

Sports

Aggies weather shaky first half for 34-21 victory

By Anthony Wilson
Sports Writer

HOUSTON — The weather at Rice Stadium Saturday was fair to partly cloudy, which turned out to be a bit of foreshadowing, because that's exactly how the Texas A&M football team played.

The Aggies checked intensity most of the game, but they could hardly be blamed. After all, Rice entered the game with a 2-5 record and were 0-3 in the Southwest Conference play.

And even though the Owls played about as well as they could, A&M was much too talented and overpowering to let a lowly Rice team beat them, as the Aggies won 34-21.

The Aggies' lack of intensity and concentration could be seen in the amount of penalties and turnovers they committed.

A&M was penalized 14 times for 80 yards. On A&M's second possession of the first quarter, running back Darren Lewis broke a 67-yard run that was called back on a clipping penalty by fullback Melvin Collins.

In the second quarter, A&M line-backer Aaron Wallace was called for a 15-yard personal foul penalty. On the next play, Rice running back Todd Jones scored on a 19-yard run to move the Owls to within four points of A&M, 17-13.

Rice's last touchdown drive of the game in the fourth quarter was aided by a roughing the passer penalty on A&M defensive end Terry Price.

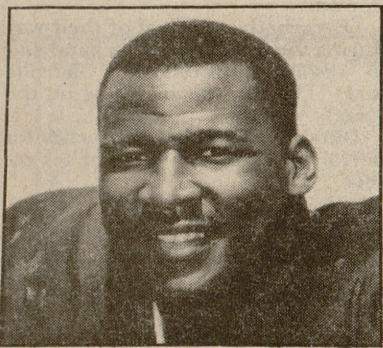
Two fine punt returns, one a 63-yarder by A&M flanker Rod Harris, were called back because of penalties.

"The times we got the holding penalties, the clipping penalty on both punts and ensuing kickoffs, that's not good," A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill said. "There's no question on the big plays it took away probably 200 yards."

A&M also fumbled five times, losing two of them, and quarterback Lance Pavlas threw A&M's only interception.

Aggie running back Darren Lewis said the intensity level of the offense was noticeably lower than it should have been.

"The intensity we had was down," Lewis said. "We have to go in the game each week with our intensity



Keith Woodside
high. We have to go out there and lay it all out on the line."

On the positive side, A&M's offense garnered a season-high 602 yards, 434 of it via the rush.

A&M's ground attack was led by freshman quarterback Bucky Richardson, who ran for 137 yards on eight carries. Richardson scored one touchdown on the day when, on A&M's second play from scrimmage, he kept the ball on an option play and sprinted 56 yards down the right sideline.

Although he had a good day running the ball, Richardson was not

pleased with his 2-of-9, 16-yard passing performance.

"I was real frustrated with the way I threw the ball today," Richardson said. "I'm glad we won, but I wish I could've done better throwing the ball."

A&M's tailbacks also had a productive day running the ball.

Senior Keith Woodside tallied a career-best 122 yards on 17 attempts and caught two passes for 52 yards, making him A&M's career reception leader with 107.

Freshman Larry Horton rushed for 76 yards on four attempts, while fellow freshman Lewis ran for two touchdowns and passed for another in the fourth period to put the Owls away for good.

Lewis threw his first career pass with 10 minutes left in the game and the score 27-13. The tailback took a pitch from Richardson, ran left and hit freshman receiver Gary Oliver for a 37-yard touchdown.

Lewis said the play, designed to catch defensive backs cheating on their pass coverage to play the run, is not something the offense usually works on.

"This week we really worked on it pretty hard," Lewis said. "Thank goodness it turned out all right."

Sherrill also was pleased with the result.

"You have to give him (Lewis) credit," he said. "He hung in there and took advantage of the play and threw a touchdown strike."

After the Aggies' first two possessions, the Owls must have thought they were reliving the 59-7 trouncing Texas Tech gave them the previous week.

After Richardson's touchdown run on A&M's first possession, and a 14-yard touchdown run by Rice quarterback Quentis Roper, A&M's second series started with another big play.

Horton ran 73 yards down the right sideline to Rice's 13-yard line before fumbling out of bounds. Lewis scored on the next play, scampering the 13 yards to the end zone, making the score 14-6.

Late in the first period, A&M line-backer Jeroy Robinson recovered a fumbled punt return by Rice's Darrell Goolsby at Rice's 41-yard line. On the ensuing drive, A&M settled for a 41-yard field goal by Scott Slater after Oliver was called for offensive pass interference in the end zone on a third down play.

Rice's Jones scored on his 19-yard run on its first possession of the second quarter, making the score 17-13.

Pavlas took over at quarterback for the Aggies to start the second quarter and promptly led a 72-yard drive resulting in a 28-yard Slater field goal, increasing A&M's lead 20-13, which was the halftime score.

At the half, A&M's defense had allowed Rice to roll up 200 total yards, 151 of it rushing.

However, in the third quarter, the "Wrecking Crew" buckled down and the Owls could only manage 23 yards of offense. The fourth quarter wasn't much better for Rice as it compiled 76 yards of offense, most of it against A&M's second and third teams.

Lewis scored the only touchdown of the third quarter on a five-yard run, capping an 11-play, 84-yard drive.

Lewis' option pass closed out the scoring for A&M. Rice's last touchdown came in the fourth quarter on a Mark Comalander to Goolsby 15-yard pass. That duo also combined for the two point conversion to end the scoring 34-21.

"We came out in the second half and made the adjustments defensively," Sherrill said. "I don't think they had a first down in the third quarter. But offensively we turned the ball over and played sluggishly."

Underdog Twins win '87 World Series

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minnesota Twins rode the determination of Frank Viola and the decibels of the Dome to their first World Series championship by beating the St. Louis Cardinals 4-2 in Game 7 Sunday night, becoming the first team to win four home games.

The Twins, with the best home record in baseball, won each game in their own park. They rallied in the final two games, and Greg Gagne's field single with two outs and the bases loaded in the sixth inning put them ahead to stay.

Viola, who won Game 1 and lost Game 4, settled down after allowing no runs in the second inning. He gave up only two more hits through eight innings and denied St. Louis its fifth title.

Viola gave up six hits, struck out seven and didn't walk a batter before giving way to Jeff Reardon. Viola was named Most Valuable Player, but the team's most important ingredient again was the Metrodome.

The Cardinals, the top road team in the majors, were swallowed up by a raucous record crowd of 55,376. A couple of controversial calls by umpire Frank Joyce sent the St. Louis manager Whitey Herzog ranting wrong left the crippled Cardinals one game short.

This was the first Series in which the home team won every game, and it came in a season in which the Twins were nearly invincible at the Metrodome. They finished 62-25, including three routs over St. Louis.

The Twins became the 10th different team to win the Series in 10 years. They scored 72 runs in beating Detroit in the playoffs and then St. Louis, the most ever scored by a club in the postseason.

Minnesota also managed to overcome the Cardinals' success in do-or-die situations. St. Louis is now 8-3 in Game 7s, still the most victories by any team in seventh games.

In this, the Year of the Home Run, the Twins manufactured the winning run Cardinals-style.

Danny Cox, pitching on two days' rest and in relief for the first time since 1984, walked Tom Brunansky and Kent Hrbek leading off the sixth with the score 2-2. That finished Cox, who failed to retire any of the five batters he faced, and he was ejected by home-plate umpire Dave Phillips as he exited. That brought back more memories of 1985, when Cardinals pitcher Joaquin Andujar was tossed from Game 7, in which Kansas City routed St. Louis 11-0.

Todd Worrell walked pinch-hitter Roy Smalley, playing on his 35th birthday, before striking out Dan Gladden with the bases loaded for the second out. Gagne followed with a sharp grounder that third baseman Tom Lawless backhanded, and Gagne beat the one-hop throw to first.

The Twins, whose starting lineup outhomered St. Louis' 183-32, scored an insurance run in the eighth when Tim Laudner singled and came home on Gladden's double.

The Twins came back despite getting two runners thrown out at the plate by left fielder Vince Coleman and possibly losing a run on Phillips' call in the second.

Trailing 2-1, Minnesota tied it in the fifth. Joe Magrane, who lost the opener and was the sixth rookie to ever start a Game 7, got the first out and Gagne followed with a grounder to first baseman Jim Lindeman.

Herzog brought in Cox, and Kirby Puckett hit the first pitch for an RBI double to right-center. Gary Gaetti walked, but Puckett was caught trying to steal third and Gaetti was thrown out at the plate on Don Baylor's single to left.

Herzog started reserve catcher Steve Lake for the first time in the Series. Lake and regular catcher Tony Pena, in the DH spot, hit RBI singles in the second inning.

Herzog took out Magrane in the fifth and brought in an obviously tired Cox, who threw just seven strikes in 21 pitches.

The record crowd of 55,376 began cheering 30 minutes before the game began and both teams were aggressive from the start.

A running catch by Cardinals right fielder Jose Oquendo in the gap stopped Minnesota from scoring in the first inning and St. Louis struck with two runs in the second.

Two pitches, and Lindeman and Willie McGee had singled. Pena then lined an RBI single past Viola's head.

Viola retired the next two batters before Lake, in his first Series at-bat, singled home McGee.

The Twins came back with a run in their half of the inning, and a close call by home-plate umpire Dave Phillips may have cost them another.

Twins' Viola is named Most Valuable Player

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Frank Viola, the one called "Sweet Music," was in perfect pitch for Game 7 of the World Series.

Viola allowed six hits in eight innings and pitched Minnesota to a 4-2 victory Sunday over St. Louis and was named the Most Valuable Player of the 1987 Series.

"This is the happiest moment of my life," Viola said. "I'm thinking of all my teammates, my friends and my family."

Viola won the first game of the Series 10-1, allowing five hits.

But he struggled in Game 4 at St. Louis, allowing six hits and five runs in 3 1/2 innings. The Twins, who finished sixth in the American League West last season, left St. Louis trailing 3-2 and Viola was hoping to get one more chance under the friendly Teflon ceiling at the Metrodome.

"I was happy to have another chance," Viola said. "I ended the season on a much better note than if I had ended it on Game 4. I would have had a bitter taste in my mouth for a long time."

Instead, Viola lived up to his nickname and threw sweet

pitches in the seventh game.

Viola's nickname comes from a banner that hangs in the right-field stands and reads: Frankie "Sweet Music" Viola. Viola is 17-0 at the dome in games in which fan Mark Dornfeld has unfurled the banner.

Viola, who struck out seven, joined a list of great seventh-game World Series pitching performances.

There was some concern over Viola pitching on three days' rest. Viola was 2-2 in his previous five starts on three days rest, and his ERA on those starts was 5.64.

"I felt great tonight," Viola said. "I had a real good fastball and a good changeup. I could have pitched on two days' rest. I have all winter to rest."

Viola was 2-1 in the Series with a 3.72 ERA. He is the 15th pitcher to win the World Series MVP, but just the third in the last 19 seasons. Pitchers won the award 12 times in the first 14 years after the award was started in 1955.

Viola finished the regular season 17-10, but was 12-3 at home plus the two World Series victories.

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