

Sports

A&M vs. Texas

Sherrill says slumping 'Horns will play with lots of emotion

By Ken Sury
Sports Editor

Although Texas A&M and the University of Texas are coming off completely different results Saturday, both A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill and Texas Coach Fred Akers said they expect an emotional game as ever when the two teams square off in their annual Thanksgiving rivalry.

A&M is coming off a 74-10 cakewalk over Texas Christian, while the Longhorns lost to Baylor in Waco 18-13 to kill any possible Cotton Bowl hopes they had.

Akers, in a telephone interview Monday during Sherrill's press conference, said he's not sure of his team's mood as the game nears.

"I haven't determined that yet," Akers said. "I expect our players to be looking forward to it. That was a big disappointment last Saturday for us to finally be knocked out of the championship race and I don't know what effect that'll have."

"I hope that we'll bounce right back and give the kind of effort we've been giving."

Sherrill said he knows the UT players will be ready for the Aggies.

"They're going to be emotional and pumped up because they're playing Texas A&M," Sherrill said, "just like our players are going to be ready to play Texas. We can try to throw in all the added incentives (to winning this game) and that doesn't really make any difference."

Texas doesn't have many incentives to beat A&M other than the rivalry. Texas will not be headed to a bowl game for the first time since 1967, but can knock the Aggies out of the Cotton Bowl much like A&M did to UT last year.

For Akers, a win could be his last hope of keeping his job as Texas head coach. But Akers said he won't approach this game any differently than any other season finale.

"I've got a group of players here that expect me to see that they're

prepared as best as they can be to play the ball game," he said. "And that's exactly what I would do any year."

Sherrill said his 8-2 Aggies aren't going to treat Texas as just another 5-5 team.

"I don't think either team is going to look at the stat sheets and say, 'Well, this team is good and this team is bad,'" Sherrill said. "It really



Texas Coach Fred Akers

doesn't matter. We're just going to go out and play and play hard."

"A&M and Texas is always a bowl game to each other. Even if one of them has already clinched the national championship or whatever, they're still going to line up and go after it."

Akers said the Longhorns will have to contain A&M's explosive offense.

"The thing that we would have to do if we were going to have a chance (to win) is not give up the big play and certainly not give up any that they don't earn," Akers said. "Like last week we go over (to Waco) and we have to do the same thing, yet on our first three possessions we turn the ball over."

"I thought it was a miracle that we still had a chance to win in the fourth quarter. You can't make those mistakes."

Sherrill said A&M profited from the easy win over TCU by resting players such as center Matt Wilson, nose guard Sammy O'Brien and offensive tackle Marshall Land, who's been hampered with a nagging leg injury throughout the season.

For the Longhorns, that wasn't the case.

"We've got some bruises and strains that come from a very tough football game," Akers said, "and that one was a tough football game (against Baylor), but hopefully (the players will be healed by game time."

"That's the biggest problem we have with the short week — is playing after such a physical game, whether or not the bruises and strains can heal properly and sufficiently enough."

"It'll make it that much tougher for us to overcome that. But there's no way we can change that. They had a fairly easy day and we had a real dogfight."

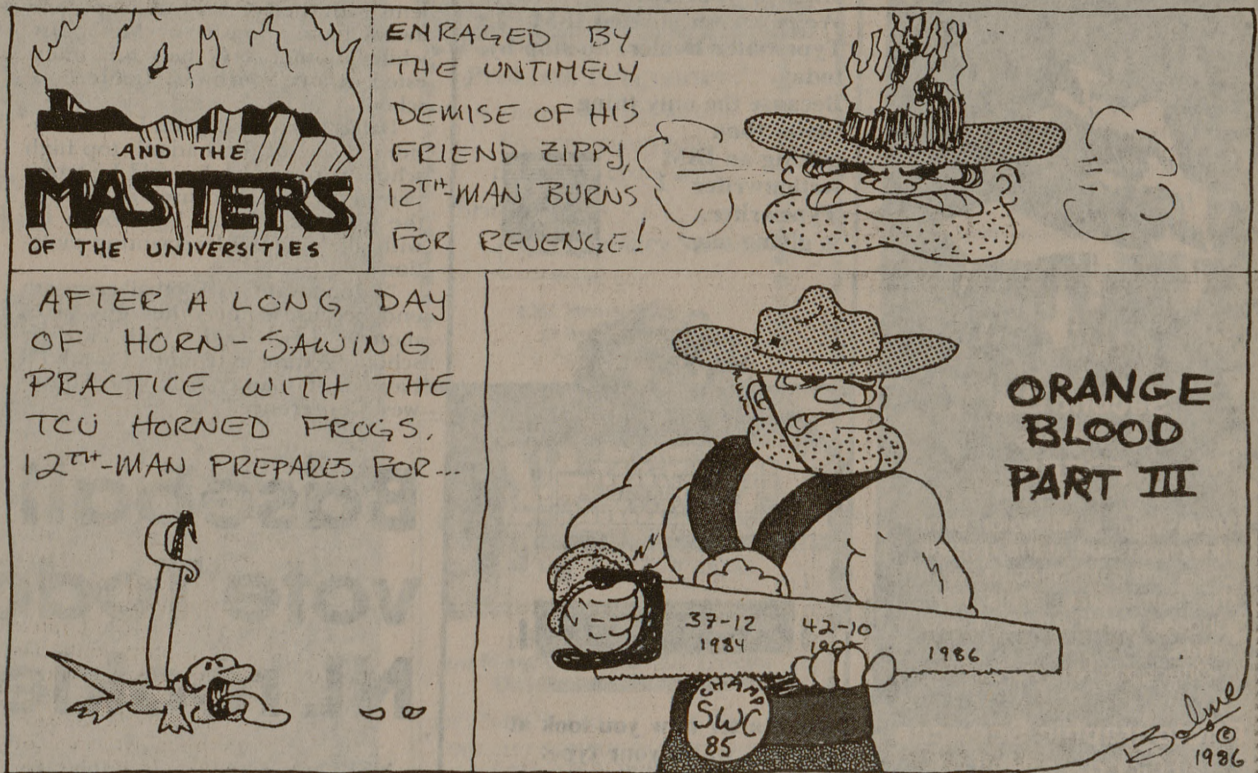
But the advantage for the Longhorns is that the game is in Austin, although Akers said he would like a little more of an edge against the Aggies.

"I'd just as soon A&M wasn't as good as they are, then it would really be a good edge," he said.

Sherrill agreed that playing in the Longhorns' backyard would aid Texas.

"Austin is extremely tough to play in," he said. "It has, over the history (of the series), been a very tough place to play, but it's kind of like Kyle Field. They're both tough for each other (team)."

"But then we'll have some people there hollering too. Crowd noise really doesn't affect you unless the guy on the other side is putting a knot on your head anyway."



Longhorns have a lot on the line in annual showdown with Aggies

By Homer Jacobs
Assistant Sports Editor

Longhorn fans have got to be sick to their stomachs.

When Texas A&M and Texas battle in Austin Thanksgiving night, the Longhorns have just about everything to lose: their coach, their pride and their winning tradition.

Viewpoint

What do they have to gain? Try nothing, except maybe a victory over the bowl-bound Aggies. But even a win over A&M probably won't ease the pain too much for UT players and fans alike.

After all, the Aggies will leave Memorial Stadium with either a Cotton Bowl or Orange Bowl invitation in hand. And the Longhorns... well, I guess they can yell for the Aggies on New Year's Day from their living rooms.

Longhorn strong safety John Hagy said after UT's loss to Baylor Saturday that if A&M beats Texas, then Longhorn fans will hear about

the win from every little A&M "cockroach" in the country.

Maybe Cotton boll weevils or Floridian fruit flies, but not "cockroaches."

Well, whatever level of the food chain Hagy chooses to place the Aggies, the question still remains whether the Aggies on the field will continue to feed upon the Longhorns like flies on Bevo's back.

With scores like 37-12 and 42-10 in the last two A&M-UT games, and a solid Aggie team taking on a suspect Longhorn squad, the outcome could be like the T-shirts that say "The Texas Massacre — Part III."

What a difference three years makes. In 1983, the Aggies were 5-4-1 taking on the No. 2 Longhorns in Kyle Field. The Aggies jumped to a 13-0 lead in the first quarter before UT woke up and decided to dominate. The final score was 45-13, and A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill and the Aggies seemed "Akers away from Cotton."

Two years and a Cotton Bowl vic-

tory later, Sherrill and his Aggies are riding high, while Texas is sinking and stinking.

The Longhorns would suffer their first losing season since 1956 if they lose to the Aggies. And UT Athletic Director Deloss Dodds has already said the Longhorns will not be in any bowl game for the first time since 1967.

Times do change. And things aren't looking bright for the Longhorns in the future, either, unless a new coach and better recruiting classes can turn things around in a hurry.

While in College Station, Sherrill has got the Aggies in a position to compete for the Southwest Conference title for years to come.

When Aggies sing the "Aggie War Hymn" tonight at bonfire and Thursday in Memorial Stadium, the words, "Goodbye to Texas University, so long to the orange and the white," now may be well-founded foresight instead of just an Aggie dream.

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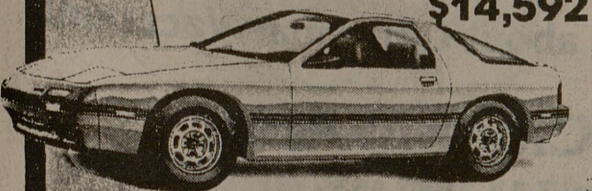
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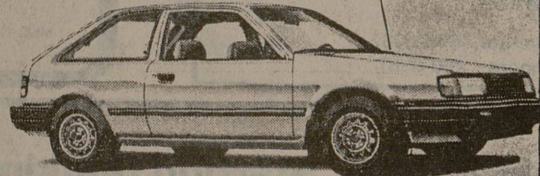


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