

Sports

A&M season depends on Saturday's match

The 1988 Texas A&M football team will play its most important game of the season this weekend against the Alabama Crimson Tide.



Jeff Miller
Sports viewpoint

The Aggies go into Saturday's contest with an 0-2 record and every reason to feel the season waste away.

The road to the Southwest Conference title may not include a New Year's Day in Dallas, but believe it or not, the race toward that title begins Saturday.

The Aggies have lost only one game at Kyle Field in the last three years (LSU, 17-3 last year).

The first two games were away and LSU's crowd isn't the most congenial, as many LSU opponents know.

Maybe the crowd didn't have any factor in the 27-0 shutout of the Aggies, but coming home where the team is used to winning is what it need.

To win against a 13th-ranked team might throw the Aggies back in the Top 20 and give them the confidence they need for Oklahoma State in Stillwater next week.

A win there would put A&M at 2-2 for the season, and the team morale certainly would be much higher than it is now.

Should the Aggies lose, though, they could be in for a long season.

An 0-3 record for a team that had hopes of a national championship would be simply devastating.

A loss would destroy any confidence the Aggies might have had, since home is where they play best.

Many fans believe if they can't win at Kyle Field with the support of the 12th Man, 0-4 isn't far away.

Like one week away. Going into the conference race winless wouldn't be very enlightening to an A&M team that didn't even win at home.

More importantly, with no incentives to play for during the conference schedule, what's the point?

Think about John Roper, Adam Bob, Dana Batiste, Alex Morris, Jerry Fontenot, and Rod Harris. How do they feel? This is their last year.

All of them have a chance to be taken in next year's National Football League draft, and high NFL draftees come from winning teams.

What happens if A&M goes 8-4, 7-5, or an unthinkable 6-6?

These outcomes would certainly lower the value that any of these players possesses.

Roper, who received most of the preseason publicity, is already going to have a tough year because everyone is going to run away from him.

We saw evidence of this in the LSU game.

Harris has already missed one game and will play, but he is not listed as a starter this week.

In addition, he may be one of the most talented receivers in the nation that can't showcase his talents because A&M's passing game hasn't been exactly outstanding since Kevin Murray left.

The opinion of many players right now is that even though they can't go to Dallas on New Year's Day, they can still prove they are the best team in the Southwest Conference.

To end the season in the Top 10, the Aggies not only have to win the SWC, but win every game in the process — a feat that hasn't been accomplished very often.

Also, a mediocre season added with NCAA probation isn't very enticing to blue-chip athletes.

The Alabama game is also important to the SWC, because it isn't doing very well against good teams this preseason.

The University of Texas was mauled by Brigham Young, Texas Christian was blown out by Georgia,

and Texas Tech lost to Division I-AA North Texas.

Things are pretty grim in the SWC, as five of its nine teams have been on probation or being investigated, and the University of Houston seems to be next.

And cheating is obviously not working, based on this year's poor start.

An A&M victory not only would help the Aggies in their quest for a SWC title and a 10-2 victory, but the conference as a whole.

Regaining the respect of fans around the nation is another factor. Alabama has a winning tradition, and Coach Bill Curry and Heisman-Candidate Bobby Humphrey want to keep that tradition alive.

The Aggies winning Saturday

against a team with the prestige Alabama has on national television would show the country the character that A&M football may or may not possess.

Coming back from 0-2 and finishing at 10-2 in the midweek NCAA probation would show football critics that A&M had enough not to throw the 1988 in the trash.

Battalion Football Picks	Doug Walker Assistant Sports Editor	Cray Pixley Assistant Sports Editor	Jeff Miller Sports Writer	d.p. Cartoonist	Jerry Bolz Sports Writer	Hal L. Hammons Sports Editor	Revelle Mascot
Alabama at Texas A&M	Aggies by 3	Aggies by 1	Aggies by 3	Aggies by 7	Aggies by 6	Aggies by 4	Aggies by 4
New Mexico at Texas	Horns by 14	Horns by 10	Longhorns by 7	Horns by 7	Horns by 14	Horns by 13	Lobos by 1
Houston at Missouri	Tigers by 4	Cougars by 3	Cougars by 7	Cougars by 1	Cougars by 14	Tigers by 3	Tigers by 10
Ole Miss at Arkansas	Hogs by 3	Hogs by 7	Hogs by 3	Hogs by 7	Hogs by 8	Hogs by 10	Hogs by 2
Baylor at Iowa State	Bears by 10	Bears by 7	Bears by 2	Bears by 7	Bears by 7	Cyclones by 6	Bears by 3
Bowling Green at TCU	Frogs by 14	Frogs by 3	Frogs by 7	Frogs by 7	Hogs by 2	Frogs by 7	Frogs by 20
Fla. State at Clemson	Seminoles by 3	Tigers by 3	Tigers by 2	Tigers by 1	Seminoles by 7	Seminoles by 1	Seminoles by 1
N. Dame at Michigan St.	Irish by 10	Irish by 7	Irish by 3	Irish by 1	Irish by 10	Spartans by 1	Spartans by 1
LSU at Tennessee	Tigers by 3	Tigers by 10	Tigers by 7	Tigers by 7	Tigers by 9	Tigers by 9	Vois by 1
Ohio State at Pitt	Panthers by 7	Buckeyes by 3	Panthers by 7	Buckeyes by 7	Buckeyes by 6	Buckeyes by 11	Buckeyes by 1
Giants at Cowboys	Cowboys by 6	Giants by 7	Giants by 3	Cowboys by 1	Cowboys by 3	Cowboys by 2	Cowboys by 1
Oilers at Jets	Oilers by 4	Oilers by 1	Oilers by 1	Oilers by 1	Oilers by 4	Oilers by 9	Oilers by 1
Record	10-2 (.833)	9-3 (.750)	9-3 (.750)	9-3 (.750)	10-2 (.830)	9-3 (.750)	8-4 (.667)
Overall	21-4 (.840)	20-5 (.800)	19-6 (.730)	19-6 (.730)	19-6 (.730)	18-7 (.720)	15-10 (.600)

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 A. "Tell it to my Great Dane"
 B. "Tell it to my Heart"
 C. "Tell it to the Marines"
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ANSWERS
 1-a, 2-b, 3-a, 4-c, 5-b

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