

Late Pavlas TD run tops Baylor, keeps Aggs in Cotton Bowl hunt



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Aggie quarterback Lance Pavlas avoids Baylor's Darrin Franklin's pass rush in A&M's 14-

11 victory in Waco. Pavlas scored A&M's winning touchdown in the fourth quarter.

By Clay Rasmussen

Of The Battalion Staff

WACO — The Baylor fans taunted Texas A&M all day long.

They showered the field of Floyd Casey Stadium with a rain of cotton balls, believing the Bears were on their way to their first conference championship and Cotton Bowl appearance since 1981.

But they were too quick to celebrate.

With just 4:48 remaining in the game, the Aggies found themselves in a precarious position: 66 yards and a closefisted Baylor defense stood between A&M and its hopes to stay in contention for the Southwest Conference championship.

Six plays into that final drive, the Baylor defense looked like it would once again shut down the Aggies' offense.

But on a crucial third-and-13 from the Baylor 47-yard line, Aggie quarterback Lance Pavlas scrambled 34 yards to the Baylor 13.

"We had two receivers out and their defense had dropped off all day to cover," Pavlas said. "I had it in the back of my mind to look for the seam and when I saw it open up, I took off."

Five plays later, Pavlas resurrected A&M's chance for a victory with a 1-yard plunge on a quarterback sneak. After the two-point conversion, the Aggies led for the first time, 14-11.

But Baylor would make the end of the game exciting with a 60-yard field goal attempt with 30 seconds left in the game. However, the kick sailed wide right, and A&M sneaked out of Waco with a thrilling 14-11 victory.

"This game was just about what I expected coming into Waco," A&M Coach R.C. Slocum. "I was asked at the start of the season which team I would pick to win the SWC — it was Baylor."

"The reasons were simple. (Baylor linebacker) James Francis is a great player and their defense was on top of the league last year."

With the win, Texas A&M improved their record to 4-2 (3-1 in SWC) while Baylor dropped to 3-4 (2-2 in SWC).

The Aggies' win was an unlikely one. A&M's offense was limited to 174 yards in the game. It took a little help from Baylor punter Pete Rutter and the A&M defense before the Aggies would be able to score their first points.

In the fourth quarter, Rutter fumbled the snap in the endzone and A&M defensive back Chris Crooms recovered, giving the Aggies six points.

"I thought our defense played an outstanding game," Slocum said. "After the opening drive, they had their backs against the wall the entire game. Baylor had the field position all day, but we kept them out of the endzone."

Even Baylor Coach Grant Teaff thought the game was a defensive struggle.

"This is one of the greatest defensive games that I have seen in my years as a football coach," Teaff said. "There was never a better start-to-finish football game as this one."

The Bears were outstanding defensively. They held A&M running backs Darren Lewis and Robert Wilson to a combined total of 90 yards. Francis recorded eight unassisted tackles and one sack. He had 2 tackles for losses and harried the Aggies' offensive scheme all day.

However, as good as the Bears defense was, the Aggies were just as punishing.

A&M's defense bent, but refused

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The Drive Pavlas seals come-from-behind victory

By Clay Rasmussen

Of The Battalion Staff

WACO — It was a come-from-behind performance that even Staubach would've appreciated.

Old No. 12, the former Dallas Cowboys' star quarterback who engineered so many last-minute wins, wasn't there for Texas A&M's 14-11 victory over Baylor on Saturday, but he just might as well have been.

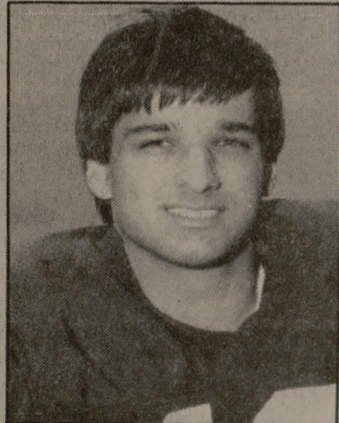
Instead, No. 12 was wearing an Aggie uniform and had the name PAVLAS spelled above it.

But the result was the same. Down 8-6 with 4:48 left in the game, Pavlas and the Aggies marched 66 yards downfield.

After-kick returner Larry Horton rambled 34 yards up field, "The Drive" went like this:

• (1st-10 at A&M 34) Darren Lewis scampers eight yards.

• (2nd-2 at A&M 42) Lewis plunges ahead for three yards



Lance Pavlas

and the first down.
• (1st-10 at A&M 45) Pavlas

throws incomplete pass to tight end Mike Jones.

• (2nd-10 at A&M 45) Pavlas rambles for 11 yard gain.

• (1st-10 at Baylor 44) Pavlas throws incomplete.

• (2nd-10 at Baylor 44) Pavlas is sacked.

• (3rd-13 at Baylor 47) Pavlas scrambles for 34-yard gain.

• (1st-10 at Baylor 13) Lewis drives for three yards.

• (2nd-7 at Baylor 10) Lewis again goes up the middle for three yards.

• (3rd-4 at Baylor 7) Lewis gains critical first down.

• (1st-Goal at Baylor 3) Robert Wilson picks up 2 yards.

• (2nd-Goal at Baylor 1) Pavlas dives over top for the touchdown.

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