

Sports

Aggies 'bear-ly' win, derail Baylor curse

By Ken Sury
Sports Editor

Go ahead. Toss out the rabbit feet, the four-leaf clover and run over a black cat.

These Aggies can't be jinxed. Last week Texas A&M ended 33 years of futility in Houston by beating UH 19-7 on Saturday.

Analysis

Aggies derailed Baylor for the first time since 1982.

You can't jinx these Aggies. You have to outplay them.

The Bears certainly tried to do that in a game that easily could be called a classic.

The Aggies' 31-30 victory certainly had all the trappings of a classic football game—outstanding offensive plays, tough goal-line stands, great quarterbacks and "never-say-die" attitudes by both teams.

And it was one of A&M quar-

terback Kevin Murray's greatest games.

"Spell it Murray, that's all you can say," Baylor coach Grant Teaff said. "He escaped our pressure and did the job. On third down he was just incredible. In those situations he got the ball there by an eyelash. It was like he was throwing through a couple of boards; like through a slat.

"It's a game of inches and really that was the difference in the game."

A&M coach Jackie Sherrill was equally impressed with Murray's play.

"Kevin Murray played the best game I've seen a quarterback play, and I've been around some great quarterbacks," Sherrill said.

Murray said his performance in last year's loss to Baylor inspired his play Saturday.

"We all went out with chips on our shoulders," Murray said. "Last year, I let our team down and Aggies all

over the world down. Today I just wanted to go out and play better than that."

Murray certainly did that. The junior quarterback completed 25 of 40 passes for 308 yards and three touchdowns. He was not intercepted either. The touchdowns moved Murray into a tie for the career touchdown record by a SWC quarterback with 40. A&M's Edd Hargett and SMU's Chuck Hixson also have 40 career touchdown tosses.

A&M's comeback was remarkable in that the Aggies were completely outplayed by Baylor in the first quarter. The Aggie offense looked as lackluster as it had against Houston last week as A&M punted after three plays on four of its first five possessions. On the other possession, fullback Roger Vick fumbled on first down just after A&M defensive end

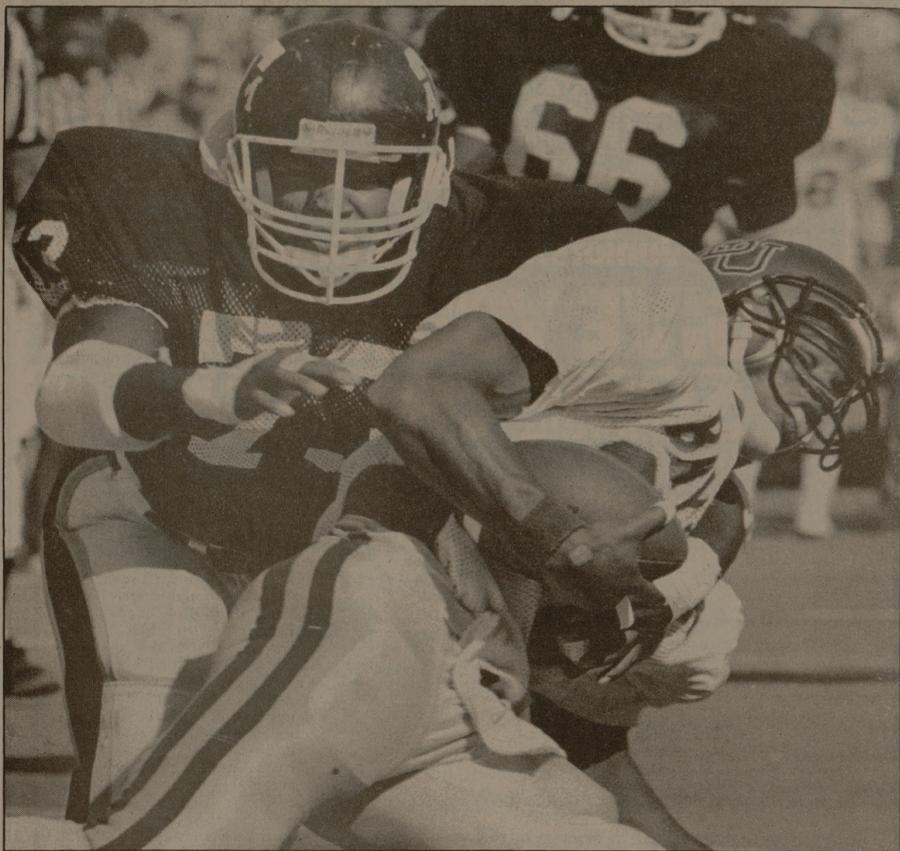


Photo by Dean Saito
Texas A&M outside linebacker Todd Howard wraps up Baylor halfback Charles Perry during Saturday's 31-30 Aggie victory. The crowd of 74,739 was the third largest ever in Kyle Field.

The 'catch' saves Ags' day

By Loyd Brumfield
Assistant Sports Editor

With 3 minutes and 48 seconds left to go in Saturday's slugfest with Baylor, Texas A&M wide receiver Tony Thompson didn't have time to think that maybe the hopes of every Aggie in the world were resting in his hands as he brought down the catch—a wobbly, bobbly touchdown reception that gave A&M a 31-30 win—its first victory over the Bears in four years.

"In those situations you more or less react instead of think," he said.

Thompson reacted well by out-running Baylor cornerback Anthony Coleman across the endzone and making a spectacular catch of a Kevin Murray pass that probably had more than a few hearts flutter among the 74,739 in attendance at Kyle Field.

"I knew I was wide open," Thompson said. "All I had to do was make the catch."

Thompson's catch was the last of a personal high of six receptions for

49 yards and by far his most important one.

"I couldn't tell if he (Coleman) tipped it or not," Thompson said. "It just came down off my right hand."

Thompson added that he used his peripheral vision to stay inbounds and make the catch.

The sophomore from Houston hasn't had a chance to share the limelight with A&M's more celebrated players because of limited playing time, but don't be fooled. Receiver Shea Walker and tight end Rod Bernstein said they know just how good Thompson is.

"We call him the 'Spider-Fella,'" Walker said. "He's got these long arms, you know. He gives me and Rod Harris a chance to rest, but he's good enough to come in and play."

Bernstein voiced similar praise for Thompson.

"Tony's an outstanding receiver," he said. "He hasn't had a chance to play, but he came in today and made the big play."

Bernstine then added, "He runs better routes than me."

Murray, who had a pretty decent day himself by completing 25 of 40 passes for 308 yards and three touchdowns, was another fan of Thompson's.

"Tony made a good move to clear out the middle and he made a great catch," he said, "but I didn't see it."

Murray said it was just Thompson's turn to contribute.

"Hey, Tony, Shea and Bernie (Bernstine) all came to the front when they had to," Murray said.

Thompson has been involved in big games in the past, but he said the Baylor game was easily his most memorable.

"This is by far my best game," he said. "It's a great feeling. We all understand our roles on this team. You may start, or you may not, but when you do play, you better shine."

Gooden gets scuffing inspection

See game story, page 10

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Mets, who complained throughout the National League playoffs that Houston pitcher Mike Scott was illegally scuffing the ball, saw their ace, right-hander Dwight Gooden, subjected to an inspection Sunday night in Game 2 of the World Series.

In the second inning, just as Boston center fielder Dave Henderson came to bat, Red Sox Manager John

McNamara complained about a band-aid on Gooden's left hand.

After a conference at the mound, Gooden removed the band-aid and continued pitching.

Mets Manager Davey Johnson said Gooden was wearing the band-aid because he had cut the middle finger on his left hand.

"They just picked up on it," Johnson said of the Red Sox. "You're not supposed to have any foreign substance, but a band-aid is not going to scuff a baseball."

Gooden, who would allow three runs in the next inning of the Mets' 9-3 loss, dismissed the episode.

"They said you can't rub the ball with the hand when the band-aid is on, so I just took it off," Gooden said.

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