

Tuesday, October 3, 1989

# A&M cracks AP Top 20

## Notre Dame, Miami stay as Nos. 1 and 2 teams

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

Texas A&M cracked into the Top 20 for the second time this season, moving up three rankings to No. 19 in the Associated Press' Top 25 Football Poll released on Monday.

A&M, which is coming off a 31-14 victory over Southern Mississippi, was ranked 15th earlier in the year after its season-opening upset over then-seventh ranked Louisiana State.

However, a 19-6 loss to Washington the next week dropped the Aggies down to No. 22, and they've stayed at No. 22 and No. 21 ever since. The Aggies play Texas Tech on Saturday.

While Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz continues to insist that his Fighting Irish are not a perfect football team, they remained the near-unanimous choice at the top of the rankings on Monday.

The Irish, who supplanted Michigan as the No. 1 team after beating the Wolverines on Sept. 16 and have remained there since, received 57 first-place votes from a nationwide panel of 60 sports writers and broadcasters. The Irish, who improved to 4-0 Saturday with a 40-7 victory over Purdue, got 1,497 of a possible 1,500 points in voting which awards the

top team 25 points down to one point for a 25th-place vote.

Miami, Fla. (4-0), which received the other three first-place votes and remained second in the poll with 1,426 points, beat Michigan State 26-20 on Saturday.

Moving from fifth to third, its

### AP Top 25 Poll

Team	Last Week
1. Notre Dame	1
2. Miami	2
3. Colorado	5
4. Nebraska	3
5. Michigan	6
6. Tennessee	12
7. Arkansas	8
8. Pittsburgh	10
9. West Virginia	9
9. USC	11
11. Auburn	4
12. Houston	14
13. Alabama	13
14. No. Carolina St.	15
15. Clemson	7
16. Oklahoma	16
17. Syracuse	18
18. Illinois	20
19. Texas A&M	22
20. Air Force	24
21. Washington St.	19
22. Florida St.	25
23. Oregon	—
24. Michigan St.	—
25. UCLA	—

highest ranking since 1977, was Colorado. The Buffaloes (4-0) received 1,344 points after a 45-28 trouncing

of Washington. The loss, Washington's worst at home in 60 years, dropped the Huskies, who had been 21st, from the poll.

The strength of Colorado's victory convinced voters to move it ahead of fellow Big Eight member Nebraska. The Cornhuskers (4-0) fell from third to fourth with 1,344 points despite a 35-7 victory over Oregon State.

Michigan (2-1) moved from sixth to fifth following a 41-21 victory over Maryland. The Wolverines, first in the preseason poll, accumulated 1,234 points.

Tennessee (4-0) moved from 12th to sixth — the biggest gain in the poll — by upsetting previously fourth-ranked Auburn 21-14 and dropping the Tigers to 11th. The Volunteers got 1,193 points.

Arkansas (3-0) improved a spot to seventh with 1,118 points after beating Texas-El Paso 39-7. Eighth with 961 points was Pittsburgh (3-0-1), which moved up two spots by playing a 31-31 tie with West Virginia.

The Mountaineers (3-0-1) were ranked ninth last week, but share that spot and a point total of 939 with Southern Cal. The Trojans (3-1) moved up from 11th by beating Washington State 18-17.

# Aggie offense finally finds way with return of strong running

By Clay Rasmussen

Of The Battalion Staff

Found at Kyle Field: An offensive running game complete with two running backs, a talented quarterback and a punishing offensive line.

Texas A&M Coach R.C. Slocum and his Aggies finally reclaimed the running game that had eluded them all season in Saturday night's 31-14 win over Southern Mississippi.

The Aggies' running game, which previously had averaged only 136 yards per game, exploded against the Eagles — amassing 314 yards.

A&M hasn't posted numbers like that since its 28-14 win over Baylor last October. The Aggies compiled 318 yards that day against the Bears.

"All along I've been saying that our running game isn't as big a problem as people have made it out to be," Slocum said on Saturday night.

Maybe not, but the Aggies in 1989 haven't come close to posting the same statistics on the ground as they did last year.

Junior running back Darren Le-

wis had yet to have a 100-yard game this year. Fullback Robert Wilson also had been having problems picking up yardage after his 121-yard performance against LSU in A&M's opener.

Defenses keying on Wilson and Lewis, in addition to an offensive line hindered with nagging injuries, had all but shut down the Aggies' running game.

A&M had been averaging only 136 yards rushing per game. Last year, they posted an average of 259 yards per game.

Saturday night's game turned that around.

"Our offense has been changed because a lot of teams have been keying on our running game," Lewis said. "The past few games we've changed their minds. We've been throwing the ball a lot and then come out with the run every now and then."

The offensive line finally had a week off to rest and enter a game healthy.

Lewis doubled his previous game rushing average in 1989, erupting for 126 yards on 21 carries. He also scored a touchdown on a two-yard

leap midway through the third quarter.

Lewis' 126 yards against Southern Mississippi pushed his career total to 2,638 yards, making him the fourth all-time leading rusher at A&M.

He moved ahead of current New York Jets running back Jonny Hector, who ended his career in 1982 with 2,587 yards. Lewis needs 1,065 yards to pass Curtis Dickey as A&M's all-time leading rusher.

Wilson also had a big night after spending the last two games in a similar position as Lewis. Opposing defenses keyed on him since the LSU game, not wanting to be burned by the Aggie rushing attack.

Averaging 5.3 yards a carry going into Saturday night's game, Wilson gained 89 yards on 13 carries — a 6.7 average.

Slocum said he is pleased with the way the A&M offense has developed, with quarterback Lance Pavlas gaining the confidence to throw, keeping opposing defenses off balance.

# Slocum must watch out for 'Lubbock hex', get team up for game

R.C. Slocum beware. You travel to Lubbock this weekend, and that has meant bad things to Texas A&M football in the past.

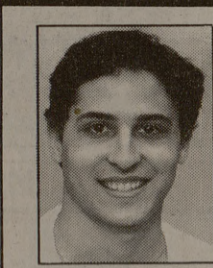
A&M leads the all-time series with Texas Tech 26-20-1, but for some reason A&M football teams have trouble playing on the plains of Lubbock.

A&M is 9-8 in games played in Lubbock, but the last five games have been too close for my blood.

In 1979, Tech scored two fourth-quarter touchdowns to rally for a 21-20 victory. The Aggies were coming off a non-conference win played host to Houston the next week after Tech. A&M lost 17-14 against the Cougars at Kyle Field.

I won't bother telling you who A&M hosts next week at Kyle Field.

In 1981, A&M squeaked one out at Jones Stadium. Coming off a lopsided non-conference win over Louisiana Tech, the Aggies went to Lubbock with a 2-1 record. A missed Tech extra point proved the dif-



**Richard Tijerina**  
 Assistant Sports Editor

ference as the Aggies scored the last two touchdowns of the game to win 24-23.

The next week, A&M hosted Houston and came away with a 7-6 win. The Aggies finished that season 7-5 and beat Oklahoma State 33-16 in the Independence Bowl.

In 1983, A&M was shut out by Tech in Lubbock. The Tech defense made a 51-yard field goal by with 27 seconds left in the first half stand. The Red Raiders won 3-0 as

the Aggie offense, led by quarterbacks John Mazur, a former USC transfer and Kevin Murray, a future All-SWC performer, could get nothing generated.

In 1985, A&M won 28-27 in Lubbock only when a two-point attempt by the Red Raiders failed with 42 seconds to play. A&M crushed Houston 43-16 at Kyle Field the next week and went on to defeat Auburn in the Cotton Bowl.

In 1987, the Aggies were coming off a big win over Southern Mississippi, and traveled to Lubbock with a starting quarterback named Lance Pavlas. Tech dominated the Aggies in a 27-21 upset.

That last one is the most scary. Pavlas had performed well earlier in the season, but fell apart against Tech. The Aggies looked flat throughout the game after coming off a big win.

Slocum would do well to take extra special care that his Aggies remain pumped up for Saturday's game. In 1987, Red Raider

fans were abusive toward the Aggies, throwing bottles and cursing at them.

Several players from that 1987 team are still here, and they should have a score to settle when they go to Lubbock this year. But they have to be careful. Tech is coming off a disappointing loss to Baylor, but is still dangerous.

James Gray is one of the SWC's premier running backs, and has been virtually unstoppable in 1989. By the time he leaves Tech at the end of this year, Gray will hold Red Raider rushing records in rushing yardage, tandem yardage (rushing and receiving), scoring and touchdowns.

It's become all too common for the Aggies to take Texas Tech too lightly. The result is often a game where the Aggies let the Red Raiders get too close, leaving them open for an upset.

But that's understandable, when you look at the situation.

The A&M-Tech game means more to

Red Raider fans than it does to us. They may win only four games all year, but if one of them is against A&M or Texas, it makes the season easier to take.

However, to A&M, Texas Tech is nothing more but a stepping stone to more important conference games. It'll be easy for the Aggies to look ahead to next Saturday when they host 12th-ranked Houston.

But Slocum can't let that happen. He has to keep his team motivated. Pavlas said it well in the post-game interview after Southern Mississippi last Saturday: It's time for the Aggies to get down to business.

Pavlas and the rest of the Aggies who were in Lubbock in 1987 have to remember the bottles, the insults and, more importantly, the 27-21 upset. It's time to make the trip to Lubbock, stay sharp and play a good game. Wins in conference games like this are going to mean a lot down the road.

It's time to just go up to Lubbock for once and kick some butt.

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