

Sports

Roper-led A&M dominates all-conference selections

From Staff and Wire Reports

DALLAS — Defensive Player of the Year John Roper led a seven-man Texas A&M contingent on Associated Press All-Southwest Conference 1987 first team as selected by the league's eight football coaches.

Roper, a junior from Houston, was the heart of Texas A&M's defense which carried the Aggies to their third consecutive SWC football title.

Playing both end and linebacker, Roper led the team in tackles and sacks as A&M topped the SWC in total defense.

Other Aggies on the first team included wide receiver Rod Harris, center Matt Wilson, offensive tackle Louis Cheek, placekicker Scott Slater, noseguard Sammy O'Brient, and safety Kip Corrington.

Aggies on the second team included linebacker Aaron Wallace, strong safety Chet Brooks and tailbacks Keith Woodside and Darren Lewis.

Jackie Sherrill, taking the Aggies to their third consecutive Cotton Bowl, was named Coach of the Year. He clinched the title Thanksgiving night with a 20-13 victory over the Texas Longhorns.

A&M will face Notre Dame on Jan. 1 in Dallas. The Irish, led by Heisman Trophy hopeful Tim Brown, finished with an 8-3 mark after suffering a 24-0 drubbing at the hands of Miami last Saturday.

Lewis was also named Offensive Newcomer of the Year. Baylor quarterback Brad Goebel was runner-up in the voting.

Other first teamers included Offensive Player of the Year Eric Metcalf of Texas, a multi-purpose junior back who averaged five yards per run, seven yards per pass reception, and 14 yards per punt return, and Texas Tech sophomore James Gray in the backfield.

Texas Christian's Tony Jeffery was relegated to a second team role although he was the SWC's leading rusher.

Jeffery was suspended for his final collegiate game because of revelations regarding a professional agent.

Only three SWC coaches nominated Jeffery for All-SWC honors.

Metcalf, Gray and Jeffery all rushed for over 1,000 yards.

Jason Phillips of Houston, who caught 99 passes, and Texas Tech's Wayne Walker rounded out the wide receiver corps.

Texas Tech's Billy Joe Tolliver, who passed for 177 yards per game, was the first team quarterback.

Others on offense included tackle Brian Brazil of TCU, and guards Paul Jetton of Texas, and Mike McBride of Texas Tech.

Arkansas' Tony Cherico and TCU's David Spradlin were first team linemen. Linebackers Britt Hager of Texas, Rickey Williams of Arkansas and Gary McGuire of Houston were first teamers.

The secondary besides Corrington, who is also a first team All-Academic All-American, included Flandia Newton, TCU, John Hagey, Texas, and a tie between Johnny Jackson of Houston and Robert Blackmon of Baylor.

Jackson drew the national spotlight when he returned three interceptions for touchdowns in a game against Texas.

The punter was Chris Becker of TCU.

The Defensive Newcomer of the Year was hard-hitting Texas Tech secondary star Donald Harris.

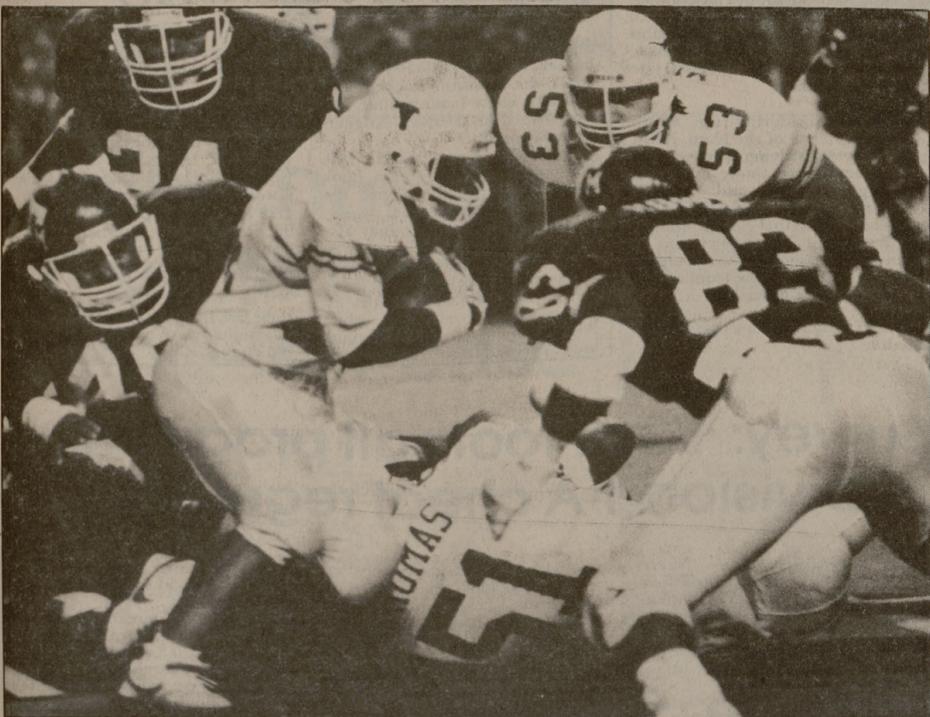


Photo by Jay Janner

A&M's John Roper (83) moves in on UT running back Derron Norris along with a host of other Aggie defenders during A&M's 20-13 win over the Longhorns Thanksgiving night. Roper was A&M's leading tackler this year.

A&M defense takes up offensive slack, leads Ags to Cotton

By Loyd Brumfield
Sports Editor

Now that the 1987 regular football season is over it's time to put Texas A&M's accomplishments in perspective.

Just how good are those Aggies, who managed to make it four in a row over Texas and three in a row in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas?

Well, pretty darned good, all things considered.

Considering that A&M lost seven defensive starters, including the entire line-backing corps, the Aggies did extremely well. The 1987 defense, led by All-Southwest Conference linebacker John Roper,

was even more dominating than last year's team and the 1985 defense.

Case in point: the A&M defense totally shut down Washington and its then-Heisman hopeful Chris Chandler, limiting the Huskies to just 173 total yards. The defense also scored a touchdown on a blocked punt and forced turnovers that led to two more touchdowns.

The Aggies were equally inhospitable to Baylor (213 total yards in a 34-10 win) and Arkansas (125 total yards in a 14-0 shut-out).

A&M even handled Louisiana State rather well, too, limiting the Tigers to just 63 second-half yards after a shaky first half.

The offense grades out much worse than the defense, but who needs an offense as

long as you can win games without one?

Craig Stump, the much-maligned fifth-year senior, hasn't had what some would call a banner year, but he did finish strong enough to emerge as the leader at the end, aided by a good showing against Arkansas when he entered the game late in the second half to spark the Aggies' only consistent drive of the day.

Stump, replaced by redshirt freshman Lance Pavlas, and then replaced again by true freshman Bucky Richardson, deserves thanks for his patience, as well as his experience down the line.

Pavlas remains the Mystery Man of the offense. He started out with promise after capable performances against Washington and Southern Mississippi (13-of-19 for 83

yards against the Huskies and 10-22 for 130 yards against the Golden Eagles), but then fell apart against Texas Tech when he couldn't read defenses and found himself scrambling for his life many times.

Since that 27-21 loss in Lubbock, Pavlas has seen minimal playing time, and he has developed a tendency to rush his throws, which has resulted in a rash of interceptions.

But when Pavlas faltered, an unknown freshman, Richardson, entered the picture and carried the Aggies for most of the season.

He would be the perfect quarterback if he would just learn how to throw the ball. Come to think of it, he may be perfect anyway, since the Aggies won without passing

for much of the year.

Next year, Chris Osgood joins the ranks of the quarterback corps. Osgood, a junior transfer from Ole Miss who started the 1986 season for the Rebels, has the best arm in the bunch and just may steal the job away from Richardson and Pavlas.

Richardson steals the show from Darren Lewis as my Offensive Performer of the Year, however, with clutch performances against Baylor, Southern Miss and Texas, scoring the winning touchdown in the latter game after replacing an injured Stump.

Lewis all but wiped out all the hoopla surrounding fellow freshman Randy Simmons, the heralded running back from McKinney.

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Analysis

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NOTICE AFFORDING OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC HEARING

The State Department of Highways and Public Transportation is planning the improvement of FM 60 from Loop 507 to FM 2154 in the City of College Station.

The proposed improvement consists of upgrading the existing four-lane roadway to provide for six lanes with two-way left turn.

Maps and other drawings showing the proposed location and design for the proposed project as well as environmental studies are on file and available for inspection and copying at the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation office at Bryan, Texas.

Information about the State's Relocation Assistance Program, the benefits and services for displacees and information concerning the relocation assistance office as well as information about the tentative schedules for acquisition of right of way and construction can be obtained at the District Office.

Any interested citizen may request that a public hearing be held covering the social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed location and design for this highway project by delivering a written request to the District Office on or before January 8, 1988. The address of the District Office is Mr. Carol D. Zeigler, District Engineer, State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, P. O. Box 3249, Bryan, Texas 77805.
