

Battalion Classifieds

Sports

Reception against Bulldogs puts Jones in record book

By Tim Stanfield
Sports Writer

Wide receiver Don Jones didn't catch as many passes as a member of the Texas A&M football teams early in the 1980s, but he certainly did latch onto one that etched himself into the Aggie record books.

Coach Tom Wilson's final A&M team carried a 1-1 record into its September 26, 1981, contest at Kyle Field against the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs. Jones was the starting flanker, even though he had caught only one pass in the previous games.

His 5-yard touchdown catch against California had helped A&M defeat the Golden Bears 29-28, in the season opener three weeks earlier.

But quarterback Gary Kubiak had completely ignored Jones as the Aggs' dropped a 13-12 decision to Boston College on September 19, and the flanker had to wonder where he stood in the scheme of things.

While Wilson had high praise for Jones and reserve wide receiver Jimmy Williams, he noted that split end Mike Whitwell and tight end Mark Lewis were the primary targets for Kubiak's aeriels.

Wilson had his squad emotionally prepared for the Bulldogs, which provided the home folks with their first look at the 1981 Aggie squad.

"I told the team that it was time to see what they could do," Wilson said. "The coaching staff wanted them to be fired up in order to be able to do their best."

Unlike their initial two games, the Aggies took to the air early against

Louisiana Tech with immediate positive results.

After forcing the Bulldogs to punt after their first possession, A&M put six points on the board with a drive that took only 52 seconds.

Kubiak completed a 31-yard touchdown pass to Jones with 12:47 to go in the first period and place-kicker David Hardy made it 7-0.

While the Aggies dominated the first half, their biggest explosion was saved for the third period.

They scored three quick touchdowns to put the game away, one of which was a 92-yard pass from Kubiak to Jones.

A long Bulldog punt had put the Aggies inside their own 10-yard line, but that only gave them a chance to make some history.

Split out wide to the right of the formation, Jones discovered that he basically was left uncovered by the Bulldog cornerback.

Taking note of the coverage, Kubiak lofted Jones a perfect pass, and after the youngster caught it, he outran a defender to the south end zone.

"They were playing their cornerbacks up tight on our receivers," Wilson noted. "That was one of the reasons we went deep so much. That was a big play for us."

Jones' catch broke the old A&M record of 91 yards which was set on a pass play from halfback Jim Kaufman to wide receiver Dude McLean against Texas in 1965.

That play became known as "The Texas Special," because A&M coach Gene Stallings had inserted it into

the game plan specifically for Longhorns.

Quarterback Harry Lethbrun tossed a bounced lateral to the flanker, then acted as if he was about to pass, but he had been so low that his "pass" had been so low.

After an acting performance of his own, Kauffman suddenly straightened up and threw to a wide-open McLean, who raced unimpeded to the north end zone at Kyle Field.

In that game McLean set an A&M record for most passes caught in a game - 13, and for the most yards - 250. A&M, however, blew a 21-17 halftime lead and lost 21-17.

The record catch was about that would sustain Jones for the rest of his Aggie career.

The 1981 season turned out to be a record year for the Aggies' director and coach leaving the school prior to 1982 spring training.

Jones did have some other plays, however, catching a 27-yard touchdown pass against Rice, and six Kubiak threw that day.

That was — and is — a school record, and it came during a 50-0 A&M win.

Two games later Jones caught a 92-yard touchdown pass in the quarter against Arkansas for the Aggies' only score in their dismal loss.

Jones played in A&M's 33-14 victory over Oklahoma State in the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, Louisiana, in which Kubiak hit Wilson for two long touchdown passes.

Coach Jackie Sherrill passed Wilson early in 1982, and with change, Jones saw his playing time severely reduced.

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Oilers' Mathews follows Highsmith move files suit to make deal with other teams

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Holdout offensive tackle Bruce Mathews filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Houston Oilers and the National Football League Thursday, seeking the right to negotiate with other teams.

Mathews' four-year contract with the Oilers expired after 1986 season.

"We've asked the court to enjoin the NFL and the Oilers from interfering with Bruce's contracting with other teams in the NFL," said Gary Schlessinger, Mathews' attorney. "We're asking for an injunction which will allow him to deal with other teams, and we're also asking for \$10 million in damages."

"I think that Bruce has an excellent case and with the collective bargaining agreement expired there's

really no hold that Houston has on him."

The collective bargaining agreement between the NFL and the Players Association expired on Aug. 31. The players went on strike Sept. 22 and came back Oct. 15, without a new contract.

"I never thought it would go this far," said Mathews, a first-round draft choice in 1983 out of Southern Cal. "Basically, I don't feel like I have any other recourse. This is really the last option open to me, other than sitting out the year, which I don't want to do."

Earlier this month, former Miami fullback Alonzo Highsmith, the Oilers' first pick in the 1987 draft, filed a similar suit in Florida. Highsmith, and the team came to terms Wednesday night and the player returned Thursday.

"Before the last preseason game we thought we had an agreement but Houston pulled that off and basically since then nothing happened," Mathews said.

"Apparently they didn't intend to give me an offer and I was withdrawn it, reneged."

Mathews said he would not be playing with the Oilers if an agreement could be reached.

"I'm happy playing with Houston. I like it down there," he said. "Any problem or difference with the situation down here has been the contractual deal between Ladd Herzog, the general manager

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