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Goehring recalls Ags' miracle win over TCU

By Tim Stanfield
Sports Writer

In no way were Paul "Bear" Bryant's Aggies supposed to defeat seventh-ranked Texas Christian when they tangled with Abe Martin's Horned Frogs on Oct. 15, 1955, at Amon G. Carter Stadium in Fort Worth.

The Aggies had overcome an opening 21-0 loss to defending national champion UCLA by winning three games in a row, but seemed no match for the highly-touted Frogs. TCU was led by All-American running back Jim Swink and All-SWC quarterback Chuck Curtis. The Frogs definitely had intentions of using the Aggies as a springboard to higher national status.

But A&M junior lineman Dennis Goehring and friends didn't exactly see things that way. "Even now I can clearly remember that while on the bus headed to Fort Worth, our quarterback Jimmy Wright said, 'These guys aren't any better than we are. All we need to do is go in there and do the best we can do and not be intimidated either by their ability or national ranking,'" Goehring said Thursday. "We had only lost 21-20 the year before when we were 1-9, and really felt that we could play them man for man."

Bryant always felt that his team could play like that, and Goehring noted 32 years later that the lessons he taught the players were more than a little responsible for the Aggies' 19-16 upset win that day.

"Back then you had to go both ways, and if you came out of the game in the first quarter, you couldn't re-enter until the second quarter," Goehring said. "It was more than a game of skill; a man's endurance was tested for you had to play the whole time regardless if you were injured."

"For instance, I played against guard Vernon Ueckels for eight straight years, the first four when I played at San Marcos High School while he was at New Braunfels High School, then when I was at A&M and he played for TCU.

"We knew just about everything each other could do on the field, so it came down to who wanted it the most. He outweighed me about 20 pounds, but I feel like I held my own."

One of the keys to A&M's startling victory was the outstanding play of the offensive line, whose starters were Jack Powell, left tackle, Jim Stanley, left guard, Lloyd Hale, center, Goehring, right guard, and Charley Krueger, right tackle.

Against a team that was fifth in the nation in total defense, giving up about 150 yards a game, the Aggies picked up an incredible 407 yards (351 on the ground, 51 in the air).

Making the feat more unrealistic was the fact that running back John David Crow, a future Heisman Trophy winner, was injured early in the first period, something that Goehring said may have adversely affected the Frogs.

"When John David went down, they seemed to let up a little, but I can honestly say that his replacement, sophomore Bill Dendy, will have played the game of his life," Goehring said. "Bill picked up some tough yards for us (74 on 8 carries) and scored our second touchdown."

Indeed Dendy scored behind a great block that Goehring had put on Curtis. The Aggies had inserted some misdirection plays into their game plan, and scored two touchdowns on them.

"Our fullback, Jack Pardee, would lead one of the halfbacks to one side, then the other guy would delay before receiving the handoff from Wright," Goehring said. "On that play, Dendy got through a big hole, I was fortunate enough to take Curtis out of the play."

After TCU had overcome a 12-3 deficit, taking a 16-12 lead, halfback Don Watson provided the winning tally with a nifty 51-yard run off the same kind of misdirection play Dendy had scored on.

Watson broke back off left guard, and according to newspaper accounts, picked up a convoy of blockers, including Goehring, on his way to the end zone.

"One thing Coach Bryant taught us was that even if we had already blocked our initial man, we were to get off the ground and try to find someone else to hit," Goehring said. "And you can be sure that even in practice, nobody stayed on the turf any longer than it took to get up. And we scored some touchdowns as a result of such effort, including Watson's against TCU."

Watson finished the game with 98 yards rushing on 7 carries, while Ed Dudley gained 62 on 6 carries, halfback Lloyd Taylor 48 yards, and Pardee 38.

Swink picked up 85 tough yards on 17 rushes, scoring on a 16-yard run, but for the most part the Aggies kept the wraps on him.

Bryant's young Aggies picked up momentum from the huge win, increasing their own standing in the Associated Press poll to 12th afterwards.

Had they not tied Arkansas 7-7 up in the hills, the Aggies would have tied TCU for the SWC title, even though they finished the season with a disappointing 21-6 loss to Texas.

"You know, I can still see them (Texas) throwing a touchdown pass just before halftime," Goehring recalled. "That seemed to take the wind out of our sails, and even though I thought then — and still do now — that we had the better talent, the Longhorns beat us soundly that day."

Goehring noted his pride in the success of the current A&M athletic program, including the overall achievement of A&M's women's teams.

"We have two ladies in our athletic hall of fame now, and I'm very proud of their success," Goehring, who also is a member of the hall, said.

Oliver

(continued from page 6)

Mickey Washington were moved to the defensive backfield. To relieve some of the pressure off starting split end Percy Waddle, flanker Rod Harris was moved to split end in front of him and Oliver was promoted to first-string flanker.

"I'm just a redshirt freshman, so my goal this year was just to work hard, make the traveling team and maybe make some special teams," he said. "Things have just worked out for me pretty good."

"It doesn't really matter who starts. They try to shuffle us in and out. I like being called the starter, but really we all split time."

Oliver's play this season has pleasantly surprised the A&M coaching staff.

"He's been very much of a surprise," Pugh said. "We knew the kid had talent and ability, but we weren't really expecting him to

step in and start. He's starting because he's been more consistent than some of the other guys we have."

The Aggies will travel to Fort Worth this weekend to take on Texas Christian University on Saturday at noon at Amon G. Carter Stadium. Oliver expects the Horned Frog defense to play tough, sound, fundamental defense.

"They're just going to line up with you, play technique and let you make the mistakes," he said. "They don't do a lot of the blitzing or fancy stuff. But they'll line up and hit you."

Oliver turned down scholarship offers from Baylor, Rice, Houston and Texas Tech to attend A&M, which was unable to offer him a scholarship. In fact, he still has not received a scholarship.

"He just proves that anything you want bad enough, you can accomplish it if you set your mind to it."

Jeffery

(continued from page 6)

"I think the award needs to be put in the right perspective," he added. "It's what that particular player meant to that football team. Probably the player who, in my opinion, exemplified what I hope the award means, in recent history, was Doug Flutie."

"You take Doug Flutie away from Boston College and what've they got? And they won and were successful."

Brown has received a lot of hype this season which has put him in the nation's eye. He was on the cover of Sports Illustrated's college football preview and the subject of a lengthy feature in that same issue. Several networks and independent broadcasters have highlighted Notre Dame's games and kept close tabs on Brown's statistics.

Jeffery has not been the subject

of such a media blitz and believes that will hurt his chances of winning the Heisman.

"I think if we had won when we played Boston College in the East, my name probably would have come up because the East has a lot of media," he said.

Crow, who like all past winners has a vote in the selection, agrees that publicity plays a big role in whether or not a player wins the award.

"Unfortunately I think a lot of it comes from the publicity these days," he said. "I don't think it's right, but it's true. Obviously I hate to say it, but it will probably sway my thinking somewhat."

Publicity played a big role in Crow's Heisman selection. That year A&M Head Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant publicly touted Crow for the award when he said, "If John David doesn't win it, they ought to stop giving it."

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