

The Battalion Sports

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Bowl-hungry Aggies rip Razorbacks

Murray's four TD passes lead Ags ast bewildered Razorbacks, 36-23

by John Wagner

Battalion Staff

Jackie Sherrill's Kiddie Corps gained a little respect Saturday. Under the direction of not-so-freshman quarterback Kevin Murray, Texas A&M's youth-laden squad turned the tables on Arkansas, 36-23, and earned the first Aggie win over Arkansas since 1976.

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Murray, a leading candidate to win Southwest Conference Newcomer of the Year honors, threw two touchdown passes and ran for another as the Aggies ended the Razorbacks' chances for a bowl bid — and increased their own considerably.

A representative of the Independence Bowl, only bowl in attendance, watched the Aggies together an almost-perfect second half and cry the Razorbacks. The win evened A&M's record at 4-4-1, with games against TCU and Texas on the schedule. Arkansas fell to 5-4.

But the key to a bowl bid, as Sherrill was quick to explain, is momentum. Consider the Aggies' situation. Since naming Murray as starting quarterback after the Aggies' 3-0 loss to Texas Tech, Sherrill's squad has gone 3-1-1, and given five points in just the right places, the Aggies could be in that same time span.

"You people (sports writers) are pretty knowledgeable about sports," said defensive end Ray Childress, who finished the game with 15 tackles and four quarterback sacks. "And you know we could easily be 9-0 right now. We have the ability and the talent to be competitive in every game."

The win was A&M's first over Arkansas coach Lou Holtz and Sherrill's first over a "name" opponent. From the looks of things, however, there are more of those on the way. Four of the Aggies' five touchdowns were scored by freshmen or sophomores — the fifth was scored by a junior. A&M's offense has only two seniors listed on the depth chart, and the Aggies outgained Arkansas 349 yards to 181.

One of the reasons for that is the play of Kevin Murray," Sherrill said, "is the best freshman in the conference. The leadership he has shown has been impressive."

Murray hit six different receivers for 194 yards, and he finished the afternoon 21-29 with one

interception. As a starter, Murray has completed 61 percent of his passes for 1,113 yards and 11 touchdowns.

"It's hard to believe he's a freshman," tight end Rich Siler (just a sophomore himself) said of Murray. "He handles pressure so well."

Despite the four touchdown passes, Murray's biggest moment of glory came late in the fourth quarter with the Aggies on the Arkansas 34-yard line.

Murray took the snap, hesitated just a second and burst up the middle on a quarterback sneak for the touchdown, capping an 11-play, 87-yard drive and giving A&M a 30-17 lead. The Razorbacks, caught blitzing on the play, never touched Murray.

"It was the right play at the right time," Sherrill said.

"They caught us in a blitz several times," Arkansas safety Keith Wyatt admitted. "Murray is a great athlete — he's a leader and he did a good job of leading the Aggies today. He's one of the better athletes at quarterback we've faced."

The A&M defense had another big day, shutting down the Razorback rushing attack and sacking quarterback Brad Taylor eight times for minus 66 yards. The Hogs — not known as a great rushing team, anyway — carried the ball 39 times for a net total of 39 yards.

"We just couldn't generate a running game, and that's always disastrous," Holtz said. "We have no excuses. Just give Texas A&M credit for the victory."

Cornerback Billy Brown helped the Aggies recover from a 9-3 halftime deficit when he intercepted a pass and recovered a fumble early in the third quarter. Both turnovers led to scores, and the Aggies erupted for 21 points in the first nine minutes of the second half to take a 24-9 lead.

The Razorbacks then ended the quarter with an 11-play, 80-yard drive against the wind (which gusted up to 29 miles an hour), and scored on a two-point conversion to cut A&M's lead to 24-17.

But the Aggies came back in the fourth with Murray's touchdown scamper and freshman Rod Bernstine's 5-yard touchdown reception to make it 36-17. Bernstine's touchdown was set up by Twelfth Man kickoff team member Tom Arthur's fumble recovery on the Arkansas 30.

Arkansas mounted a comeback attempt late in the game, scoring on a 2-yard touchdown pass from Taylor to Mark Miskler. The Razorbacks then recovered an onside kick, but Childress and Cannon combined to sack Taylor three times in four plays to stop the drive.



Texas A&M fullback Roger Vick carries the ball against Arkansas Saturday.

Vick led all rushers with 70 yards on 19 carries.

Dean Saito, Battalion staff

Taylor: Hogs didn't 'have it'

by Kay Mallett

Battalion Staff

A complete turnaround. That's what the frustrated University of Arkansas football team was calling its 36-23 loss Saturday to Texas A&M. Quite a change from the 35-0 whipping the Hogs gave the Aggies last year.

And when it was over, Razorback head coach Lou Holtz voiced his disappointment at his team's overall play.

"That's just about as poor as we've played intelligence-wise in a long time," an exasperated Holtz said outside the Razorbacks' locker room.

Intelligence-wise? One wonders whether it was a lack of wisdom or simply a lack of teamwork and enthusiasm that caused the loss.

Arkansas quarterback Brad Taylor summed up everything most accurately.

"We just didn't have it," he said. "The game just wasn't going for us the whole time."

Taylor, who led the Southwest Conference in total offense going into Saturday's game, completed only 16 of 30 passes. He rushed six times for only nine yards. And he was sacked eight times for a loss of 66 yards.

In other words, he just couldn't bring the team together, especially in the second half. When the chips were down, Taylor and the Hogs couldn't pull it off.

But they tried, vainly. Arkansas' passing game, which is usually the star of the Razorback offense, just didn't work. Either Taylor's passes — or Taylor himself — was being continually dropped.

"You can't blame the receivers," Taylor said. "We just couldn't get anything to connect."

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Aggie basketball team falls to Flyers, 65-64

by Bob Caster

Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M basketball team lost its season opener to the Houston Flyers 65-64 Saturday night, leaving a crowd of 2,643 in a state of disbelief as Aggie freshman Winston Crite had two baskets ripped out in the last two seconds of the game. Either would have given the Aggies a win.

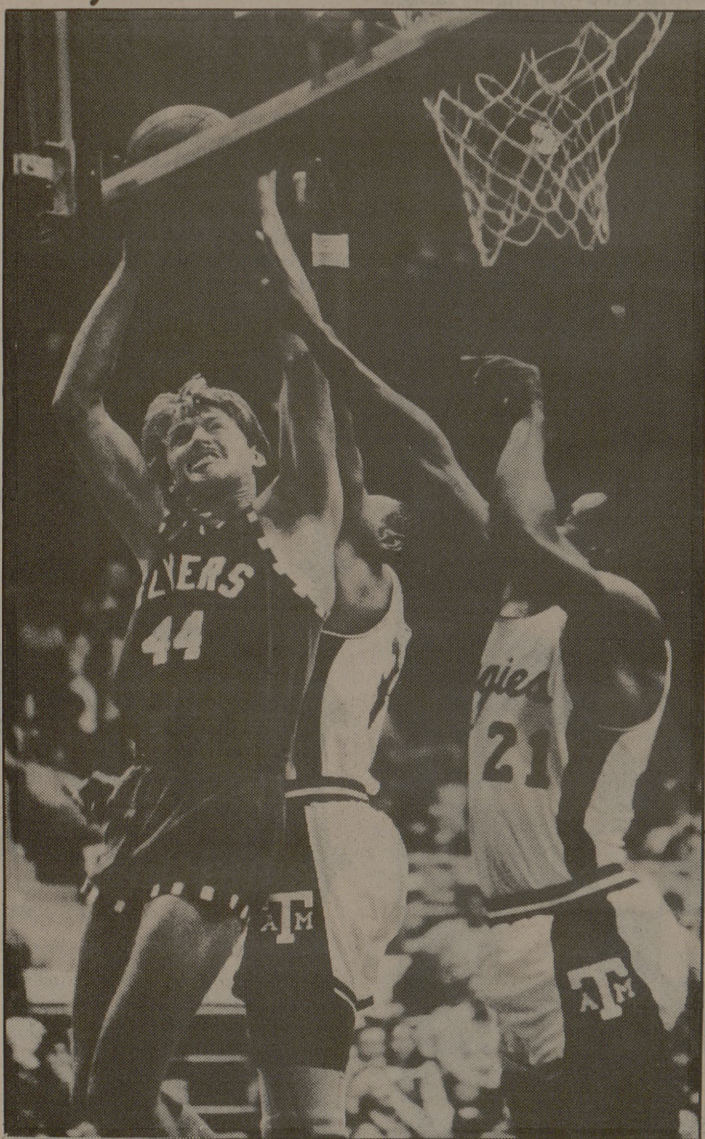
With less than a minute left in the game, the Flyers put the ball in play following a Crite three-point play but promptly turned it over to the Aggies at midcourt on an intercepted pass. With 15 seconds left, the Aggies returned the ball to their own end of the court, working it in to Crite who was waiting in the key. Crite put the ball in for the apparent go-ahead score but an offensive foul erased the basket with two seconds left on the clock.

The only hope for the Aggies was to intercept the inbounds pass and score — all in two seconds. And that's just how it happened as the clock ran out. But once again the basket was nullified on a travelling call against Crite.

The whole game was not as exciting as the last minute, however. The Flyers, who are the 1983 AAU champions, blew the Aggies out 33-20 in the first half. Led by 6-1 guard Nickey Snell, who finished with 22 points, the Houston team hit 52.2 percent from the field and 90 percent from the foul line during the first half. The hapless Aggies shot only 35 percent from the floor on 9 of 26 field goals in the first half.

Whatever Aggie coach Shelby Metcalf told his players at the half, however, it seemed to work. The Aggies came back in the second half and outscored the Flyers 44-32.

"I was really pleased with the effort they gave in the second half," Metcalf said. "I was mainly concerned with them putting out a good effort, not whether we win or lose."



Dean Saito, Battalion staff

Houston Flyer Larry Stephenson goes up for a basket against the Aggies Saturday in G. Rollie White Coliseum. The Flyers defeated A&M in the exhibition, 65-64.

Metcalf may have had good point. The Aggies have no seniors and only three juniors on the team. Of the starting five, three were freshmen and two were sophomores.

"I was real nervous in the first half, but we played more

of a passing game in the second half," said freshman guard Todd Holloway, who was the Aggies' leading scorer with 15 points. "That allowed us to free-lance a little more."

The Aggies have two weeks off before hosting Texas Lutheran on Nov. 26.

Childress' play stops Hogs short

by John P. Lopez

Battalion Staff

Texas A&M head coach Jackie Sherrill calls him one of the most dominating defensive linemen in the conference.

His teammates say he's awesome — a definite all-conference pick and a strong all-America candidate.

But Texas A&M opponents don't say much of anything about Ray Childress.

At least, not to his face. After all, who would want to upset a 6-7, 270-pound defensive end whose favorite pastime is making life miserable for opposing offenses. One would have to be crazy, or idiotic, or both to say something about Childress and throw him into a tizzy.

Say hello to the Arkansas Razorbacks.

It might have been Hog offensive tackle Robert Wilcoxen, who Childress consistently

whipped on the way to a game-high 15 tackles. It might have

"Ray Childress had a great game — probably the best game he's ever had for us." — Texas A&M coach Jackie Sherrill on Childress' 15-tackle performance Saturday

been Arkansas quarterback Brad Taylor, a four-time sack victim of Childress', or it might have been Razorback head coach Lou Holtz who couldn't do a thing to stop Childress from having a spectacular performance Saturday.

Regardless, somebody on the Arkansas team undoubtedly went over the edge — and had to

suffer the consequences. Namely, a 36-23 defeat that was keyed defensively by Childress.

"Ray Childress had a great game," Sherrill said. "Probably the best game he's ever had for us."

And those are pretty big words considering Childress was already the leading tackler for the Aggies going into Saturday's game against Arkansas with 77 stops. To date, Childress has 92 tackles — 66 unassisted including 11 quarterback sacks. He also intercepted a pass in the Aggies' 13-13 tie with Baylor earlier this season.

Those statistics have to please Childress — especially after having his best game of the year against Arkansas, a team that has beaten Texas A&M for six consecutive years.

"It feels great," Childress said after the Aggies' win. Simply put.

But that's the way Childress likes to put things, both on the field and off. He gets excited and intense when the defense is faring well, but he's not a flamboyant, gloating-type of player like a Mark Gastineau.

And when off the field, the soft-spoken Childress is usually direct and to the point. He hates losing and bears much of the responsibility when the Aggies end up on the short end of the score.

After Texas A&M lost to California 19-17 earlier this year, Childress was asked how he felt the defense performed.

"We didn't play very well — we lost," he said. Not a wordy assessment, but effective.

As is Aggie linebacker Billy Cannon's summation of Childress' talents.

"All we have to tell Ray Childress is 'go get the quarterback,'" Cannon said. "And he usually does."

Finally!

Luck, Oilers end streak with win over Detroit

United Press International

HOUSTON — It took a lot of Luck — Oliver Luck — but the Houston Oilers Sunday put an end to their long-suffering losing streak.

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Second-year pro quarterback Luck, in his first start, passed for 189 yards and two touchdowns, and he called upon Earl Campbell to run for 107 yards to lead a 27-17 win over the Detroit Lions.

The Oilers, who won for the first time since Sept. 19, 1982, thought so much of the job their new head coach has been doing they gave him the game ball afterward.

Interim head coach Chuck Studley said he would return the favor and award all 49 Oilers a game ball with "Nov. 13, 1983" on it. "Today, we literally rose from the dead," Studley said. "The team made up its mind that this thing had gone on long enough."

Studley made the decision one week ago to bench regular quarterback Gifford Nielsen and take a look at Luck. The coach, as well as the Lions, got an eyeful.

"He's a player, isn't he?" Studley said. "He may not have the greatest arm but he's a player and he got us in the end zone."

Luck said that despite having less than one game experience he felt comfortable running the offense.

"I suppose it's a Cinderella start," he said. "Hopefully, I won't turn into a pumpkin in a couple of games. I felt it was very important for us to come down the field and score on our first possession."

The Oilers did, but then they fell seven points behind twice. Each time Luck marched his team to touchdowns with ease that Houston has not shown since the days when fired coach Bum Phillips was in charge.

"It felt like we won the Super Bowl," Oilers center David Carter said. "It felt like we got a gorilla off our back. The weight of the world is off us. This is the best thing that has happened to us since... since... forever."

Lions defensive tackle Doug English said Luck played better than he thought he would.

"Luck was the man of the hour," he said. "I have to congratulate him."

Oilers' fullback Larry Moriarty also scored on a 3-yard run and place kicker Florian Kempf booted field goals and 47

and 21 yards.

Campbell, who one week ago demanded to be traded after this season, got his 107 yards on 28 carries. As in the days when the Oilers were playoff contenders, the team protected its lead by giving the ball to Campbell in the fourth quarter.

The Lions, now 5-6, suffered only their second defeat in six games despite running back Billy Sims 105 yards rushing and one touchdown.

Sims leaped one yard for his score, and Detroit also scored on Danielson's 3-yard pass to fullback James Jones and on a 35-yard field goal by Ed Murray.

Oiler safety Willie Tullis intercepted two passes off quarterback Eric Hipple and cornerback Bill Kay took one pass off quarterback Gary Danielson pass, all in the second half, to close the door on any Lions comeback bid.

Interim head coach Chuck Studley won his first game since taking over the Oilers five games ago with the resignation of Ed Biles.

One week ago, Studley benched regular quarterback Gifford Nielsen in the first quarter and brought on Luck to play in his first full game.