

# Sports

## Spikers' upset win over Purdue ranks high in Ag history

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS  
Assistant Sports Editor

Incredible. Awesome. Unbelievable. Although the Texas A&M football team's win over Houston was a big one, those three words can only be used to describe the No. 17 Aggie volleyball team's upset of No. 9 Purdue Saturday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The spikers' 12-15, 15-12, 15-9, 9-15, 17-15 upset ranks right up there, along with the football team's 37-12 upset of Texas last year, as one of the greatest wins in A&M sports history.

In fact, the only thing missing in this one was the orange and white uniforms. "This ranks right up there with San Diego State (the Ags upset the Aztecs last year)," said a hoarse A&M Coach Terry Condon. "They are ranked No. 9 and hadn't lost to anyone but (No. 13) Illinois. We really needed this one. This is a turning point for us."

But in the fifth and deciding game, it appeared A&M would fall to the Boiler-makers just as No. 7 Texas had the night before. Behind the blocking and spiking of Marianne Smith and Linda Reichl, Purdue had a 14-7 advantage, just one point shy of the match.

However, the Aggies' outside hitters, Margaret Spence and Stacey Gildner, took control.

While slowly but surely chipping away at the deficit, A&M held off match point after match point. In fact, it held off eight in all.

With the partisan crowd of at least 1,750 on their feet, yelling with the Dunn Hall Bleacher Bums, Chris Zogata served an ace to put the Aggies within one at 14-13. After fending off match point No. 7, a Gildner kill knotted the game at 14.

Purdue outside hitter Kim Corwin got one point back for the Boilers and suddenly, they have match point No. 8.

But A&M middle blocker Sherri Brinkman drove the ball past the tall Boiler-maker front line, giving the Ags yet another chance.

Aggie setter Lesha Beakley, playing with a fractured hand, served A&M's 15th point. After the Boilers got the side out, Gildner got the ball back with a dink, and served an ace to give the Ags their first match point.

Although they didn't take it the first time or the second time, the Aggies had worked too hard to let this one slip away.

The third match point was a charm. When a Purdue spike touched out of bounds, Gildner slumped to the floor in disbelief as her teammates and A&M fans rushed onto the court.

"It does happen," Condon said, "but I don't think I've ever seen anyone come back after being down 14-7 to a team like Purdue. To tell you the truth, I didn't think we would do it. They just believed in themselves."

It was similar to a football team being down by 14 points with two minutes left in the game and no timeouts.

Impossible. "I don't think we've ever been under that much pressure," Beakley said. "This has to be one of the top matches of all time. It was one of the most exciting, tense and had the most pressure situations."

Just as the Dallas Cowboys pulled the incredible comebacks behind Roger Staubach, the Aggies performed their version of the Hail Mary just as well.

A&M's quarterback came in the form of Beakley, an unlikely leader at 5-foot-5, and it's version of Drew Pearson came in 5-8 Gildner, a first year starter who had seen little playing time before this year.

"Lesha and Chris did a great job setting the ball," Condon said. "Lesha did a tremendous job quarterbacking this team. Stacey Gildner played especially well. They were keying on Sherri, so Stacey helped take some of the pressure off of her."

Both teams had their All-Americans and both played as such.

Brinkman had a superb night with 27 kills and a .323 hitting percentage for the Aggies.

"Sherri played well," Condon said. "She has to deal with six against one any time we play. Any team we play, they think if they stop Sherri they stop the Aggies. I think we proved tonight we aren't like that. Sherri hit some outside sets tonight that I've never seen her hit before. That's nice to see."

And the Boiler-makers got 32 kills and a .288 percentage from their All-American, Smith, who seemed almost unstoppable.

"Purdue is an exciting team," Condon said. "They had people putting the ball away almost at will."

What Purdue lacked was what A&M possessed — the Gildner factor.

Gildner, never before mentioned in the same breath as All-America, certainly looked like one Saturday.

Her 23 kills, .353 hitting percentage and 20 digs was the difference between

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## A&M to play for all the marbles

By BRANDON BERRY  
Sports Writer

"We're good enough to be in the Top 20," Texas A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill said after the Aggies defeated Houston 43-16 Saturday at Kyle Field. "Every game from now on just gets bigger and bigger."

"When we play Baylor next Saturday it will be a very, very big ball game. It's going to be for all the marbles."

Against the Cougars, the Ags seemed to be playing against themselves.

Would they score more than 50 points? Would A&M fullback Roger Vick earn his third consecutive game of more than 100 yards rushing? Would the defense hold the Houston veer offense to negative yardage for three full quarters?

After the first quarter, the final outcome was never a question.

"We went out there and weren't really ready, mentally," Vick said. "But we never panicked, and eventually things started going our way."

Forty-three points their way.

Houston opened the game after fielding a short kickoff from A&M placekicker Scott Slater on their own 38 yard line. They proceeded on a 62-yard, 12-play touchdown drive, which culminated in a four-yard TD run by sophomore Winston Williams.

On their ensuing first possession, the Aggie offense scored, but for the wrong team.

A&M quarterback Kevin Murray misfired on a lateral pass to Vick, which was ruled a fumble. Murray pitched the ball out of the back of the endzone for a safety rather than give the Cougars a chance for the touchdown.

After a short Todd Tschantz punt, the Cougar offense went back to work only 53 yards from another score.

Houston, behind shifty Gerald Landry at quarterback, drove to the A&M 14-yard line in three plays before fumbling the ball away to the Aggies on a great defensive play by Aggie outside linebacker Todd Howard.

The A&M defense then didn't allow the Cougars another first down until the last moments of the first half and held Houston to minus 5 yards offense for the next two quarters.

"I don't know if (the fumble) was the turning point," Sherrill said, "but, even if we would have fallen behind 16-0, we feel very good about our offense's ability to move the ball and put points on the board."

"But what you saw out there was a total defensive effort. There's no question that our defense dictated what happened out there — we kept putting them in the hole!"

And kick returner Jimmie Hawkins kept making them pay for it.

The senior from San Antonio returned five Robert Myers' punts 87 yards, returned a Chip Brown-dyke kickoff 32 yards and, for good mea-

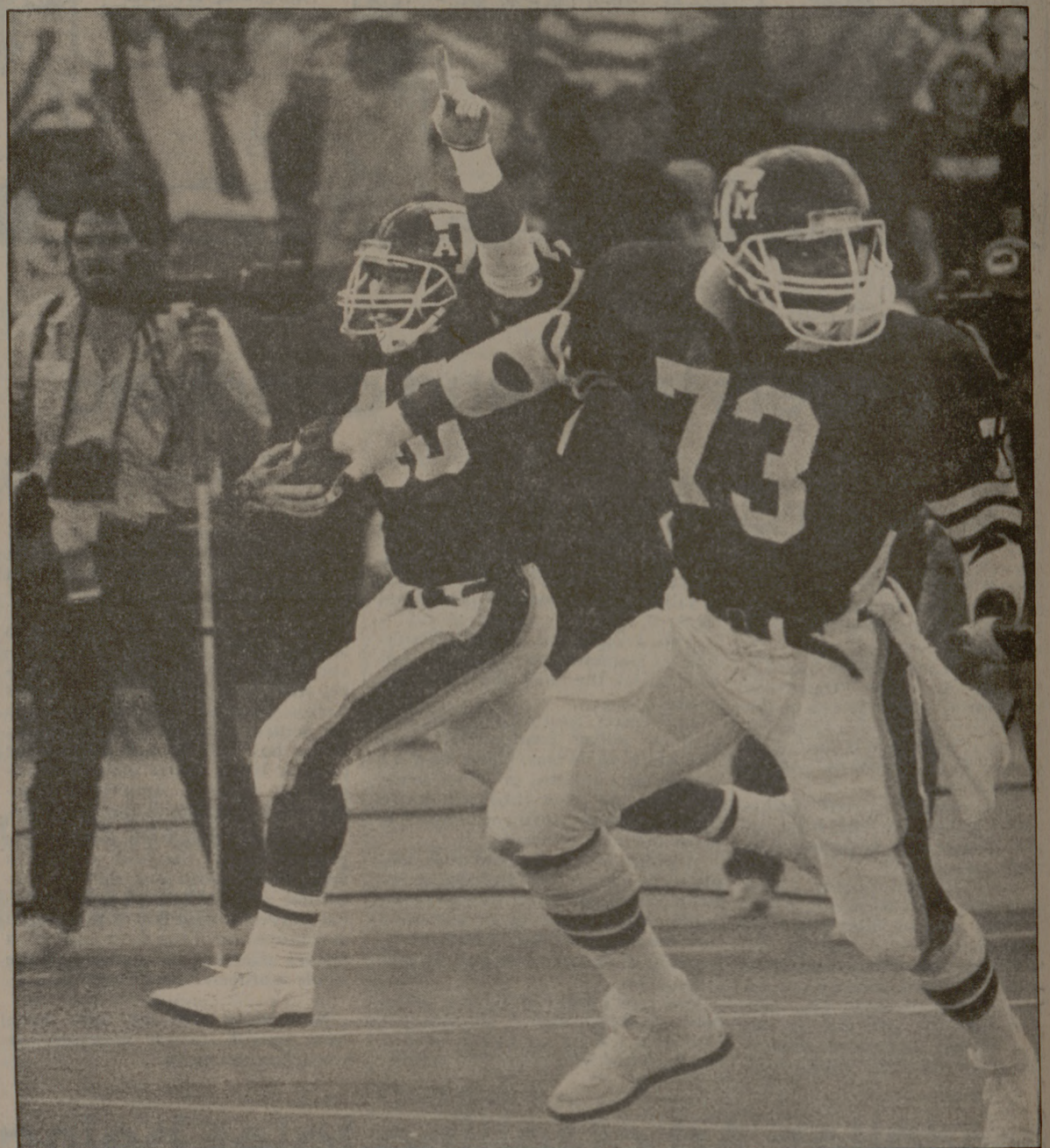


Photo by JOHN MAKELY

Texas A&M's Jimmie Hawkins celebrates on his way to a 32-yard TD after an interception in

A&M's 43-16 win over Houston Saturday. Todd Howard (73) provides Hawkins with an escort.

sure, returned a Landry interception 32 yards for a touchdown.

About the only ball Hawkins didn't return was the game ball awarded him by the A&M coaching staff.

"When Houston kicks, they usually kick it from left to right," Hawkins said. "We just practiced all our returns from the right and it paid off."

For the game, the Aggies rolled up 185 return yards, compared to just 52 total return yards for the Cougs. When the A&M offense did score, they had to move the ball an average of only 38 yards.

"Everything just came together today," Hawkins said. "I think we had a few things go wrong at the beginning of the game, but we just started playing our game."

Howard said, "Our defense is really getting a feel for what we are doing. We have a lot of poise and character."

"We really have confidence in our offense this season because we know they are going to move the ball no matter what."

Either forward or backward.

The A&M offensive line was penalized 11 times for 68 yards.

"It wasn't a very productive game," offensive tackle Doug Williams said. "It was the same old things — 11 penalties for 68 yards."

"Me, as an offensive lineman, will take the blame for 49 rushes for 162 yards. We didn't perform like a top offensive line is supposed to play."

But senior fullback Anthony Toney, the Ags' leading rusher with 77 yards on 17 carries, disagreed.

"I think Doug just got a little carried away," Toney said. "How can you complain? I thought we moved the ball well. Doug just overreacted."

Like little boys are prone to do, playing for all the marbles.

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