

Tough Bear defense rains on Ag's hopes

By TRAVIS TINGLE
Assistant Sports Editor

Baylor Head Coach Grant Teaff greeted every member of his team with a smile and a firm pat on the back as they filed into the dressing room. And one of Teaff's water-logged players summed up the Bears' 20-16 victory over Texas A&M with a phrase that sounded like a command from God.

"And the sun shall shine," Mark Cochran, Baylor's defensive left guard, said.

"And the sun came out," Teaff replied with the twang of a TV evangelist.

Baylor had come off two close losses in rain, to SMU and Houston, but even the three inches of rain that pounded "Lake" Kyle Field Saturday couldn't dampen the Bears' desire to get back on the winning track.

"It was a great win for our team," Teaff said. "We've had two heart-breakers in the rain. Each time, there was a fine line between winning and losing. It was that way again today. It's an unbelievable feeling to win a close one like this. We had to find a way to win, and this time we did it."

A tenacious defense, which allowed A&M only 207 yards of total offense, deserved the game ball for the Bears.

On fourth-and-goal from the Baylor two-foot line, A&M's Craig Stump pitched wide to little used split end Jeff Holley. Holley unwisely hesitated and gave Baylor linebackers Ray Berry and Kevin Hancock a chance to force the play outside and make the game-saving tackle.

"Our linebackers had the dive by the running back and our strong safety had the quarterback dive covered," Hancock said. "I knew he (Stump) would have to pitch outside when we shut things down inside. Ray and I just went outside and were able to string it out."

"If you keep a team, the size of A&M, out of the endzone from the two-foot line, you're doing what it takes to win close games," Teaff said. "That was a big play. They just don't come any bigger than that."

"We thought they would do one of three things. We figured they would go over the top, bootleg it or fake over the top and run the option. They went with the option and we just got excellent penetration and made the play."

After a 24-yard punt by Baylor's Buzzy Sawyer, the Aggies inherited excellent field position at the Bears' 32-yard-line. A&M marched to the Baylor 15 and had one more opportunity to score, until Bear rover Robert Watters intercepted an ill-advised Stump pass with only 21 seconds remaining in the game.

"I just thought, hold on to the ball," Watters said. "I just wanted to make sure I caught the ball before I started running with it."

A quick kick attempt by A&M fullback Anthony Toney was blocked by defensive tackle Paul Mergenhausen. Hancock scooped the ball up and the Bears were in business at the Aggies' 16 yard line. Baylor then capitalized on an 8-yard touchdown run by quarterback Tom Muecke.

"That was definitely a big play," Teaff said. "The wind shifted be-

hind them, so they made the decision to go with the quick kick. Mergenhausen did a great job blocking the kick and Hancock put us in position to score."

The weather conditions changed the whole complexion of the game from Baylor's standpoint. Teaff wouldn't elaborate on what might have happened.

"We had an entire game plan that we worked on all this week and we're not able to use it because of the rain," Teaff said.

"In that kind of game, first you take care of the ball. The intensity of the rain varied, but even after the rain stopped, the ball stayed wet the rest of the game. Both teams did a miraculous job handling the ball."

Both teams decided the games outcome, not the elements. Mistakes are intensified in this kind of weather, but both teams did a good job despite it.

Teaff was particularly pleased with the toughness of his defense.

"We have a heck of a defense," he said. "Our defense completely matured as a result of this game. They've been playing the run well and the Aggies found that out today."

"Our secondary had been maligned, abused, whacked, cracked and cussed, but today they came through for us."

It was the first real starting assignment for Muecke, who said the Bears knew they should have defeated Houston and SMU the last two weeks, but still came into the A&M game with a lot of confidence.

Muecke spoke for the whole team when he said:

"It's been about a month since we've seen sunshine on Saturday."

New Orleans could lose USFL team

United Press International

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. —The New Orleans Breakers soon might be shifted or sold to another city because of the U.S. Football League's decision to change to a fall schedule, Breakers owner Joe Canizaro said.

"If there is no change in direction of the league, we'll be asking for an alternative city as a backup," Canizaro said Saturday at a meeting of USFL owners. "I know it would be difficult to play in the fall against the Saints."

The New Orleans owner said moving is the only realistic alternative he now has, since the USFL confirmed Friday it will switch from a spring and summer schedule to a fall format in 1986. This would put the USFL in direct competition with the NFL.

The change would force the Breakers to play a lame-duck season in the Superdome in 1985 if the Saints renew their Dome lease and Canizaro elects not to compete with the NFL team.

"I've been opposed to a merger (with another USFL team) and I don't think that will happen," Canizaro said, "but the league might make it so interesting, or it might be so important to the league, that I'd do it."

Canizaro also is faced with a 10-year Superdome lease signed when the team moved from Boston last December. The lease calls for the Breakers to play in New Orleans during the spring and summer for nine more seasons.

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