

Sports

Big plays, freshmen key A&M victory over USM

By Loyd Brumfield

JACKSON, Miss. — Southern Mississippi had a legitimate shot at knocking off a sluggish Texas A&M football team until the Golden Eagles got hit by "The Curse of the Big Play" Saturday in Mississippi Memorial Stadium.

All three A&M touchdowns came on big plays in its 27-14 win which was played in front of 22,150 fans. The first score came on a 69-yard screen pass from starting quarterback Lance Pavlas to fullback Matt Gurley.

Next, freshman running back Darren Lewis got into the act late in the third quarter with a 77-yard dash up the right side of the field to open A&M's slim 10-7 lead to 17-7.

And finally, quarterback Bucky Richardson, a true freshman, scored on an 82-yard run on third down and 13 with just over eight minutes left in the game. The Aggies also got help from kicker Scott Slater, who booted two field goals of 38 and 30 yards respectively.

Still, all was not well for the Aggies, who got off to a sputtering start once again. The problem this week, though, was penalties, not the offense.

A&M suffered nine penalties for a total of 74 yards while USM only had three for 25 yards.

The Aggie defense, after two sterling outings against Louisiana State and Washington, got off to a lackluster start, allowing the Golden Eagles 184 first-half yards. In the second half, though, A&M allowed Southern Mississippi only 65 total yards.

"We came out in the first half and didn't play up to our potential," A&M safety Chet Brooks said. "We were sort of embarrassed, so we came out in the second half and played ball. If we look like that against (Texas) Tech next weekend we'll get run over."

Southern Miss quarterback Brett Favre completed only 6-of-22 passes on the day, but tailback Shelton Gandy ran for 99 yards on 23 carries, including 65 yards in the first half.

But the real story Saturday was the three scoring plays. Without them, the score may have been 14-6 in favor of the Golden Eagles.

Gurley's touchdown came on third down and nine at the A&M 31. Pavlas, making his first collegiate start, hit Gurley with a screen. Gurley broke a couple of tackles before finding open field. A&M tailback Keith Woodside destroyed the last USM player with any hope of catching Gurley with a devastating block at the USM five yard line, and A&M was ahead 7-0.

Gurley's reception was the longest A&M touchdown pass since Don Jones' 92-yard reception from quarterback Gary Kubiak in the 1982 game against Louisiana Tech.

USM tied the game in the second quarter when Favre hit a wide open Darryl Tillman for a 52-yard touchdown pass.

A&M continued to struggle early in the second half, until Slater kicked his first field goal. After that, the offense settled down.

Lewis' score came two possessions later on a first down play. USM came with a pass rush, but Lewis ran outside to the right and was gone.

"I feel pretty good," Lewis said. "All this playing time is giving me a chance to adjust to defenses. I feel like I can go out now and try to make something happen."

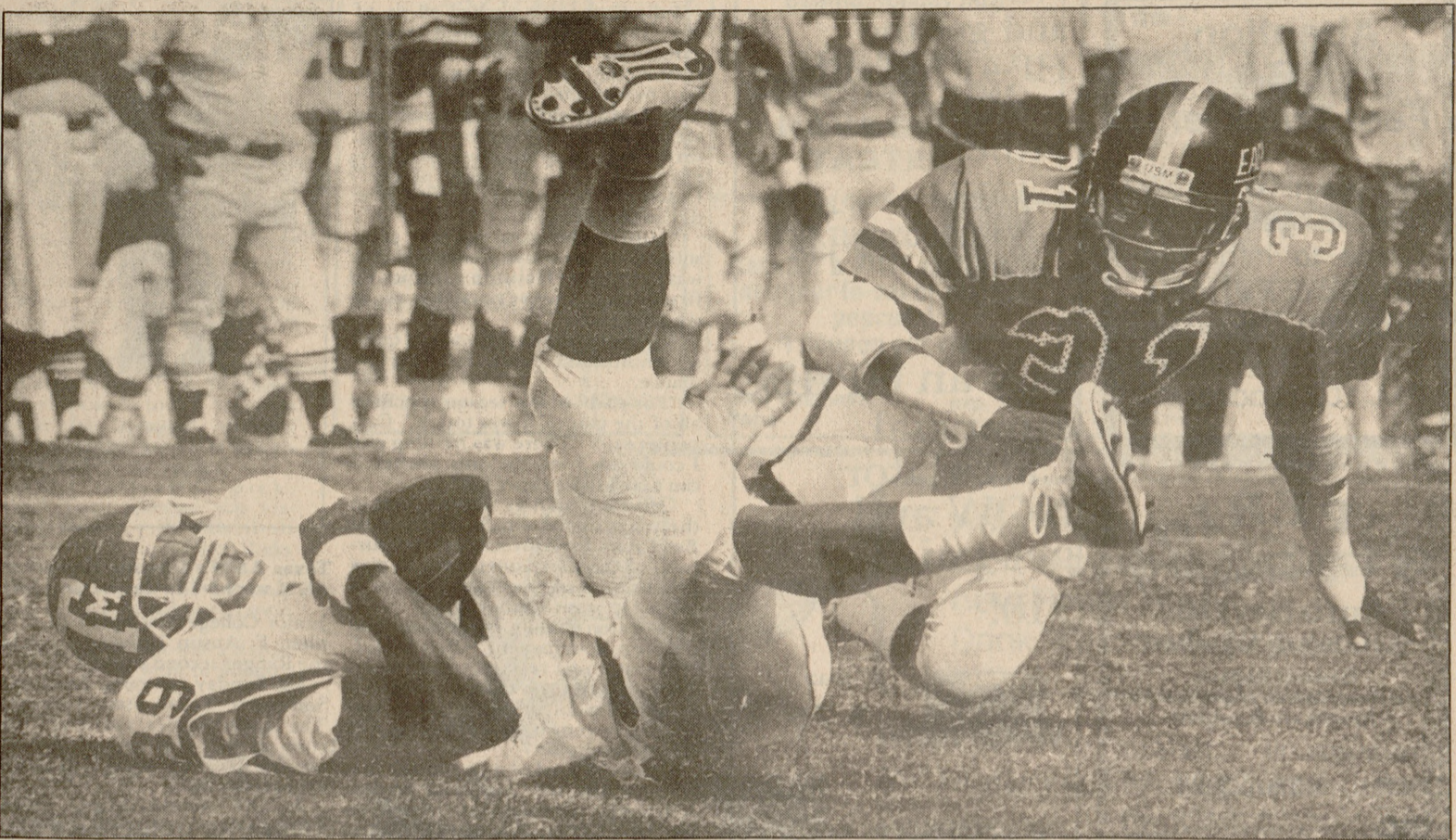
The most unlikely star for the Aggies was Richardson, who capably led the team for nearly the entire fourth quarter. Facing a third down and 13 at the Golden Eagle 18, Richardson scrambled up the middle and wasn't touched on his way to the end zone. His touchdown made the score 24-14.

Richardson and Lewis finished with 102 and 103 rushing yards respectively, marking the first time two A&M freshmen rushed for more than 100 yards in the same game.

"You could say the freshmen came through today," Lewis said. "We have to concentrate a lot more than the older guys."

Pavlas finished with 130 passing yards on 10 completions. Craig Stump quarterbacked the Aggies for only two series and completed 2-of-3 passes for 13 yards.

"We're still young offensively and we're still making mistakes," Sherrill said. "A lot of good things happened out there and a lot of young people did some good things."



Texas A&M tight end Sylvester Morgan goes down hard Saturday after catching a pass against Southern Mississippi's Jonathan Robertson. Morgan caught two passes on the day in helping A&M defeat USM 27-14 while raising its record to 2-1.

Photo by Dean Saito

Johnson overcomes flu, paces Ags in tourney

By Tom Mulos

The Texas A&M men's tennis team got victories from second-seeded Dean Johnson in the single's competition and from sophomores Steve Kennedy and Shaun O'Donovan in doubles to earn two first places in the Texas A&M 4-Way Tournament held this weekend at

the Omar Smith Tennis Center.

McNeese State, Texas and Texas Tech rounded out the competition in the two-day tournament.

Johnson, despite having the flu, defeated fourth-seeded Dick Bosse of Texas Tech, 7-5, 6-1, to win the singles title, his third straight.

Unseeded O'Donovan and Kennedy defeated Pat Flynn and Aaron

Gross of Texas, 6-3, 6-3, to advance to the semifinals before taking the title from second-seeded Hulbert Karrasch and Mike Emmett, of Texas, 6-3, 6-4.

"The turning point for Dean was when he broke service in the first set at 5-4," Coach David Kent said. "He has played outstanding all weekend in a top-quality tournament. We look

for great things from our senior captain."

Despite a rough start, Johnson was pleased with his performance.

"This was the first time that I had been seeded in a collegiate tournament and I started the first round a little shaky and nervous, but once I settled in I was able to get the job done," Johnson said.

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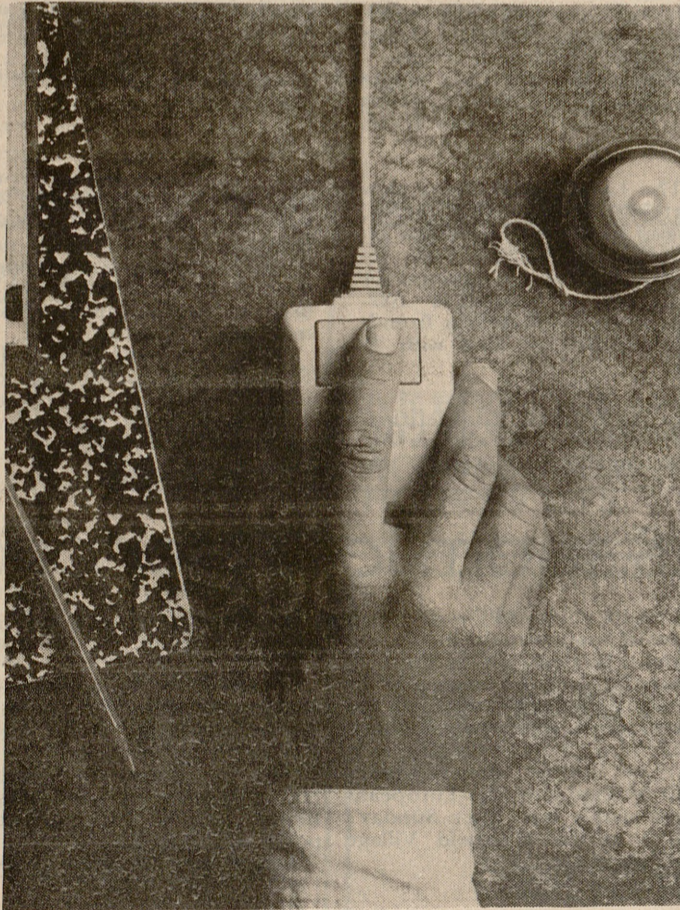
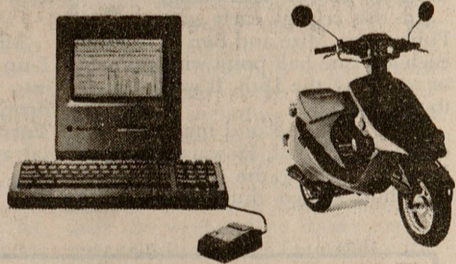
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