30-17 victory over Texas the pre-

vious week.

"It's a great win for us," Collins said. "There was no doubt we could see A&M was an improving football team, and we knew they'd play well. You have to give our kids credit."

McIlhenny said the Mustangs won the game because of their defense.

"Those guys are the reason we're 8-0," he said.

SMU limited to the Aggies to 189 total yards and only 75 yards passing. But how much Kubiak's injury helped the Mustang defensive cause is impossible to tell.

Mustang free safety Blaine Smith said it was SMU's defense — not Texas A&M's injuries — that shut down the Aggies. Smith intercepted Aggie quarterback John Elkins twice, with one interception being wiped out by a Mustang penalty.

"We're pretty pleased we contained A&M's passing attack, but people still don't give us the credit we deserve. They think we haven't been challenged yet, but I'd say we've played tough enough against some good pas-

sing teams to get a little more credit.

"We're just going to let people keep talking and we're going to keep playing."

Craig James, Dickerson's Pony Express sidekick, said the Aggies impressed him, especially after the emotional blow of losing Kubiak.

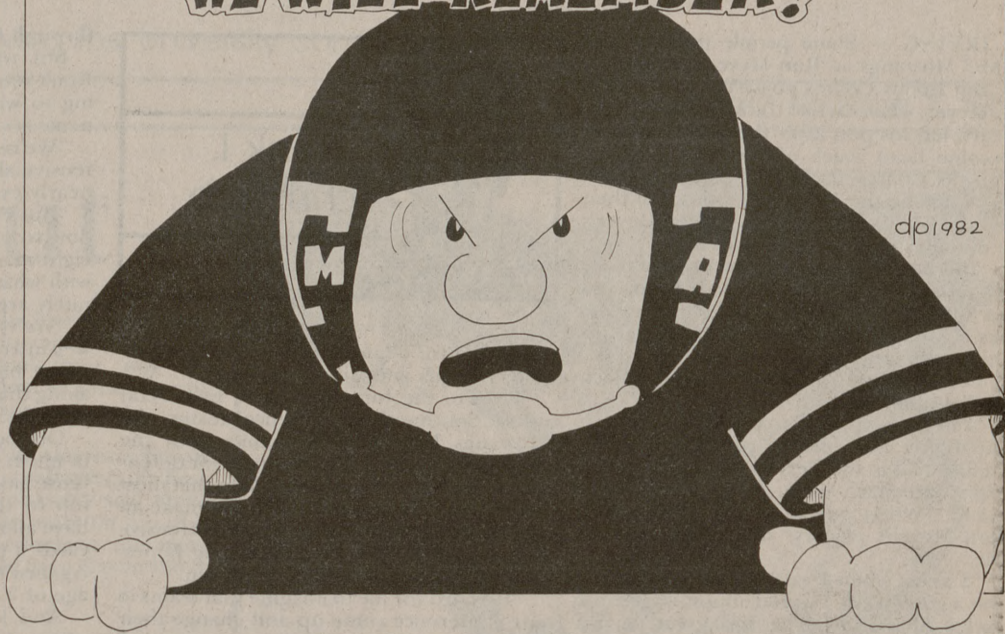
"I was surprised, (that the Mustangs won so handily) but turnovers will kill you," James said.

"You can't turn the ball over and win, and when Kubiak went down, you could just see a little flutter go out of their offense."

"You hear that defenses should bend and bend and bend, and never break, and that's how the Aggies were. When we were watching film from the first of the year, they (the Aggies) didn't have a lot of guys who seemed excited about playing defense."

"But we could see that in the last couple of weeks their defense started to get excited about being out there. Once they get their injuries down, once they get their rhythm down, they're going to be a good team."

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## Weekend

(continued from page 18)

— Alkio def. Robert Bazon (UT), 6-2, 6-0

— (semifinals) Kettenacker def. Hill (A&M), 6-2, 5-4 (Hill withdrew during second set)

— Alkio lost to Crozier (UT), 2-6, 3-6

Both teams will hold tournaments again this weekend, with the men hosting Texas Tech and Southwest Texas State, and the women's team hosting Houston, Oklahoma State and North Texas State.

The Aggie women's volleyball team defeated the Kentucky Wildcats Saturday night to win the championship of the A&M Invitational tournament.

The match lasted more than two hours, with Texas A&M emerging victorious by scores of 15-9, 10-15, 16-14, 10-15 and 15-11.

The Aggie Ladies, now 27-4, have won 20 straight matches, three short of the state record set by AIAW national champion Texas in 1981. The tourney title was Texas A&M's third of the season.

Texas A&M, ranked No. 15 in the NCAA poll, now swings west for its toughest road trip of the season, playing Long Beach State today and No. 2-ranked San Diego State Tuesday night at 7:30. This weekend, the Aggie Ladies will participate in the UCLA/NIVT tourney in Los Angeles.

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