

# From 'backer to back

## Roper becomes newest Ag scorer

**Player of the Week**  
John Roper

**By Doug Walker**  
Assistant Sports Editor

John Roper likes to talk about how much he hates the offense.

He never played on offense and doesn't remember ever wanting to. He enjoys hitting the quarterback above all else.

Roper may want to reconsider his feelings in light of his major contribution to Texas A&M's 28-24 victory over the Texas Longhorns Thursday night.

His 48-yard touchdown return of a blocked field goal early in the second quarter provided the difference, as the Aggies beat Texas for the fifth straight time.

The blocked kick gave A&M a 21-0 lead and provided a perfect exhibition of the talents of the "Blitz Brothers" (Roper and fellow linebacker Aaron Wallace).

Wallace broke through the left side of the Texas line and blocked the kick. Roper scooped up the ball and lumbered down the sideline for the score.

"I was tired," Roper said. "I was surprised at first, then I caught my breath and ran up and scooped it up."

As he neared the Texas goal, Roper stiff-armed a Texas tackler and lunged over the goal line for the score.

Roper said, "I give credit to Darren for the way he runs. He inspired me."

A&M held Texas to a total of 14 yards rushing on 33 attempts for the night and caught the Longhorns for losses totalling 63 yards. Roper ended the game with six tackles (four unassisted), one quarterback pressure and one quarterback sack for a six-yard loss. He also added one tackle for a loss of two yards and broke up a pass.

Roper's touchdown looked like it may lead to a rout as the Aggies built their lead to 28-0 midway through the second quarter. As the Longhorns mounted their comeback the importance of Roper's score grew.

Texas cashed in on Aggie turnovers deep in A&M territory to draw closer late in the game.

A&M Head Coach Jackie Sherrill praised Roper and the other seniors for their attitude and determination.



Photo by Jay Janner

A&M linebacker John Roper put the grips on Texas' running game and Eric Metcalf Thanksgiving night. Metcalf was held to 52 yards.

"There's no question the three seniors (Roper, Dana Batiste and Adam Bob) made the difference," Sherrill said. "Texas did not take the ball and have any sustained drives."

"You look at (Roper) and Batiste. Every game they played harder and harder. You don't play for rewards. You play for what's inside. If (the defense) would have had a letdown, we'd have lost the game."

The Texas offense had the ball late in the game with a chance to take the lead, but the Aggies stifled them.

Roper and the defense had a talk about the situation before stopping Texas' last threat.

"We just said that this is our last year and we'd come too far to let this happen," Roper said. "We just had to go for what we know."

The Longhorns were stuffed all

night by the Aggie defense. Texas gained more than one first down on only one drive and managed only 11 first downs. Other than Jones' 76-yard scoring catch, the longest Texas drive was the 35-yard move in the second quarter which ended with the blocked field goal. Texas' Eric Metcalf managed only 52 yards rushing on 22 carries.

Roper was happy about keeping the A&M winning streak against Texas alive and said Aggie fans need not fear a letdown next year. Roper, Batiste and Bob are among seven seniors listed on the Aggie two-deep list leaving after this week's Alabama game.

"It's a happy feeling to beat them five times in a row," Roper said. "We just came out and played as hard as we could."

# Finding motivation is key for Aggies in 'Bama game

**By Hal L. Hammons**  
Sports Editor

What does a team have to fight for when it has already beaten its archrival and the schedule says the season ought to be over?

Texas A&M is going to have to find some kind of motivation, because one game still remains on the Aggies' docket — the rescheduled game with the University of Alabama.

Of course the game was scheduled for Sept. 17, but Hurricane Gilbert and Alabama Head Coach Bill Curry — and some would add, "not necessarily in that order" — had other ideas.

Curry announced the day before the game that his team wasn't going to risk a plane trip through an area that possibly would be threatened by the hurricane.

So now both teams' seasons are practically over, the bowl bids have been extended, and the yearly climax of the teams' respective seasons — 'Bama vs. Auburn and A&M vs. the University of Texas — are over.

Jackie Sherrill said at Monday's

weekly press luncheon the result of the postponement was difficult to measure.

"It's kind of hard this time to get a feel for either team emotionally," Sherrill said. "I don't know if at the game either one of them will be ready. I can't get a reading."

But he said A&M was going to have to be ready to win the game, because despite its 7-3 record, the Tide is an imposing force.

Sherrill said, "I can understand now why Alabama thought at the beginning of the year they were going to have a pretty good year and contend with Auburn for the (Southeast Conference) championship, and maybe the national championship."

Since then Bobby Humphrey, their Heisman Trophy candidate running back, has been lost for the season with an injury.

But Sherrill said the Tide is still loaded with talent.

"They've got a ton of first-round picks," he said.

Leading the pack is Lombardi and Butkus Award nominee Derrick Thomas, Alabama's star outside linebacker. Sherrill said Thomas would probably go in the first three or four picks of next spring's NFL draft.

He compared Thomas favorably with another nominee the Aggies have faced this year — Nebraska's Broderick Thomas.

"Anybody who's seen Alabama and Nebraska knows Derrick Thomas is a better football player than Broderick Thomas," he said.

The Aggies will have to play without Bucky Richardson. The sophomore quarterback had knee surgery Monday and will miss the game.

Sherrill sounded like the Sherrill of old, refusing to say whether Chris Osgood or Lance Pavlas would start in Richardson's place.

"It doesn't make any difference," he said. "We may put both of them in at the same time."

# Believe it or not, hockey has at least one fan in this state

There is a conspiracy against hockey. Somewhere, there are powerful people plotting to revoke Texans' rights to enjoy the sport of hockey. Little by little, there is less of it to be seen or even read about.

Last year I was lamenting the lack of Texas professional or semi-professional hockey teams. I was extremely distressed that, for whatever reason, I was being denied the opportunity to attend a hockey game without leaving the state.

There used to be semi-pro hockey teams in Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas — but no more.

Hey, there was even a hockey team on the A&M campus!

Yes, long ago. But even that team drifted apart. This is a terrible tragedy, but at least last year there was something to fall back on.

Television. All right, so we don't have those hockey teams in our major cities, but we received some comfort from the fact that we were not completely cut off from the hockey world.

Hockey fans' savior was ESPN. ESPN faithfully provided coverage for hockey-starved individuals, but still I would grip over the fact that our cities didn't have hockey teams.

I should have been eternally satisfied with what I was already getting through television — Olympic hockey and all — instead of being disgruntled.



**Cray Pixley**  
Assistant Sports Editor

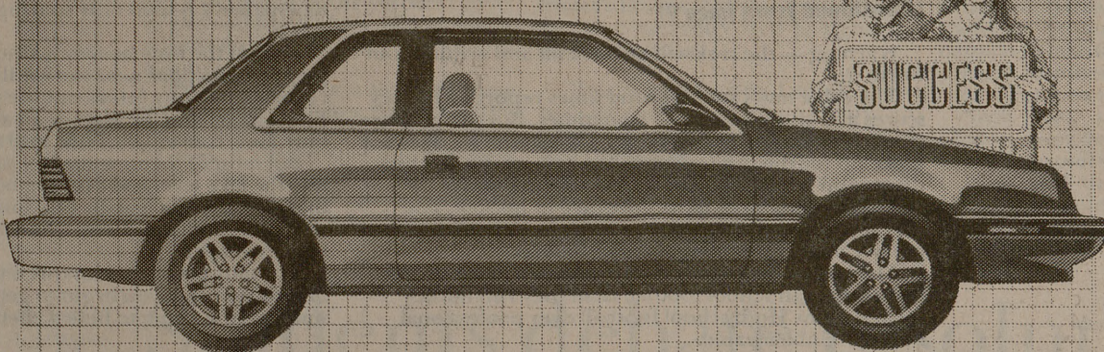
I suppose I thought the coverage of hockey by the area media couldn't get any worse.

Well, I was wrong. It got much worse. Hockey season rolled around this year without coverage by ESPN. It was a very conspicuous absence. The last resource for hockey pulled the plug. Without ESPN's coverage there is nowhere to turn for hockey information.

Oh, it can be argued that hockey is still on television and in the newspaper, but this is not entirely correct. For those hockey fans who have been in the dark since ESPN abandoned the cause, here is where to look for that hockey coverage.

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\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	<b>IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME STUDY</b>	\$100
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\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	<b>TENSION HEADACHE??</b>	\$40
\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	Call To see if you qualify for a medication survey. \$40 financial incentive for those chosen to participate	\$40
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	<b>ASTHMA STUDY</b>	\$400
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	Individuals who have regular asthma to participate in an asthma study. \$400 incentive for those chosen to participate.	\$400
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	<b>FREE STREP THROAT TESTING</b>	\$100
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	For individuals 12 years and older with sore throat willing to participate in a study to treat strep throat. Diagnosed strep throat welcome. \$100 incentive for those chosen to participate.	\$100
\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	<b>SORE THROAT STUDY</b>	\$40
\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	Wanted: Individuals ages 18-70 with sore throat pain to participate in a 90 minute study to compare currently available over-the-counter pain relief medication. \$40 incentive to those chosen to participate.	\$40
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