

Sports

UT's Haggy: 'cockroach' remarks misconstrued

By Anthony Wilson
Sports Writer

Although cockroaches are said to be the only creature with a chance of surviving a nuclear holocaust, they aren't a revered creature.

A cockroach is a small (unless it lives in Texas), long-feelered, household pest. Describe a cockroach? Repulsive, revolting, sickening, disgusting and offensive should fit the bill. They are so repugnant that just describing a cockroach is a nauseating experience.

Generally the word cockroach does not conjure up positive connotations, unless of course, you happen to be Theo Huxtable's best friend.

So last year when University of Texas strong safety John Haggy referred to Aggies and cockroaches in the same breath, he became the most hated man in Aggieland this side of Karl Palmeyer.

In a phone interview Monday, Haggy said the media changed the meaning of his infamous comments by excluding the tone in which they were made.

"I think you have to understand how the whole thing got started," Haggy said. "I didn't come out and

say those things as though I was trying to be a bad ass. It started out as a joke."

Haggy was sitting and talking with about four reporters when he jokingly made his off-the-cuff remarks. Some of the reporters mentioned that Haggy's comments were made in jest. However, others "filled it in with what they wanted to put in there and made me look like a real ass," he said.

"I didn't think it would come out the way it did," Haggy said. "I thought they would understand I was saying this jokingly. But it didn't come out like that. It came out as though I was trying to say, 'Hey, I hate those people.' It just came out wrong."

"But once it did, I had no choice. I couldn't look like a coward dog in front of everybody and go 'Look, I was just joking.' I had no choice but to say, 'Well, yeah, I guess I did say that.'"

Haggy, who said the incident was uncharacteristic of him, now regrets having made the comments.

"I'm sorry I said that," he said. "That's the first time I've ever said anything about any team I've played against. I've been playing here for

four years, so I didn't think it was fair for people to label me as speaking trash to the media because that's the first time I'd ever done it. I'm just sorry it happened."

Haggy took a lot of flak from his teammates about the statements, but it was former Head Coach Fred Akers who came down hardest on him.

"He was pretty mad," Haggy said about Akers. "He told me, 'You can't say anything to the media whether you're joking or being serious. If you give them any reason to write anything, they're going to make a controversy out of it, get some hype for this game and sell some papers.'"

One of the reasons Akers may have been so incensed by Haggy's comments was that they only served to psyche up an Aggie team which already had a talent edge over Texas.

"If I gave them extra-added incentive, then I'm sorry I did that," Haggy said. "You never want to do that. They had a very talented team and we didn't need to give them any more incentive than they already had."

To keep from being misconstrued again and to keep from being in-

involved in the hype surrounding the UT-A&M game, Haggy has refused to talk to the media about last year's comments.

"The reason I said I didn't want to comment on it this year is, I didn't want to say anything that could be taken out of context and have people write stuff that I really didn't say," the senior said. "So I figure if I just tell them, 'No comment,' they can't write anything."

This week Haggy is focusing all his attention on the game he called the biggest of his career.

A&M and UT were in a similar situation in 1985, when A&M's victory sent them to the Cotton Bowl. Because an injury kept Haggy out of that game, he is anxious to get a chance to contribute to a championship run.

"Last year, it didn't matter whether we beat A&M or not," Haggy said. "It was just a moral victory. But it means everything in the world to me — especially being a senior and having the chance to get that ring for once. There's nothing more in the world that I want than to win that game so I can go to the Cotton Bowl for once."

"If you can't get fired up to play

your last game to go to the Cotton Bowl, then you shouldn't be playing college football. I don't know how much fuel you could add to this fire."

Haggy will also be trying to garner his first win over A&M, an obstacle he is eager to overcome.

"There's been years in the past where guys from A&M have gone through their career without beating Texas or maybe beating them once," he said. "I'm sure they felt the same way."

Although A&M's offense isn't as potent or experienced as it has been in recent years, it's still good enough to earn Haggy's respect.

"I think they're a pretty good offense," he said. "Everyone says they're having quarterback problems. I think they've got the talent back there. Maybe those guys haven't been playing together as long as (Kevin) Murray and (Roger) Vick and all those guys. But I don't think they have any lack of talent."

Freshman running back Darren Lewis and senior quarterback Craig Stump have particularly impressed Haggy.

"I think Darren Lewis is as good a

running back as any in the conference," Haggy said. "That's great for a true freshman. He seems like he's the guy who's been making the big plays for them lately. Anytime you have a big play man, that's the guy you want to try and shut down."

"Stump's been kind of down at times," he continued. "I think if they would just leave him in there and let the guy play — hell, he's a fifth year senior — he'd probably do a helluva job for them."

Unlike last year's game, the Longhorn secondary will not be able to key on one receiver as they did former tight end Rod Bernstine. Haggy said A&M's receiver corps is more well-balanced this year. He noted that junior Rod Harris, with his speed and precise pass routes, is probably the best of the lot. But one perplexing aspect of Harris he doesn't understand is his post-catch celebrations.

"Hell, we're trying to figure out what that's called," he said. "It's some sort of dance where he's dancing then all of a sudden he stops and folds his arms and looks at somebody. As long as he keeps making the catches, I guess he can keep doing that."

Sherrill: Stump, Kyle Field will key A&M's win in Turkey Day game

By Hal L. Hammons
Assistant Sports Editor

Quarterback Craig Stump will have to play well for Texas A&M to win Thursday's game against Texas, Head Coach Jackie Sherrill said Monday at his weekly press conference at Cain Hall.

Stump, who quarterbacked the Aggies to victories over Arkansas and Texas Christian, will start Thursday's game, Sherrill said.

A&M safety Chet Brooks said, "Craig's added some leadership. I'm glad he's back, just to get some leadership behind that side of the ball."

Offensive Coordinator Lynn Amedee said Stump easily could have quit this season after he lost the starting quarterback job, first to Lance Pavlas and then to Bucky Richardson.

"Ninety percent of the quar-

terbacks in this country in that situation would've quit," Amedee said. "He's better than good for that one reason."

Amedee and Sherrill both said Stump's experience makes him the best quarterback for the team at this point in the season. His experience helped him read the TCU defense and change the play from the line of scrimmage on several occasions. Those changes resulted in Darren Lewis' first touchdown run of the day, as well as Stump's touchdown pass to Rod Harris.

But winning will involve stopping the Longhorns' one-man offensive show, tailback Eric Metcalf.

Defensive Coordinator R.C. Sloucum said, "Every time (Metcalf) touches the ball, he has a legitimate chance of taking it all the way to the house."

Brooks said, "I think it's going to be a tougher game than TCU because of the talent. They (TCU) don't have anybody like Metcalf."

"Take Metcalf away from Texas and they're 3-8."

Brooks said, however, that the home-field advantage, not Metcalf, will be the deciding factor in the game.

"I think the key to this game is coming here to what we in the Wrecking Crew call The Junkyard," he said.

Sherrill said playing at home has its disadvantages, such as bonfire and Elephant Walk, that distract the team more.

However, he admitted, "I would like to have our crowd. . . . Of course, it's only a factor if you're playing well."

McWilliams predicts tough game with A&M for SWC championship

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Coach David McWilliams said Monday his team could play its best against Texas A&M on Thanksgiving and still lose to an Aggie squad that has won six straight games.

A&M, 8-2, and Texas, 6-4, both 5-1 in the Southwest Conference, will play for the conference football championship at Kyle Field, where A&M has won 12 consecutive SWC games.

ESPN will televise Thursday's game nationally with a 7:15 p.m. kickoff.

The stadium seats 72,387, and A&M officials predict a crowd of more than 75,000.

The single-game record at A&M was 77,607 when the Aggies played Texas in 1985.

The winner goes to the Cotton Bowl in Dallas to play Notre Dame on Jan. 1.

A&M has been to the Cotton Bowl the last two years, beating Auburn in 1986 and losing to Ohio State in 1987.

The loser will play Pittsburgh, 8-3, in the Bluebonnet Bowl at Houston on the night of Dec. 31.

McWilliams said the Longhorns have "done a good job of hanging in there and winning."

"I think they feel confident going into this football game, and know at the same time that it's going to take a great effort. . . ." McWilliams said. This is one of those that you've got to play your very best and still you may not win it."

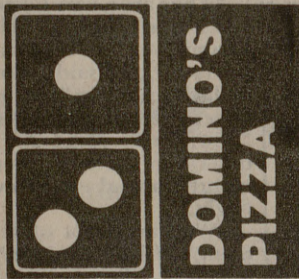
"But at the same time, if we do

play our very best, certainly we have an opportunity to win the football game."

A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill told the *Austin American-Statesman* he would give Texas the edge in the game "because they're a little older in games like this," although Sherrill has nine players who started against Texas last year.

McWilliams wondered about Sherrill's comment, saying Texas had eight seniors, "but they haven't ever won it."

McWilliams said a noisy A&M crowd concerns him. "I think it would be ridiculous to say, 'No, it's not a problem.' And our squad knows that."



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