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Sports

&M closer to last season's form

By Ken Sury

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xas A&M, coming off last s loss to Louisiana State Uni-y greeted North Texas State ticipants in the Section he eager-of a hun-**Sports**

olf spot-Analysis flock of by crushing the Eagles, 48-28.

urday night. I's home opener wasn't even

as the final score would indicause the Aggies played secnd third-string players for the ity of the second half.

had only two setbacks in its e first half. The first was an to fullback Roger Vick, who d a compound dislocation of little finger. On the fourth an plans on Soviet he game, with A&M/already U's 19-yard line, Vick tried to an Eagle defender and on the pinkie. His bone was dthrough the skin. V. speech

M Head Coach Jackie Sherrill ick would miss this weekend's with Southern Mississippi, and os the SWC opener with Texas

loss of Vick didn't hurt the offense too much, however, se senior Ira Valentine was inon the next play and he fired h openings in the Eagle de-o score the game's first touch-

entine later scored on a 1-yard ith five minutes, 17 seconds the first half to up the Aggie 24-7

other setback was a turnover M's second possession. Quark Kevin Murray tried to hit re-Shea Walker on third down, ly found the waiting hands of l's Ralph Roberson, who re-d the ball 45 yards for a touchand the only score by the Ea-

and the only score by the Ea-athehalf. th the first-team offense in the for the first half, A&M had uouble scoring against its out-ad Division 1-AA opponent. A&M's six first-half scoring (four touchdowns and two goals), the longest drive only



A&M fullback Ira Valentine lunges for extra yardage as a North Texas State tackler holds on.

consumed 4:46 off the clock. A&M had the ball for 19½ minutes, while NTSU held it only 10½ minutes.

Murray moved up in the SWC re-cord books during the game. His 13 completions now rank him sixth on the all-time list with 359, while his 22 attempts and 193 yards moved him into ninth on the list with 634 at-

tmepts and 4,479 yards. A big reason for A&M's offensive success is that the Aggie defense be-came more aggressive than at the LSU game. North Texas State was held to 39 yards of *total* offense in the first half.

"Of course we're happy with the way we played," nose guard Sammy O'Brient said, "even though it was with a team not up to our caliber.

"We had a lot more intensity on the field. We were happy after makValentine replaced Roger Vick who was side-lined with a dislocation of his left pinkie.

ing a big play. A lot more than at LSU."

Linebacker Johnny Holland agreed, adding, "We had our motor turned on. Last week, we didn't play as hard. We never got that motor turned on."

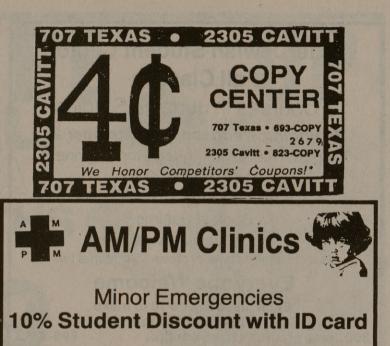
With the comfortable 34-7 halftime lead, Sherrill said he didn't have any problem with bringing in the second and third-team players. "We certainly wouldn't keep our (experienced) players in and take a chance at getting them hurt," Sherrill said, adding that it was a way to get the backup players used to game situations for later in the season.

Two of the A&M backups who had good performances were senior Lance Haverda and sophomore Tim Landrum. With the Eagles punting from their own 37, Haverda blocked the kick and Landrum scooped it up at the 18 and dashed in for A&M's

wide, so I had a gap to run through. I had a straight shot at the punter."

NTSU tried to mount some semblance of a comeback by scoring three times in the final quarter. The effort was aided by a blocked punt and two Aggie turnovers, but it was simply too little too late for the Eagles.

So if the play of the first half is any indication, the egos are back intact and the Aggies are back in form — perhaps championship form.



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"It was a called play," Haverda said. "We sent 10 people in. North Texas State had their receiver split