

## Ag attendance overrated Where are all those die-hard fans?

By Tim Stanfield  
Reporter

Suppose you were a little delinquent in purchasing your tickets for last Saturday's Rice-Texas A&M football game at Kyle Field. Well, too bad, for surely the game had long been a sellout.

I mean, since Aggie students, alumni and fans always pack the house whenever their boys take the field, there just couldn't be many, if any, ducats on the table.

Bah! Reality says outstanding sophomore running back Darren Lewis ran for 170 yards in front of a paltry 53,727 fans at Kyle Field on a beautiful afternoon for football for the Aggies' fourth consecutive Southwest Conference victory.

Yes, the rebounding Ags breezed past the slumbering Owls before approximately 19,000 empty seats — and it was the third largest crowd to see the teams meet here!

How can this be? Don't Aggies have a reputation for going to their football games regardless of the team's record, the weather, the opponent or day of the week?

Certainly, but it's as true as saying that Dan Quayle really helped in the military activity in Southeast Asia as a member of the Indiana National Guard.

Cold hard facts say that since A&M opened the 1967 season with a 20-17 loss to SMU, Kyle Field has

been sold out 13 times, although the Aggies came close twice.

When Coach Gene Stallings' 1967 team defeated the University of Texas, 10-7, capturing the SWC title and a Cotton Bowl berth, the 49,200 fans had to be put into Kyle Field with a shoehorn.

Two years later — guess who was the opponent — A&M drew 51,160 to see the Longhorns win 49-12. And yes, the succeeding pair of games the rivals played here drew record crowds of 52,090 and 52,974 (Texas won 34-14 and 42-13).

A pattern is forming right before our eyes: Aggies don't fill the place up to see their team play. They come out to see A&M's rival play the home boys.

In 1975 Athletic Director and Head Coach Emory Bellard not only returned the Aggies to success on the field but also supervised expanding Kyle Field.

Nobody who saw A&M play that season will ever forget the sight of students crowding into the unfinished second deck with only a rope at the edge preventing somebody from falling off.

Surprise! While the stands were being built, A&M actually set a record attendance without the Longhorns present! Baylor drew 53,693 in one of the wettest games ever played here.

Of course, a few weeks later, Texas showed up, drawing 56,679 to

an exciting 20-10 A&M win that kept Texas out of the Cotton Bowl.

Bellard resigned during the 1978 season, and the new athletic director, current Bryan Mayor Marvin Tate, was at the helm for the final expansion that boosted capacity to 72,767.

During the construction, the Aggies played their 1979 opener at Rice Stadium where 40,000 watched Brigham Young rally for an 18-17 win.

The other four home games were played at Kyle Field amid the construction. Two of them, Arkansas and Texas, drew larger crowds than there were permanent seats. The Hogs won 22-10 before 62,648, while the Longhorns beat A&M 13-7 in front of 69,017.

With expansion completed, Penn State christened the new facility by defeating A&M 25-9 before 66,783 (you will note that the prior season Texas drew 2,234 more fans).

Fifty-one games have been played here since then, and only nine have drawn larger crowds than the initial game (in which Penn State blocked three punts).

What does all this mean? Well, sad to say, the long-standing Aggie tradition of standing up for their team in a full Kyle Field is merely a myth.

How many times have you heard (or said), "Let's go to the Arkansas game," or "It's only Louisiana Tech or Rice (or TCU or SMU...), can't

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## UT overcomes Lady Aggies; A&M falls after taking game

By Jerry Bolz  
Sports Writer

For one set, the Texas A&M volleyball team was ahead of the fourth-ranked Texas Longhorns. Then emotion and crowd support wore off, and reality took over.

UT rebounded from a 15-10 loss in the first game to cruise to an easy victory over the Lady Aggies before 1,406 fans — easily the biggest attendance of the season at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Texas allowed only 11 points after the first game, as A&M followed the first game by losing 15-4, 15-2, 15-5.

The Longhorns were never rattled, even though they gave A&M nine points on hitting errors in the first game. But Texas' emotionless, steady play made the difference the rest of the way.

A&M Coach Al Givens said the key reason the Lady Aggies lost was their lack of passing after Game 1.

"As long as we're passing well, we have enough offensive weapons to hang with anyone," he said. "Gradually, our passing just went downhill."

In the second game, the Longhorns wore the Lady Aggies down with errorless play and stifling defense.

After a 4-4 tie, Texas shut the Lady Aggies down, scoring 19 straight points. The streak reached into the third game as Texas opened an 8-0 lead behind the serving of setter Sue Schellhout.

Texas' Coach Mick Haley said the Longhorns just got into a rhythm.

"We never feel like we're out of a

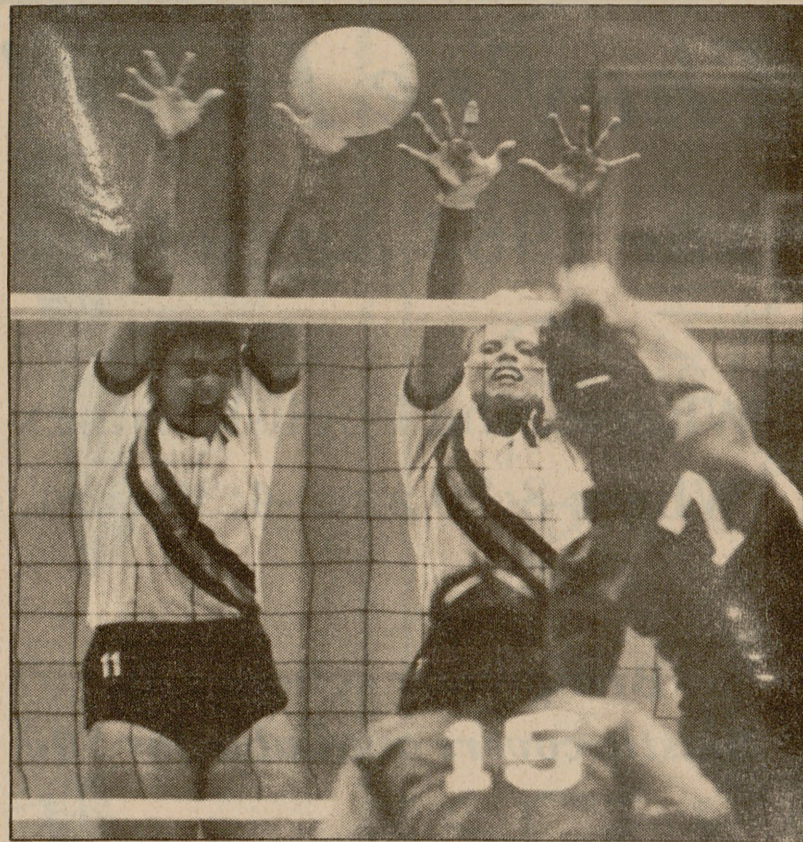


Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Junior Kelli Kellen (left) and senior Cheri Steensma attempt a block of Texas' Janine Gremmel during the second set of Wednesday's match.

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## Only time will tell if the Aggies will stay motivated

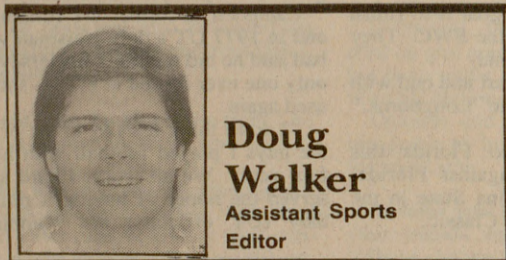
We're not even out of October and the Southwest Conference football race appears to be decided. Arkansas has virtually clinched its first Cotton Bowl appearance in 13 years with three conference games to play.

With the Aggies out of the race because of NCAA probation, the only real suspense remaining for Aggie fans is whether A&M can finish the conference schedule without a loss.

For me there is another question that will be answered in the season's final month that may tell more about this team than any other: How will the probation affect the Aggies' motivation as the season winds down?

If the Aggies beat Arkansas they will probably finish the year without another loss. However, if the Hogs beat A&M, it's conceivable the Aggies could throw in the towel and lose all their remaining games.

I really believe this team will compete regardless of what happens in the Arkansas game. The players seem to have enough pride to overcome any motivational shortcomings. Anyway, I can't imagine Jackie Sherrill allowing them to grow complacent.



Doug Walker  
Assistant Sports Editor

When the Aggies trailed Baylor at halftime, Sherrill raised a ruckus in the locker room and told the team, in the immortal words of defensive back Mickey Washington, "Get your heads out of your butts!"

Apparently it worked.

The Aggies are known for going easy on teams that should be blown out and this year has been no different. Although they have sputtered in the past two games, and probably will next week against Louisiana Tech, the Aggies have won the games they were supposed to win and turned what could have been a completely

disastrous season around with four consecutive conference wins.

As the season has progressed the Aggies have shown the potential to be awesome. However, they have only shown this ability when they felt they needed to. As in years past, the Aggies have played to the level of their competition.

A&M began the conference schedule needing a win over Texas Tech in the worst way. Already 0-3 on the season, the Aggies faced the possibility of an 0-5 start as the Red Raiders and Houston had looked impressive in their conference openers.

The Aggies responded by crushing Tech and winning a tough one over the Cougars. The real test of their resolve will come after their first conference loss. That could easily come against the Razorbacks. A&M hasn't played well in Arkansas in recent years, and the Hogs want to prove they are really the SWC's best team.

Arkansas could clinch the conference title as early as this weekend with a win over Rice combined with a win by Tech over Texas and a TCU loss to Houston. This scenario could benefit A&M from a motivational standpoint.

With the title already theirs, Arkansas could have a letdown against A&M. Sherrill himself has said that Arkansas could "take a picnic" in November by clinching early.

It's probably just wishful thinking on his part. The Hogs will be just as fired up as the Aggies and looking for revenge for last year's 14-0 domination by the Aggies.

History shows that some ineligible SWC teams have been unphased by probation. The 1956 A&M team was unable to compete in post-season bowl competition and went unbeaten in conference play while ending up 9-0-1 overall.

For a more recent example there is the case of the 1981 Southern Methodist team. Despite being on probation, the Mustangs went 7-1 in the SWC and 10-1 overall. SMU left the Cotton Bowl with second-place Texas as the host team.

Ironically, the beginning of A&M's three-year dominance of the SWC coincided with the fall of a team that was favored to win the title but was ineligible for Cotton Bowl play.

The 1985 SMU team had tied for the conference crown in 1984 and looked like the

favorite. But the NCAA stepped in and dropped the Ponies out of contention by slapping them with the probation that preceded the "Death Penalty" ruling of last year.

SMU began the 1985 conference season with wins in three of the first four games before losing a 19-17 decision to the Aggies. That loss to A&M apparently made the remainder of the season a hopeless cause for the Mustangs. They beat Rice in their next game and then squeaked by an inferior Tech team before getting bounced by Arkansas and Oklahoma in their final two games to finish with a record of 6-5 overall.

SMU followed a similar script in 1986 as they struggled through to a 5-3 SWC record in the second year of their probation.

As history shows, the Aggies could go either way. They can use the probation as a rallying point or fold up and look forward to next year.

Now what will happen to the Aggies. I'm not a mystic, but I do know that the next few weeks will be interesting to watch. The Aggies will reveal much about their character as a team by their performance in the next few weeks.

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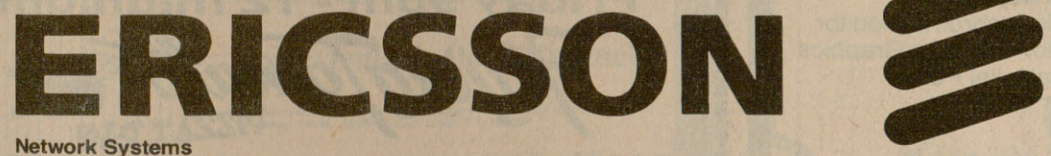
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