

Ags on rankings roller coaster again, jump to No. 23

Buffaloes find it's hard to catch Irish, Hurricanes

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

What a difference a week can make for Coach R.C. Slocum and Texas A&M.

After dropping out of the Associated Press Top 25 Poll a week before after losing to Texas Tech, the Aggies responded Saturday with a 17-13 upset over Houston.

It's been a football rankings rollercoaster for the Aggies so far in 1989: in one week and out the next.

A&M plunged into the Top 25 Poll after its opening-season upset over Louisiana State, then ranked seventh. The Aggies found themselves ranked 15th.

But the next week, A&M was upset 19-6 by Washington and dropped to No. 22.

The Aggies rebounded with a 44-7 thrashing of Texas Christian, and moved up one spot the next week to No. 21.

They had an off weekend the next week and healed some injuries, but the Aggies felt the effects the next week in the Poll. They dropped to No. 22.

After their next week's 31-14 victory over Southern Mississippi, the Aggies jumped three spots to No. 19 — the first time they had cracked the Top 20 since their first-game upset over LSU.

The Top 20 appearance was short-lived. After the Aggies' last-minute loss to Texas Tech two weeks ago, they dropped out of the Top 25.

Then they had to face No. 8 UH with its high-powered Run-and-Shoot offense. But for the second time this year, the Aggies responded well to a Top 10 team. They upset the Cougars and now find themselves back in the Top 25.

If the Aggies have been anything but consistent in the polls this year, the top teams have been opposite.

When your record is perfect — all wins, no losses, no ties — but the guys in front of you have the same fancy credentials, it's tough to make progress in The AP college football poll.

So, as long as Notre Dame and Mi-

Notre Dame's first-place votes slipped from 54 to 52 after the Fighting Irish defeated Air Force 41-27. Miami remained No. 2 in the country with a 48-16 thumping of San Jose State.

The four teams behind Notre Dame, Miami and Colorado — Nebraska, Michigan, Tennessee and Arkansas — remained unchanged from a week ago.

Pittsburgh, Southern California, Alabama, Auburn and North Carolina State all advanced a notch to complete the top dozen while Illinois picked up three places from 16th to 13th after beating Purdue 14-2.

Florida State, loser of its first two games this season but winners of four straight since then, advanced from No. 19 to No. 14 with a 41-7 victory over Virginia Tech. Washington State moved from No. 17 to No. 15 after beating Stanford 31-13.

Behind No. 16 Houston come Penn State, enjoying a six-place advance after thumping Syracuse 34-12, and West Virginia, idle Saturday but still up from No. 20 to No. 18. Air Force's loss to Notre Dame dropped the Falcons two places to No. 19 and Florida, tied with Brigham Young for 25th a week ago, moved up to No. 20 by beating Vanderbilt 34-11. BYU took over No. 21 after beating Colorado State 45-16.

Losses cost Michigan State, Clemson and UCLA their spots. Michigan State lost 10-7 to Michigan and fell from No. 21. Clemson, No. 14 a week ago, lost 30-14 at home against Georgia Tech and vanished. UCLA absorbed a 42-7 thumping by Arizona and turned over its No. 22 ranking to the Wildcats.

South Carolina, idle last week, remained No. 24 and Oklahoma fell from 15th to 25th after losing to Texas 28-24.

AP Top 25 Poll	
Team	Last Week
1. Notre Dame	1
2. Miami	2
3. Colorado	3
4. Nebraska	4
5. Michigan	5
6. Tennessee	6
7. Arkansas	7
8. Pittsburgh	8
9. Southern Cal	9
10. Alabama	10
11. Auburn	11
12. N. Carolina St.	12
13. Illinois	13
14. Florida St.	14
15. Washington St.	15
16. Houston	16
17. Penn State	17
18. West Virginia	18
19. Air Force	19
20. Florida	20
21. Brigham Young	21
22. Arizona	22
23. Texas A&M	23
24. South Carolina	24
25. Oklahoma	25

ami, ranked 1-2 and both 6-0, continue to win, No. 3 Colorado will have to be satisfied with changing the minds of voters one at a time.

The Buffaloes, also 6-0, turned one more voter their way Monday, getting three first-place ballots in this week's poll after a 52-17 victory over Iowa State. That helped Colorado to 1,352 points, 22 behind No. 2 Miami and 91 in back of front-running Notre Dame. A week ago, Colorado was 57 points behind Miami and trailed Notre Dame by 123.



Photo by Scott D. Weaver

Linebackers Anthony Williams (48) and William Thomas (11) cause Houston quarterback Andre Ware to fumble in Saturday's 17-13 Aggie win. A&M is now No. 23 in the country.

No time to hibernate — Aggies need to bear down for Waco game

So, Texas A&M is coming off the biggest football win the Southwest Conference has seen so far in 1989 — a 17-13 upset over previously eighth-ranked Houston and its explosive Run-and-Shoot offense.

So, the Aggies should be riding high for the rest of the season until they meet their next big opponent: Arkansas on Nov. 24.

They've got nothing to worry about until that game against the Razorbacks on Kyle Field, right?

Wrong. It's hardly a time for the Aggies to be breathing easy. After its early SWC loss to Texas Tech, A&M got a huge win last Saturday when it stopped UH.

Not many other teams on the Cougars' schedule will.

But don't worry. One of the farthest things on Slocum's mind this week will be the Houston Cougars. A&M managed a win against UH, and that's all that matters. Next up for Slocum's Aggies are the Bears.



Richard Tjerina
Assistant Sports Editor

In Waco. If that phrase mentioned above, "In Waco," isn't making you worried, it should. A&M leads the series 22-17-5 and has won the last three games, but don't take the Bears lightly — especially when they're playing at home in Floyd Casey Stadium.

Since A&M beat Baylor in Waco by one touchdown in 1977:

- The Bears lead the series 4-6-1,

including shellackings like 24-6 and 46-7 at Kyle Field.

• A&M has struggled in Waco. The Aggies have won only once in Waco since 1977 — a 34-10 romp over the Bears that was a close game until midway through the fourth quarter. Aside from the 13-13 tie in 1983, the Bears have beaten the Aggies in Waco by scores of 17-7, 19-17 and 20-15.

If this is sounding anything like the way games go when A&M travels to Lubbock, it should.

You could hardly call A&M the Road Warriors of the SWC in 1989. They've dropped two of three games away from Kyle Field this season, and Waco presents as good a place as any to make it three.

So, just what is this Baylor football team the Aggies will meet on Saturday?

A good one. Especially on defense.

Baylor has the best secondary in the conference, anchored by safeties Robert Blackmon and Mike Welch. Blackmon has 38 tackles and three interceptions.

In front of the secondary, though, is the Bears' greatest threat: Linebacker James Francis (6-4, 250 lbs) is a stud who does everything for the Bears and has become one of the nation's top contenders for the Butkus Award.

Three things to watch for in the game against Baylor:

- How will A&M quarterback Lance Pavlas handle the Baylor secondary?

Simple. He'll take what the Bears give him, which means tight end Mike Jones will have another big day.

- Who will shine in the battle of Butkus Award candidates — Francis or A&M linebacker Aaron Wallace?

It will be the best matchup of the day. But A&M's offensive line is bigger and better, which means Wallace will have more opportunities to plaster his No. 23 on Baylor quarterback Brad Goebel's jersey.

- Who will have a bigger day rushing —

A&M's Darren Lewis or A&M's Robert Wilson?

It won't matter. Slocum will be happy regardless because the game's leading rusher will be wearing an Aggie uniform.

It should go A&M's way. The Aggies have just too much talent and too much desire to drop another conference game.

The Aggies will make it four in a row because the team is still remembering the dog biscuits and spit from the game in Lubbock two weeks ago.

If Slocum plays it right, the Aggies will go undefeated until they host the Razorbacks.

Before that game on Nov. 24, A&M will have three weeks off to heal its wounded and work up a game plan against the Hogs. And if Slocum plays it right again, A&M will go undefeated all the way to Dallas.

But remember, R.C. — that road starts on Highway 6 to Waco this weekend.

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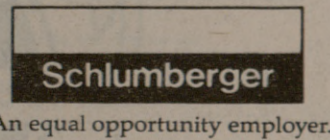
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