

Ag fairy tale turns into nightmare

By Ed CASSAVOY
Sports Editor

Now children gather around the fire. I am going to tell you a bedtime story.

In the fair land of Aggie, many years ago, there was much rejoicing. The fair kings who reigned over the land of maroon and white had found their people a new coach for the football.

For years there had been sadness at the lousy play of the Aggies.

But now Coach Jackie Sherrill, or Sir Sherrill to the peasants, had come.

So the Brazos Valley filled with songs of good cheer, as hopes of a Cotton Bowl victory were renewed.

But, children, fair Aggeland was not as sunny a place as was first thought. After Saturday's 20-16 loss to Baylor, questions were raised about the fair knights of Jackie Sherrill.

Sir Sherrill came into the Baylor game with an 0-2 conference record, and he needed a win. Rumors abounded around the castle about the Aggie kings trying to buy out Sir Sherrill's contract if the Aggies failed to slay the dragon — or Bear.

Well they didn't win. Again.

After the game, Sir Sherrill, wet hair clinging to his skull, walked into the interview room in his stocking feet. He may have been drenched to the skin by the rain, but his spirits were not dampened.

Sherrill said he saw the Aggies do many good things against Baylor. The defense did some good things. Aggie quarterback Craig Stump did some good things. Jackie did some good things.

There were some grumbling from the assembled towncriers who had to report his words to the people.

What, they asked, was the reason for a quick kick by Anthony Toney which the Bears blocked? The Aggies gave the ball back to the Bears on the Aggie 16 yard line.

"On the quick kick, it was the right play to at that time," Sherrill said. "He (Toney) just kicked the ball too low."

Sir Sherrill said the team had worked on the quick kick in practice with good results.

"In practice Toney was hitting 45 yards," Sherrill said. "With Baylor playing a pass defense there wouldn't be anyone back there. It could have been a big play."

It was. For Baylor.

The Aggie knights on the kicking squad had an equally bad night. Especially Friar Alan Smith and punter Sir Todd Tschanz.

Torrential downpours throughout the game did not help their cause. Neither did the snapping of Sir Shawn Walker. Epic songs will be heard for years lauding the high snap that soared over Tschanz's head. Tschanz smothered the ball on the Aggie two. Baylor converted that small error into 7 points.

Smith seems to be under the spell of an evil wizard. He missed two field goals against the Bears. More importantly, he missed an extra point conversion that would come back to haunt the Aggies.

A&M was struggling on offense, down by four points going into the final minutes of the fourth quarter. A field goal was not enough.

A&M marched down to the Bears one yardline. On fourth down, Sherrill had to go for it.

The call was for Stump to fake to Sir Thomas Sanders then pitch to Jeff Holley running left. Holley got the ball and forgot the one thing all successful knights know — never hesitate.

Holley did, and was pulled down at the Baylor three.

"If we go ahead and sprint to the outside then we may have scored," Sherrill said, "but we tried to make an inside move and it didn't work."

One question that comes to mind, is why not have Sanders run right? Having Sanders run up the middle did nothing to fool the Bear linebackers. Linebackers are the people you must fool.

The Aggies had one more shot at getting the Bears to yield, but a Stump pass to Prince Jimmy Teal was intercepted.

"On a play like that you can't get sacked," Stump said. "And I should have just thrown out of bounds. I

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Aggie running back Anthony Toney slips and slides his way to the first A&M touchdown. Saturday's game was played in monsoon rain conditions, with Baylor beating the Aggies 20-

16. This was the third loss in a row for A&M, tying them with Rice University for last place in the Southwest Conference. Sherrill's Aggies play Rice at Kyle Field this Saturday.

Photo by PETER BOY

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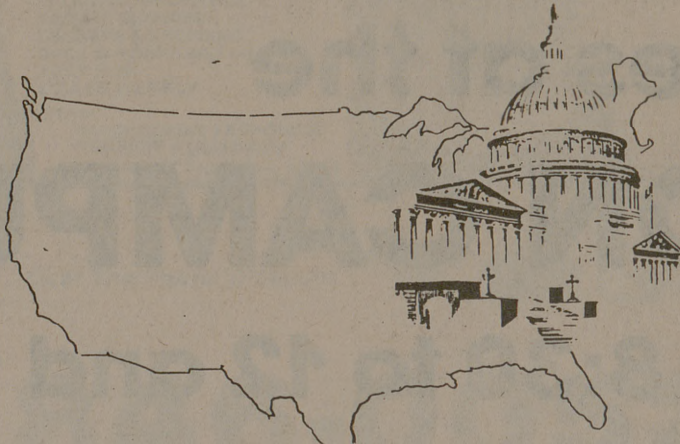
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