

Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

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john wagner

Aggies may begin, end SWC season Saturday

Let you lose faith and chunk your football ticket book in the nearest dumpster, remember this important point. It's the second season. A time for rebirth. A chance to redeem past sins. The Aggies open their Southwest Conference season Saturday. They might also end it.

TO SAY SATURDAY'S game against Texas Tech is important is an understatement of the biggest kind. The entire season rests on what the Aggies can do in a sold-out Jones Stadium, capacity 47,000. A win might put A&M back on the right track. A loss, and you can go ahead and toss your ticket book.

That's the way these things go. One minute you're a contender. Three hours later you're an also-ran. Conference play has a way of making coaches nervous — a loss to the "wrong element" (pardon the wattism) can end a team's bowl chances quicker than scheduling Georgia, Ohio State and USC all in a row.

When you play in a conference against bullies like Texas, SMU and Arkansas, you can expect to lose one. Maybe a couple. Probably all three. A team like A&M can't afford to lose to Texas Tech. Or Baylor. Or Rice. Those schools you have to beat, especially when you begin SWC competition with a 1-2 record, as have the Aggies.

Losses to California and Oklahoma State have made things awfully tough for A&M. The Aggies need to win at least six of eight conference games to be considered for a bowl bid.

Not impossible. But just about as close to it as you can get.

TEXAS TECH COACH Jerry Moore says his players are "a bunch of no-names." No criticism intended. Those no-names whipped previously-unbeaten Baylor 26-11 last week, forcing six Bear turnovers and giving up only 41 yards rushing.

Comparisons? A&M rushed 40 times for 49 yards against Oklahoma State. To win, the Aggies are going to have to throw the ball, something they did equally poor against the Cowboys.

It's been seven years since Tech has opened conference play with two straight victories. This could be the year they break that string. Moore's gang of no-names can be rough on a team. Just ask Grant Teaff and the Baylor Bears.

So when A&M coach Jackie Sherrill says the Aggies will face a "tough test" in Lubbock, he means it. The last two games out West were both decided by one point. No, A&M didn't lose both of them. Only one.

WHAT ALL THIS boils down to is winning. To stay alive in the race for post-season play, the Aggies have to win Saturday. And the next Saturday, and most of the Saturdays after. They can't afford to lose.

At A&M's pre-season press conference, quarterback John Mazur said he would be "very disappointed" if the Aggies didn't make it to a bowl game this year.

So would a lot of other people, John. Get those ticket books ready. The season may end before the schedule is finished.

Growing grumblings

Aggies try to silence skeptics with win against Texas Tech

by John P. Lopez

Battalion Staff
The grumblings are getting louder and the Texas A&M football team wants to quiet Aggie football skeptics soon — like Saturday when the Aggies travel to Lubbock to take on Texas Tech.

The grumblings, in this case, are Aggie football fans and local media personnel asking anyone who cares to listen, "what happened to A&M?"

In other words, talk around Aggieland is the same as it has been since the glory days of the mid '70s.

And the only thing Texas A&M can do to prove that things are different this year and the Aggies are a better team is chalk up a win against the Red Raiders Saturday.

Easier said than done. Even though most fans will have to scan the game program to find out exactly who is on the field for the Red Raiders, the "no-names", as Texas Tech coach Jerry Moore calls his team, are a talented troupe.

In their opening Southwest Conference game against Baylor last Saturday, the Red Raiders looked strong in their 26-11 romp over the Bears. It was Tech's first conference-opening win since 1977 and Moore said the emotional win will definitely help the Red Raiders this week.

"It's really great getting off on a winning note," Moore said. "It's always good to have an emotional day and win your first conference game."

But it wasn't just emotion that won the game for the Raiders. Although Tim Smith, Jim Hart, Robert Lewis and Brad White aren't exactly household names, they just might carry the Red Raiders to a successful season.

Lewis, a junior running back, is a perfect example of the consistent play the Red Raiders have turned in this season.

Lewis' longest run from scrimmage this year is 19 yards — good, but not exactly an all-America play — but he is averaging more than 6 yards a carry and 133 yards a game. That's what coaches like to see.

"It's great to have a good hard runner like Lewis around," Moore said. "He slashes through the line and gives you everything he's got on every play."

"Jim (quarterback Hart) is another guy like that. You can always count on him. Some players are good only on game day, but Jim practices hard everyday and you can tell on Saturdays when he plays. I'm real pleased with the way this team has been playing together."

But Moore said he is also aware of the way the Aggies haven't played together this season and "should be due a good game."



Moore's biggest worry is handling Texas A&M's size on both offensive and defensive lines.

"They are just tremendously big up front," he said. "Texas A&M is without a doubt the best

team we've faced all year. With the size and talent they have on their team, it's going to take our best effort of the year if we want to win."

But, if the Aggies are the best

team the Raiders have faced all year, why all the irate grumbling from Aggie partisans.

"Naturally, fans always want to see a team win," Moore said.

Former UH star signed by Houston USFL franchise

United Press International
HOUSTON — The Houston Gamblers of the United States Football League Thursday announced the signing of defensive end Mack Mitchell, a former University of Houston player and first round NFL pick, and three other players to contracts.

Also signed were wide receiver DeWayne Jeff, tight end Deon Miller and offensive guard Scott Boucher.

Mitchell, 6-8 and 260 pounds, played for Houston from 1971-1975 and holds the career sack record at 40. He was the first round draft pick of the

Cleveland Browns in 1975 and played there four years before going to the Cincinnati Bengals and the Denver Broncos for single seasons.

Jeff played in college for Hawaii and in the pros with the Detroit Lions and Baltimore Colts. Miller, who played for Rice University, spent the 1983 training camp with the Los Angeles Raiders. Boucher played at Northeast Louisiana and then with the Denver Broncos in 1982, the Chicago Blitz of the USFL in 1983 and with the Houston Oilers briefly in 1983.

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Pokes fill back slot with Allen

United Press International
DALLAS — The Dallas Cowboys Thursday signed running back Gary Allen, a second-year pro cut this summer by the Houston Oilers, to fill a roster spot left open by an injury to rookie Chuck McSwain.

Allen, 5-10 and 183 pounds, was named to the All-Western Athletic Conference team three times during his tenure at the University of Hawaii.

In seven games with Houston last season, Allen returned 15 kickoffs for an average of 19.5 yards per return. He rushed twice for 2 yards and caught two passes for 35 yards, including a 43-yard touchdown catch against the New York Giants.

McSwain underwent surgery this week to repair a tendon on a finger and will be out for the remainder of the season.

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