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Sports Writer

Hogs escape with soooweet 23-22 victory; A&M accept John Hancock bid against Pitt

By Richard Tijerina

Of The Battalion Staff

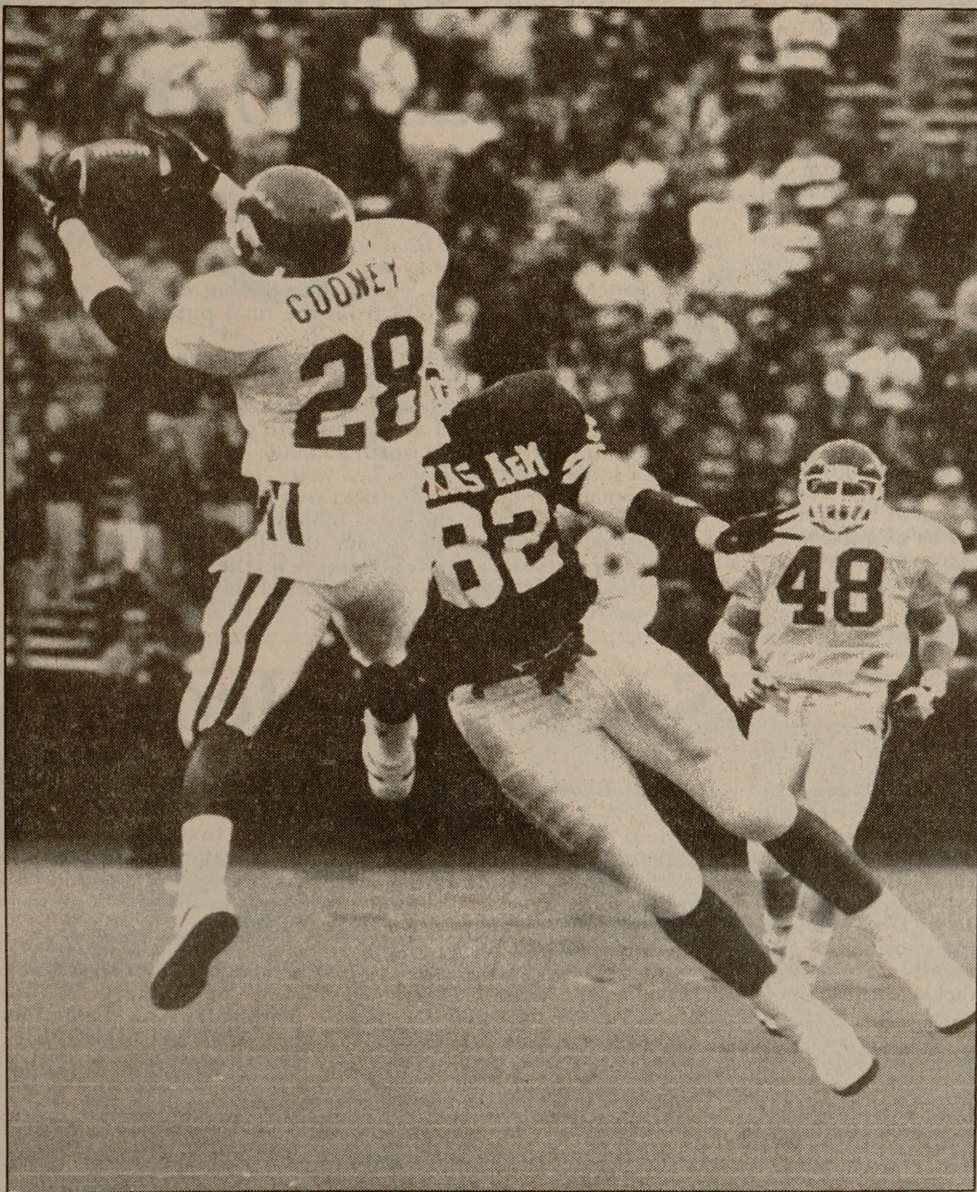


Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Arkansas cornerback Anthony Cooney intercepts a lofted pass by A&M Lance Pavlas late in the fourth quarter of the Razorbacks' 23-22 thriller over the Aggies. With the win, the Razorbacks earned their second consecutive Cotton Bowl appearance. Their likely opponent is Tennessee.

cause it's been longer since they went. Slocum said he thought the Razorbacks might try to draw the Aggies offside on the fourth down play. However, Arkansas quarterback Quinn Grovey threw a quick pass to tight end Billy Winston.

But A&M safety Larry Horton jumped from behind Winston and knocked the ball away. As the Aggies were celebrating, the referee threw the yellow flag and called Horton for interference.

The Razorbacks scored the go-ahead touchdown five plays later.

"I thought I made a clean play, but it was the referee's decision," Horton said. "I thought I went over his back without touching him. After I hit the ball, I went into his back. That was a key play and probably made the difference right there."

"I knew it was going to be an interference call." Slocum was outraged on the sidelines, but said after the game that he'd withhold judgement until he saw the play again on film. However, A&M cornerback Kevin Smith said a game of that importance should never have been decided by a referee.

"I'm not taking anything away from Arkansas — they played real hard today," Smith said. "It was a war between two tough teams out there. But the disappointing thing about the whole game is that it came down to one play. I don't think a game should be decided by one call."

Not surprisingly, Hatfield and Grovey said there was no doubt about the interference call.

But even after two-yard touchdown by Barry Foster that put the Razorbacks up, the Aggies weren't through yet. Linebacker William Thomas blocked the extra point attempt, giving the Aggies one last chance to drive the field and tie or win the game.

Ironically, Horton had the chance at the kickoff return. But the junior, ranked tenth in the nation in kickoff returns with a 26.07 average, didn't run the ball out.

That left the Aggies and quarterback Lance Pavlas 80 yards from the touchdown to win, and about 60 yards to attempt a game-tying field goal. Two minutes and 52 seconds remained in the game.

Pavlas, who led the Aggies in a game-ending touchdown drive in their 14-11 win against Baylor earlier in the season, looked like he was ready to spin some magic.

He completed his first three passes of the

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Ags should have no problem getting hyped up for Texas

After being hyped to a fever pitch the last couple of weeks, the race for the Mobile Cotton Bowl Classic ended abruptly last weekend.

With four Southwest Conference teams still in contention, the possibilities were confusing and seemingly endless. However, the Aggies held their destiny in their hands. A win over Arkansas would have given A&M the inside track, needing only a win over Texas this weekend to clinch the Cotton berth.

But some things just aren't meant to be. A questionable pass interference call, a floating interception and a fumble ended the Aggies' chances of playing in Dallas on New Year's day.

Trailing 20-17 lead with under five minutes to play, Arkansas faced a fourth-and-three situation from the A&M 19-yard line. Since a tie would have given A&M a trip to the Cotton Bowl, Arkansas coach Ken Hatfield elected to go for the first down.

Quarterback Quinn Grovey looked right and then threw the ball to tight end Billy Winston in the left flat. A&M free safety Larry Horton knocked the ball away, but had to reach over Winston to do so. The official ruled that Horton touched Winston before the ball arrived, and threw the flag.

After the automatic first down at the Aggie 13, the Hogs scored the go-ahead touchdown five plays later.

After a safety, Arkansas slipped out of town with a 23-22 victory, their second consecutive Cotton Bowl berth and a string of Aggie broken hearts.

"For a bowl game, there is no consolation to the Cotton Bowl," said A&M cornerback Kevin Smith, "I'd rather lose by 100 points than by just one."

Horton agreed. "It's a sad feeling now," Horton said, "but we have to bounce back next week See Lehmann/Page 13

34-0 Penalty-plagued Oilers shut out. Schottenheimer: 'It was just our day'

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — When the home team plays its best game of the season and the visitors play their absolute worst, routs happen.

"Let's face it — we're not 34 points better than them," Coach Marty Schottenheimer said Sunday after his Kansas City Chiefs hung a 34-0 shutout on the Houston Oilers, who set a team record with 16 penalties.

"I have no idea why it all came together for us today — offense, defense and special teams," Schottenheimer said. "It was just our day."

The Oilers (7-5), who had won five of their previous six, were shut out for the first time in almost three years while setting the club record with 16 penalties for 115 yards. They also go into the record book as the Chiefs' (5-6-1) most thoroughly beaten opponent since a 40-3 victory over San Diego 21 years ago.

The Chiefs, who had only 15 yards in penalties, got the first shutout since 1981, and the Oilers were making no excuses.

"We couldn't get open," Houston coach Jerry Glanville said. "We couldn't pass protect. The defense didn't stay onside. We didn't play well. I didn't coach well."

"I guess you can say it's not as bad as if you lost by one point," said Houston quarterback Warren Moon, who was pulled in the fourth period after an 8-for-20 day for 99 yards. "We got blown out."

Moon's one interception triggered a sideline brawl that resulted in 24 yards in Houston penalties and gave the Chiefs complete control of the momentum.

After Walker Lee Ashley made the interception early in the first period, Moon and rookie linebacker Derrick Thomas wrestled each other into the Chiefs' bench and sent players, coaches and officials scrambling to separate them.

The penalty yards gave the Chiefs a first down on the 8, and after a facemask penalty against the Oilers, James Saxon carried over right guard from 4 yards out for a 10-0 lead.

"What a big momentum shift," Chiefs guard Mark Adickes said. "Any time you get a turnover, it turns the momentum. But then for there to be an altercation

and the guy to blame is the quarterback ... and then you get 24 yards in penalties, and then you get another penalty that puts you on the 4-yard line ..."

"They've always been known as kind of a dirty bunch of players," Chiefs linebacker Dino Hackett said. "Then when they tried to start some stuff against us and we shoved it right back in their face, it set the momentum right there. It said we weren't going to take anything from them."

Nick Lowery, who missed three potential game-winning field goals last week at Cleveland, kicked a 31-yarder in the first period and a 34-yarder in the second.

The Oilers, who had not been shut out since losing 27-0 at San Diego on Dec. 7, 1986, broke their record of 15 penalties, established Oct. 6, 1985 against Denver.

"There is no two ways about it," Houston running back Alonzo Highsmith said. "They beat us in every phase of the game."

With 4:16 left in the first half, Albert Lewis blew in from the right side to block Greg Montgomery's punt. Jayce Pearson fell on the ball on the 1-yard line and rolled into the end zone for a 20-0 lead.

"Nothing was going right," Glanville said. "Maybe down the road that experience will help us."

Steve DeBerg, who completed 15 of 25 passes for 224 yards and no interceptions, drove the Chiefs 51 yards in six plays in the third period and hit Jonathan Hayes with a 7-yard touchdown strike for a 27-0 lead.

Christian Okoye's 17-yard run up the middle capped a 9-play, 71-yard march in the fourth period. Okoye had 67 yards, pushing his season total to 1,043 and making him the Chiefs' first 1,000-yard rusher since the late Joe Delaney in 1981.

"Getting the 1,000 yards feels great, but the most important thing was how the team played," he said. "All week long we had great practices. It felt like we were going to be ready."

Both Moon and Thomas said there were no hard feelings.

"I've never had a personal foul and I didn't think I should have had one on that play," Moon said. "I thought there would be offsetting penalties."

"I think that play increased our intensity level," said Thomas.

Ware's impressive day against Tech furthers Heisman Trophy chances

Rice, Thompson, Harris still in hunt

HOUSTON (AP) — Andre Ware's final appearance on the campaign trail was spectacular. Voters for the Heisman Trophy had to notice when the Houston quarterback pumped up his stats by another four touchdown passes Saturday.

Ware says his performance in Houston's 40-24 victory over Texas Tech was just another day on the firing line and had nothing to do with campaigning.

"It was just an average day for me," Ware said. "I felt no pressure. I wasn't playing for the Heisman Trophy. I played the best game I could have played against Tech."

It came at the right time for those Heisman electors who were about to seal the envelopes before mailing their ballots. The Heisman winner will be named Saturday at the Downtown Athletic Club in New York.

Ware increased his season passing totals to 44 touchdowns and 4,299 yards. His chances for the most coveted individual award in college football were not hurt any what his chief rivals did.

Indiana running back Anthony Thompson gained only 97 yards on 28 carries in a 15-14 loss to Purdue.

Notre Dame quarterback Tony Rice was victimized in Miami's 27-10 defeat of No. 1-ranked Fighting Irish. Rice rushed for only 50 yards in 20 carries and passed for 106 yards.

Neither Thompson nor Rice scored, and they can only hope their supporters mailed their ballots early.

West Virginia quarterback Major Harris no doubt helped his chances with a Thanksgiving Day performance which resulted in a 24-17 victory over Syracuse.

Harris, a junior, became the first player in college football history to pass for 5,000 yards and rush for 2,000 in a career.

Against Syracuse, he rushed for 95 yards and a touchdown on 18 carries and completed 12 of 23 passes for 182 yards.

Air Force quarterback Dee Dowis, rated a longshot, scrambled for two touchdowns in Saturday's 42-38 win over Utah, having rushed for 103 yards on 17 carries and completing 6 of 8 passes for 137 yards.

Two other likely Heisman contenders — Colorado quarterback Darian Hagan and Florida running back Emmitt Smith — were idle this week.

"I watched Major Harris on TV against Syracuse and he does a lot for his team," Ware said. "I was very impressed."

But Ware holds the statistical edge, with



Photo by Jay Janner

Houston quarterback Andre Ware was stopped by A&M on Oct. 14, but his strong showing in Saturday's game against Texas Tech solidified his Heisman Trophy hopes. The winner will be announced Saturday.

nearly twice the number of touchdowns of his closest competitor, Thompson, who has 24 this season.

"If Andre does not win, they should stop giving the award," said Houston coach Jack Pardee. "He is a player who has put up statistics each week and has not had a bad day this year."

"And when you talk about character, he could have left school last year and been immediately eligible to play anywhere in the country (because of NCAA sanctions against Houston), but he stayed here and has had a phenomenal season."

"What else can you say about what the award represents?"

Because the NCAA has prohibited Houston games from being televised this season and from participating in bowl games, Ware has had the additional burden of not being seen by those selecting the Heisman winner.

"I had a Barry Sanders-type season all year long. I can't vote. But I definitely feel like I deserve consideration," Ware said.

"I hope I'm able to win it because it would be a great accomplishment for our team," Ware said. "If I don't, I don't know what else I could have done."