

# Hurricane turns Crimson at Kyle Thomas, 'Bama too much for Pavlas; Tide rolls to 30-10 win

By Hal L. Hammons  
Sports Editor

It's not humanly possible to not feel sorry for Lance Pavlas after Thursday night's game.

The young man has carried the burden of "superstar potential" ever since high school, and for the first time since early in his freshman year he got a chance to actually fulfill them.

And he played his guts out. Unfortunately for him and Texas A&M, Alabama quarterback Derrick Thomas and Butkus Award winner Derrick Thomas did too. And with better results.

So Pavlas had to console himself with a good performance, while Smith and Thomas celebrated a 30-10 win. Pavlas was somber and soft-spoken in the interview room after the game.

"Finals are coming up, and it's been a long season, and I'm tired," he said. "I haven't been this tired in a long time."

## Sherrill quiet about rumors

Jackie Sherrill would not comment after the game Thursday night about the recent allegations concerning "hush money" paid to former player George Smith as reported by the Dallas Morning News or his future with the University.

Sherrill has refused to comment ever since the story was printed Nov. 18, saying he would not talk about the story until the end of the season.

He would not answer questions directly about his future with Texas A&M.

"That's not even a question," Sherrill said.

But he did indicate he planned on being at the Aggie helm next season.

"We'll see you next September," he told the media.

He would not answer when asked when he would respond to the allegations.

The News reported that Smith said he received "hush money" from Sherrill several times, including one payment of \$500 four days after the NCAA handed down sanctions against A&M for other rules violations.

The loss ended a controversy-filled season for the Aggies, who finished at 7-5. The Tide stands at 8-3 and will begin preparations for their Dec. 24 date with Army at the Sun Bowl in El Paso.

The game, styled the "Hurricane Bowl" by the local chambers of commerce, originally was scheduled to be played Sept. 17. But Alabama Head Coach Bill Curry decided not to send his team, citing possible danger from Hurricane Gilbert.

Curry received a lot of criticism at the time from Alabama fans — something he hasn't needed in a season filled with rumors that he will soon be replaced.

Tailback Murry Hill said, "We felt the coaches had taken enough bad publicity, and it was our turn to do something. We took it upon ourselves to get the job done."

Sherrill said, "It was unfortunate that we played it at this time, but we played it the time we had to play it." "It would have been our first home game (with the original date), and we play well in our first home games. And we would have had Bucky (Richardson)."

Richardson aggravated a knee injury in the Texas game last week that he suffered against Texas Christian the week before. He had knee surgery earlier this week.

Pavlas, a surprise starter over Chris Osgood, went 10-for-21 with only one interception. And that came late in the game with the outcome already decided.

He played the entire game except for one play, when he was suffering a hand cramp and Osgood went in.

A&M Head Coach Jackie Sherrill said, "Pavlas did a very good job all week in practice. We planned to play both (Pavlas and Osgood), but it just didn't happen that way."

Smith completed 13 of 20 passes for 156 yards, two touchdowns and one interception.

Smith, who was recovering from knee surgery and not noted as a scrambler, proved his critics wrong. He completed numerous passes on the run and was sacked only once on the night.

Curry said, "There just isn't anyone like David Smith. There's nothing you can do to stop him. He just keeps coming right back to get you."

Thomas had two sacks of Pavlas, including one that caused a fumble and led to the clinching score in the fourth quarter.

Sherrill said, "Derrick Thomas is a great player. He showed it at the end. He put the pressure on and we didn't protect the quarterback."

Darren Lewis tied Earl Campbell's record of 10 straight 100-yard games, but he fell short of Campbell's Southwest Conference single-season rushing record.

Lewis needed 181 yards for the record but only managed 128 on 24 carries, placing him second on the all-time list with 1,692 yards.

Alabama blew open a close game in the fourth quarter, scoring 17 points while shutting out the Aggies.

Smith's passing and critical Aggie penalties helped Alabama drive 73 yards for a touchdown to go ahead 20-10 with 4:47 to go. Smith scrambled for 12 yards on a critical third-and-11, and a holding call on A&M put the ball at the A&M 28. An eight-yard touchdown pass to Kevin Turner on third-and-one capped the drive.

Thomas' fumble-causing sack with 8:55 remaining led to Alabama kicker Phillip Doyle's third field goal of the day, which put the Tide ahead 23-10 with 2:13 to play.

Alabama added another late score on an obviously disconsolate Aggie defense. Murry Hill capped a 54-yard drive with a 10-yard scamper up the middle for a touchdown.

The Aggies looked to be gaining the momentum early in the second half after trailing 13-3 at intermission.

Pavlas scrambled and threw across the field to Rod Harris for a 24-yard gain on fourth and two to keep the half's opening drive alive. Lewis took the ball to the one on two carries, and Robert Wilson dove in for the score.

The Aggies stopped Alabama on the next drive and took the ball to the Tide 42. But Sherrill opted to punt the ball on fourth and two.

A&M never penetrated Tide territory again.

Sherrill said, "At the time I felt we still had time. We were still in the game. If we had been a little farther downfield we would have gone for it."

Many expected the game to be a defensive struggle, but it certainly didn't look like it in the opening quarter.

Alabama took the opening kick and drove 75 yards on 14 plays. Smith hit fullback Robert Stewart for a 10-yard TD to end the drive.

A&M drove back for a 49-yard field goal by Scott Slater for the only points A&M was to earn in the half.

Two field goals by Doyle in the second quarter — one after Pavlas fumbled on an exchange with Lewis — provided the only points Alabama was to need.



Photo by Jay Janner

## Play of the Game

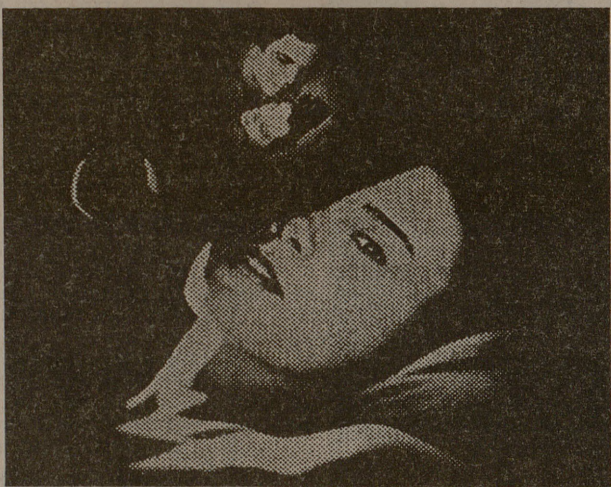
Alabama linebacker Derrick Thomas, the 1988 Butkus Award winner, sacks A&M's Lance Pavlas from behind forcing a fumble which led to a field goal in

the fourth quarter of Thursday night's game. Thomas had nine tackles and two sacks in the Crimson Tide's 30-10 win.



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