

# Resting Aggies move to No. 14 in AP Poll

## Four SWC teams in Top 20; Irish, Buffaloes stay on top

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

Texas A&M Coach R.C. Slocum must wish all weekends could be so easy. Although his Aggies had the weekend off, they managed to gain two spots in the Associated Press poll, rising to their highest position this season, No. 14.

A&M may be as fortunate next week as

"One of our goals was to be in the Top 25 this year," said Duke coach Steve Spurrier, whose team beat North Carolina State 35-26 Saturday.

"It's an honor for our program and a credit to our players that we made it. But what we really want is to be ranked at the end of the season."

Hawaii moved into the rankings for only the second time in school history following a 34-26 victory over Pacific.

"We're certainly happy to get national recognition — it's something we've been striving for," Hawaii coach Bob Wagner said. "If we can continue to play good football, hopefully we'll get even more attention."

While there were changes at the bottom of the rankings, the top seven remained unchanged — Notre Dame, Colorado, Michigan, Alabama, Florida State, Nebraska and Miami.

Notre Dame, which clobbered Southern Methodist 59-6, received 57 first-place votes and 1,497 of a possible 1,500 points from a nationwide panel of sports writers and broadcasters.

Colorado, which beat Oklahoma State 41-17, received the other three first-place votes and 1,439 points.

Michigan defeated Illinois 24-10; Alabama downed Louisiana State 32-16; Nebraska routed Kansas 51-14 and Miami beat Pittsburgh 24-3. Florida State did not play.

Rounding out the Top 10 are Southern Cal, Tennessee and Arkansas. Southern Cal moved up one spot after beating Arizona 24-3; Tennessee went from No. 11 to No. 9 after crushing Akron 52-9 and Arkansas remained No. 10 following a 19-10 win over Baylor.

Auburn is No. 11, followed by Illinois, Houston, Texas A&M, Clemson, Virginia, Penn State, West Virginia, Pittsburgh, Texas Tech, Brigham Young, Ohio State

Team	Last Week
1. Notre Dame	1
2. Colorado	2
3. Michigan	3
4. Alabama	4
5. Florida State	5
6. Nebraska	6
7. Miami	7
8. Southern Cal.	9
9. Tennessee	11
10. Arkansas	10
11. Auburn	12
12. Illinois	8
13. Houston	16
14. Texas A&M	16
15. Clemson	17
16. Virginia	18
17. Penn St.	19
18. West Virginia	19
19. Pittsburgh	14
20. Texas Tech	23
21. Brigham Young	21
22. Ohio St.	—
23. Fresno St.	24
24. Hawaii	—
25. Duke	—

they rest yet another weekend in preparation for their Nov. 24 showdown with the University of Arkansas.

The Houston Cougars, who pummeled Texas Saturday 47-9, rose the same number of spots to No. 13. Arkansas stayed at No. 10 and Texas Tech edged in at No. 20.

Duke broke into the rankings for the first time since 1971 and Hawaii for the first time since 1981 in Monday's poll. The Blue Devils, 7-3, gained the final spot in the Top 25 while the Rainbows, 8-2, are No. 24.

# KO'd Aikman KO's rookie record at same time

IRVING (AP) — Troy Aikman held the NFL record for most passing yards by a rookie on Monday while he cleared out the cobwebs from a highlight-film hit by Phoenix linebacker Anthony Bell.

Aikman was knocked cold for almost five minutes Sunday after releasing a 75-yard touchdown pass to James Dixon in a 24-20 loss to the Cardinals.

The rookie quarterback, making his first start since he suffered a broken index finger on his non-passing hand on Oct. 1, had to be told his pass went for a touchdown. Coach Jimmy Johnson broke the news after Aikman regained consciousness.

Aikman's 379 yards passing against Phoenix surpassed by 10 yards the record

previously held by Tampa Bay's Vinny Testaverde in a Dec. 6, 1987 game at New Orleans. It was the fifth-best total in Cowboys history.

"I was knocked out and didn't know what happened on the pass," said Aikman, who caught Bell's helmet on his chin. Doctors said Aikman suffered a slight concussion.

The record was set on the pass to Dixon, which came with less than two minutes remaining and gave Dallas a 20-17 lead.

Phoenix rallied in the last minute to give the Cowboys their ninth loss against only one victory.

Dixon set a club rookie record with 203 receiving yards.

Aikman had a sore jaw and a headache

on Monday after Bell's "ringing" hit, but Johnson said he believed the quarterback would be ready for Sunday's game against Miami.

Aikman said the last thing he remembered seeing was Dixon breaking across the middle.

"I didn't see anybody coming at me," Aikman said. "Coach Johnson told me we scored."

Trainers said the first thing Aikman asked was whether the pass went for a touchdown.

Don Meredith, who has the top three passing days in Cowboys' history, set the re-

cord of 460 yards in a 1963 game against San Francisco. Gary Hogeboom had the fourth best.

Neither Roger Staubach nor Danny White ever had such a prolific passing day as Aikman, who was 21-of-40 and victimized by at least eight drops and a senseless penalty that wiped out most of a 51-yard pass to Paul Palmer in the fourth quarter.

"Troy was just tremendous," said Johnson. "It was a bitter defeat. We had them beat."

Tom Tupa's 72-yard scoring pass to Ernie Jones with 58 seconds sank the Cowboys. The Cardinals recovered Dixon's fumble on the ensuing kickoff and ran out the clock.



Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

Linebacker John Cooper causes a fumble in A&M's 63-14 romp over SMU. No. 14 A&M is preparing for a Nov. 24 showdown with Arkansas.



**Richard Tijerina**  
Assistant Sports Editor

## A&M: Wherefore are thou, Cotton Bowl opponents?

To pick Cotton or not to pick Cotton. That is the question.

Apparently, this season's Southwest Conference championship and Mobil Cotton Bowl host won't be decided until Nov. 24 on Kyle Field.

Arkansas vs. Texas A&M.

The winner of the Thanksgiving showdown between the No. 14 Aggies (7-2) and No. 10 Razorbacks (8-1) likely will be playing Jan. 1 in Dallas.

The road to the Cotton Bowl is a bit confusing. Sometimes, all the possibilities involving the four SWC teams still involved in the hunt are harder to follow than a Clay Rasmussen sports column. Breaking it down, these are the simplest paths the four contenders can take.

• A&M: Must beat Arkansas and Texas.

• Arkansas: Must beat A&M and Southern Methodist.

• Texas Tech: Must beat SMU and Houston, and both A&M and Arkansas each gets another loss.

• Texas: Must beat Texas Christian, Baylor and A&M, and A&M must beat Arkansas and Tech must lose to either SMU or Houston.

Whew. So, there it is. The easiest way for each team to reach the Cotton Bowl.

And my prediction? Here it is. The Aggies will beat Arkansas 34-24, then on Dec. 2 will embarrass Texas 38-13. It'll be the first SWC championship for Slocum, and the fourth Cotton Bowl appearance for the Aggies in five years.

But their opponent? That's where the picture becomes cloudy.

Cotton Bowl bids go out Nov. 25, the day after A&M-Arkansas. Officials originally wanted No. 6 Nebraska, but now the Cornhuskers are looking at the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl.

But what a matchup an A&M-Nebraska Cotton Bowl would be. Nebraska's great offense against A&M's blitzing defense. Nebraska's great defense against A&M's sometimes great offense.

The Aggies and Cornhuskers last met in the Kickoff Classic in 1988. A characteristically flat A&M team showed up for its season opener and lost 23-14 on national television. A 1989 Cotton Bowl rematch would be an attractive game for TV ratings.

But with Nebraska edging toward the Fiesta, Cotton Bowl officials now are looking like lost parents, trying to find a playmate for their child.

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