

Aggies drubbed SMU in '74 Simonini's 48-yard fumble return-TD led effort

Coach Emory Bellard's 1974 Texas A&M squad attained the No. 4 ranking in the Associated Press Poll twice that season, prior to playing at Kansas and SMU.

Both times the Aggies entered the game heavily favored — and came away the loser twice (28-10 and 18-14). Though they started the 1975 season with 10 consecutive wins, it wasn't until after defeating Baylor 19-10 that the 7-0 Ags moved back into the fourth spot in the AP.

Guess who was their next opponent? Yep, the SMU Mustangs, fresh off a tremendous game against the University of Texas, in which fullback Wayne Morris rushed for 202 yards.

Texas won that game, as it had the previous season. On November 8, 1975, the Ags hit Kyle Field ready for revenge — or did they?

"I think we had a bit of a revenge factor going into that game," former Aggie All-American linebacker Ed Simonini said Tuesday night. "We certainly didn't want history to repeat itself."

"We had an off week before that game, and one of our defensive linemen, Jimmy Dean, was injured and didn't play against SMU. Steve Spitzberger replaced him for us, but it was a concern going into the game."

Unlike the 1974 game when the breaks went the Ponies' way early in the game (SMU got its first touchdown when tight end Oscar Roan caught Morris' fumble on one hop and strolled untouched into the wet end zone), the Aggies got an early boost this time and ran away with the game, 36-3.

"Pat Thomas intercepted a pass on the first play of

Tim Stanfield Flashback

the game, which got us going," Simonini said. "Things like that often determine the outcome of a game. There were games when early turnovers set us back."

Simonini had his usual excellent game, stopping Morris on fourth down at the A&M two yard line in the fourth quarter in a defensive effort that limited SMU to 203 yards in total offense (154.6 yards less than they averaged).

But there was something extra for the senior from Valley High (Las Vegas, Nev.); he returned a fumble recovery 48 yards for the only touchdown of his A&M career.

It came at 6:31 of the second quarter and, according to Simonini, quickly and unexpectedly.

"(Quarterback Ricky) Wesson and Arthur Whittington had a problem with a handoff, and the ball just popped out of there and right into my hands," he recalled. "When I caught it, I was wide open, but the thing I remember the most was how fast Lester Hayes went by me."

"He and Pat Thomas cleared the way for me to score, because I wasn't fast enough to outrun Wesson and Whittington. In fact, I had to weave back and forth to the end zone, and some of the guys got on me about

how long it took me to get there."

Always fired up, the youngster exited the end zone with both arms high above his head, fists clenched and yelling at the top of his lungs. Well, as loud as he could.

Following the game Simonini said, "I was about to die from exhaustion when I crossed the goal line. I was too tired to do anything but kick the ball in the stands."

Along with quarterback David Shipman's 84-yard touchdown pass to running back Skip Walker, Simonini's touchdown put the game on ice, but, as always, there were other things still to be done.

Like making life miserable for anyone in the Pony backfield, but particularly the fleet Morris.

One week after his career-best rushing total, Morris gained 8 yards on 7 carries, and the entire SMU rushing output was a paltry 135 yards on 56 carries.

"We were sort of wondering how their offense would do against us, and I think we dominated them," fellow A&M All-American linebacker Garth TenNapel said. "We remembered the game from last year and wanted to beat a good team heavily."

"Morris was quoted in the papers that he expected to have a good game against our defense," Simonini added. "So maybe we used the type of defense that kept him from carrying the ball very much."

One time he did get it was in the fourth quarter, when SMU made its best bid for a touchdown. On

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Nets get Carroll in six-player trade

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Joe Barry Carroll, the No. 1 pick in the 1980 NBA draft, was acquired by the New Jersey Nets on Wednesday in a six-player deal with the Houston Rockets, a Nets spokesman said.

The Nets also picked up guard Lester Conner from the Rockets and shipped guards Frank Johnson, Lorenzo Romar, swingman Tony Brown and 7-foot-1 center Tim McCormick to Houston.

Carroll, 7-1, was acquired by Houston from Golden State in December, playing in 77 games during the season. He averaged 12.7 points and had 489 rebounds in 2,004 minutes.

"We are extremely pleased to have someone like Joe Barry Carroll join our team," Harry Weltman, the Nets vice president and general manager, said. "His presence in the middle and his ability to get points from this position is something we sorely need to be competitive in this league."

Carroll was originally drafted by Golden State in 1980 out of Purdue

and played four seasons with the Warriors before spending a year in Italy. He returned to New Jersey in a trade with Philadelphia for Mike Gminski and averaged 14.1 points and 6.9 rebounds in 47 games.

McCormick also was a recent acquisition. He came to New Jersey in a trade with Philadelphia for Mike Gminski and averaged 14.1 points and 6.9 rebounds in 47 games.

"Tim was an integral part in what turned out to be a fine deal for our team last year," Weltman said. "His development as a player made this deal possible for us."

Conner, a former star at Oregon State, averaged 2.5 points in 52 games with Houston last year.

Brown, 6-6, missed all of last season with a torn right Achilles problem.

Romar played last season in Europe with Athletes in Action, while Johnson recently signed as a free agent with the Nets after playing for the Washington Bullets.

Hard to find good reason for A&M to play Dogs

Texas A&M meets Louisiana Tech Saturday in a non-conference football game which will benefit the Aggies in no way other than giving them a practice game in preparation for the remainder of the season.

Why play Louisiana Tech? Don't ask me? Other than giving A&M an easy win and filling a vacant spot in the schedule left by the NCAA's death penalty ruling against Southern Methodist it's hard to see why this game is being played.

Jackie Sherrill summed it up after A&M's uninspired 32-3 win over the Bulldogs last year. "You don't win in a game like this unless you just roll over them."

Exactly! And when was the last time the Aggies really clobbered a team that had no business lining up to play them? Not in a while. The TCU game in 1986 comes to mind. A&M won 74-10 in a game in which they could have easily topped 100 points.

Normally, the Aggies play to the level of their competition — regardless of what level that may



Doug Walker
Assistant Sports Editor

be. This is why those of you planning to take in Saturday's game should expect the Aggies to win by a comfortable margin, but not by a huge spread.

Last year the Bulldogs held the Aggie offense to 14 first downs and 254 total yards as A&M led only 11-3 at the half. A&M scored its only touchdown when John Roper returned a blocked punt for a score. Only two fourth-period touchdowns, one a 59-yard punt return by Rod Harris,

made the score as one-sided as it was.

A game against an opponent like this can only help by giving the starters a lot of rest and allowing some reserves to gain a little game action.

Maybe the Aggie offense will work on the passing game and come out of this without any new injuries.

In fact, the thing that worries me most about this game is the possibility of losing a key player like Darren Lewis, Dana Batiste or John Roper to injury in a meaningless game.

It would be a shame if the Aggies lost their biggest weapons before getting a chance to prove they are the best team in the SWC.

On the positive side, the game provides a big paycheck for Louisiana Tech. Tech is a school trying to retain its new status as a Division I-A school and has already played Wyoming, Houston and Florida State in an attempt to gain revenue and help their attendance average.

Tech must average 18,600 in attendance for all home games to retain I-A status and is close to that mark this year thanks to a big turnout

against Houston. The Bulldogs are paying a heavy price on the field for their revenues gained from road games.

The Bulldogs followed a 60-0 home loss to Houston with a 38-6 shellacking at the hands of Wyoming in Laramie. The odyssey continued two weeks ago with a 66-3 pasting at Florida State in a game in which FSU Head Coach Bobby Bowden admitted to running up the score to enhance the Seminoles' standing in the national rankings.

Bowden's tactic reminds me of what was probably another reason why Sherrill scheduled this matchup. He expected the Aggies to be in contention for the national title this year and a huge victory margin over the Bulldogs could have helped the Aggies in the polls. This would have been especially vital if the team had only lost one game thus far.

Based on the success of the Seminole special teams against the Bulldogs, you might look for Harris to have another big day returning punts. Also, there may be a couple of blocked punts by

the Aggies as in last year's game.

The offense will probably look sluggish once again. The combination of a week off and the third straight game against an opponent with less than impressive credentials probably adds up to another uninspired victory against a weaker opponent.

Lewis should have another big day as the offensive line will shove around the smaller Bulldogs. The Bulldogs, who just moved up to I-A, have 95 scholarships available and only 86 players on scholarship. Most are freshmen and sophomores and just aren't as big as the people they go up against.

The defense is another story. With the Bulldogs' starting quarterback out with a separated shoulder and two receivers also injured, the Aggie defense should expect a shut out.

Unless they win by about 50 or 60 points and pass for about 300 yards, it looks like this will be a game played only to fill a spot on the schedule and bolster the individual numbers of A&M's offensive stars.

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