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Sports Writer

Reserve backs for Ags shine; Lewis still fine

When you think about the Aggies' running attack, you think about Darren Lewis.

But the Aggies proved they could still run the ball Saturday despite the loss of Lewis in the backfield.

Lewis, who was the nation's top returning running back after being ranked second nationally last season, paced the sidelines in street clothes Saturday due to a sprained knee.

Lewis' injury came in last weeks 23-22 loss to Arkansas with just over five minutes left in the third quarter.

With the Aggies' preseason Heisman candidate out for the day, the running back position was left open to sophomores Keith McAfee and Randy Simmons.

Although McAfee had seen more playing time than Simmons, Simmons rose to the occasion when called upon by Texas A&M Coach R.C. Slocum.

"I know I don't get many chances," Simmons said. "I know I've got to give 100 percent every time I'm out there."

"I don't ever want to go to the film room and have someone say I didn't work hard."

But work hard he did with a career-high 16 carries for 58 yards. On the Aggies' last possession, Simmons busted through tackles and moved the ball down to the one-yard line, which set up a touchdown trot for fullback Robert Wilson.

McAfee, who didn't have his best game of the year but was a key factor to A&M's offense, carried the ball 11 times for 23 yards and a touchdown.

So, with these two explosive and capable reserve running backs, how drastic was the loss of Darren Lewis for the Aggies?

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Varsity's horns sawed off sixth straight time

Big Mac Attack

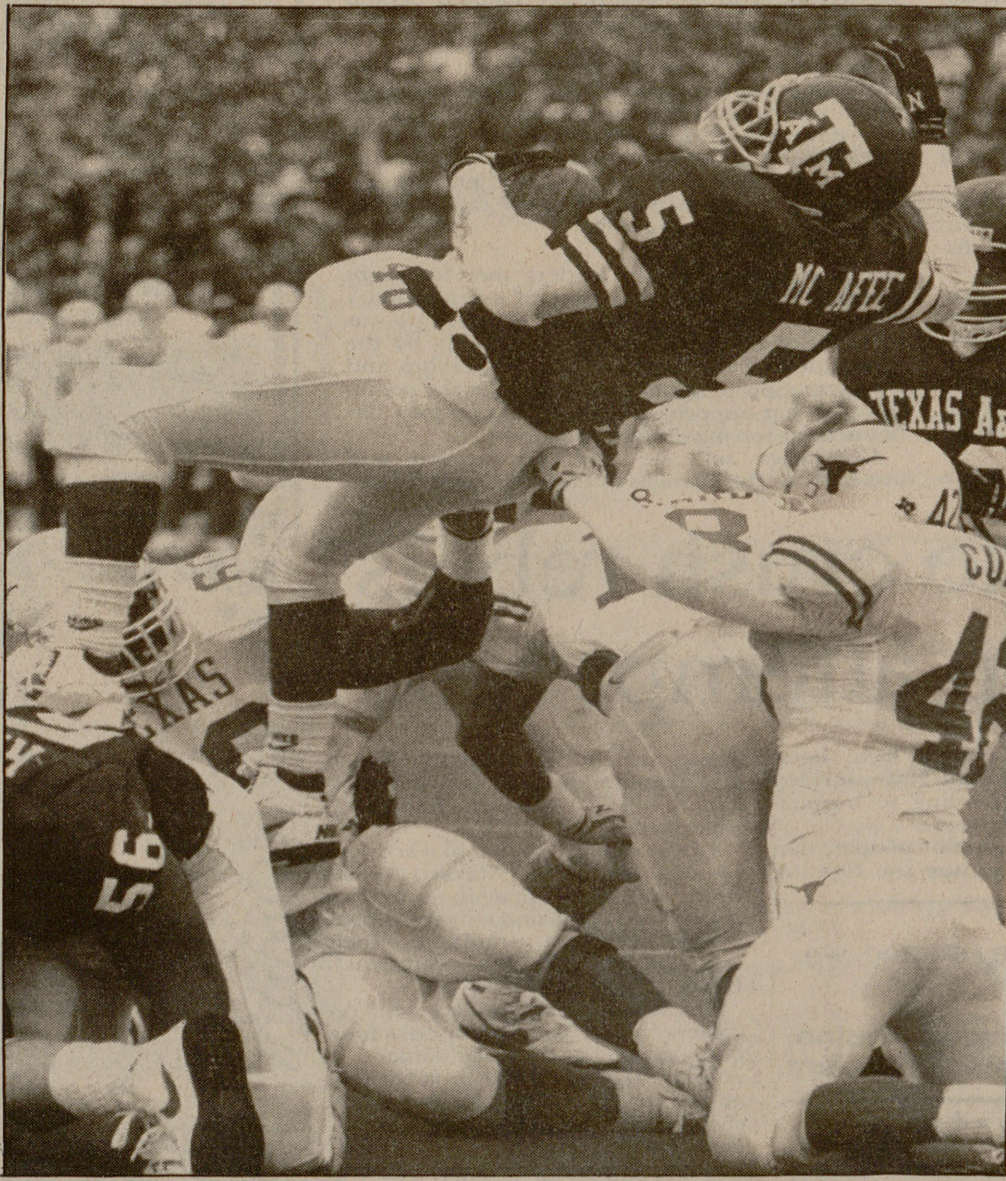


Photo by Jay Janner

Aggie running back Keith McAfee (5) dives over the top for a one-yard touchdown in the first quarter of A&M's 21-10 win over Texas Saturday.

A&M makes big play when needed, holds off Texas for 21-10 victory

By Clay Rasmussen

Of The Battalion Staff

The Longhorns started out trying to end an old Aggie tradition, but ended up taking part in a more recent one.

Texas tried to keep A&M from singing its school song before Saturday's game. UT should have been more concerned with its performance and less concerned with its pride.

A&M downed Texas for the sixth straight year, 21-10, in front of a crowd of 76,803, the third largest in Kyle Field history.

A pre-game midfield brawl broke out as Texas taunted A&M players and coaches who had gathered to sing the "Spirit of Aggieland," a tradition the Aggies have observed for years.

As the Aggies approached the center of the field in what the Longhorns saw as an intimidation play, words passed between the teams and soon after, fists were flying.

The No. 16 Aggies survived the pre-game brawl and bounced back from an emotional 23-22 loss to No. 9 Arkansas to finish their season 8-3, 6-2 in Southwest Conference play.

Texas, after surprising many critics early in the season with wins over Arkansas and Oklahoma, finished the year with a losing record.

The Longhorns ended up 5-6, 4-4 in SWC play. This is the first time that Texas has recorded back-to-back losing seasons since 1938.

The Aggies struggled early and trailed the Longhorns for most of the game, but A&M Coach R.C. Slocum was still pleased with the play of his team.

"That was a great win for the team," Slocum said. "We had guys playing hurt and we didn't have our starting tailback or noseguard."

"To beat your arch rivals under those circumstances is very satisfying."

The Longhorns, coming off a devastating 50-7 loss to Baylor last week, played like a team possessed.

Texas Coach David McWilliams, disappointed with the loss, was still very happy with the play of his team.

"I was pleased with the effort," McWilliams said. "We had an opportunity to win the football game, but we didn't get it done."

"When our players look back, they're going to see how close we were. There are ways a play or two that makes a difference."

There were two plays that stand out, making the difference between an Aggie win or loss.

The first play that made a difference came with less than five minutes to go in the first quarter.

After the Aggies stalled on their own 25-yard line, punter Sean Wilson fumbled the snap and the Longhorns recovered at the A&M 18.

However, the Longhorns were unable to take advantage of the A&M miscue. They were penalized for having 12 men on the field during the punt.

The penalty gave the Aggies a first down, and took away an excellent opportunity for the Longhorns to extend their lead.

"That was a big turnaround on that penalty," A&M quarterback Lance Pavlas said. "We had some trouble getting things going offensively, and that gave us another chance."

The second crucial play came with just seconds left in the third quarter. A&M barely beat the game clock and burned Texas on a 45-yard touchdown pass.

"We told our guys to hang in there and keep playing their hearts out," Slocum said. "I'm very proud of this group because they fought back and scrapped to the very end."

An emotional 23-33 loss last week at the hands of Arkansas took its toll on the Aggies early in the game. A&M was unable to capitalize on two Texas interceptions and the Aggie offense was unable to sustain any drives.

A&M trailed early and was in danger of falling further behind when the Longhorns let an excellent opportunity to pull away from A&M slip away.

The fumble recovery on the Aggie punt that was called back for the penalty hurt the Longhorns, McWilliams said. It was simply a case of missed communication.

"We got confused and somebody who shouldn't have been out there was," McWilliams said.

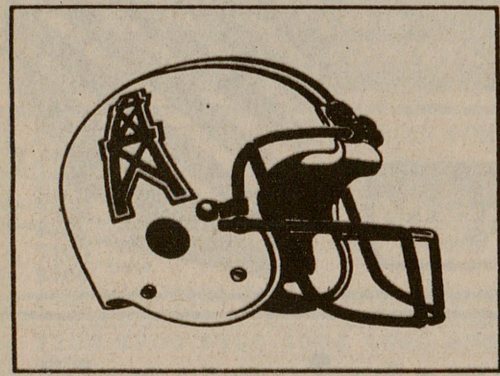
Eight plays and 67 yards later, A&M tied the game.

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Snowball Oilers edge Steelers in icy weather, move into first place in AFC Central

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The weather outside was frightful, but the Houston Oilers — who usually play in the climate-controlled comfort of the Astrodome — found it downright delightful.

Lorenzo White ran for 115 yards and a game-winning 1-yard scoring run with 21 seconds left after Warren Moon threw two touchdown passes in the final 1:54 of the



first half during a driving snowstorm, giving the Oilers a 23-16 victory Sunday over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The cold weather-tested Steelers were supposed to have a decided advantage in the numbing wind and blowing snow, but it was the Oilers (8-5) who overcame a 10-0 deficit, three fumbles, and a minus 25-degree wind-chill factor to take over first place in the AFC Central Division. Cincinnati's 21-0 victory in Cleveland knocked the Browns (7-5-1) out of the lead.

"Pittsburgh was saying we couldn't play in the cold — well, we did," said Moon, who played numerous bad-weather games in the Canadian Football League. "I knew we could. We played well in Cleveland last year in bad weather in the playoffs, and we knew we had everything going for us."

White, who didn't start, said the only time he played in worse weather, "was my sophomore year at Michigan State, when it rained and hailed and snowed at Iowa. I always seem to have big games in the bad weather. I had my two best games in college in bad weather."

The Steelers (6-7), who twice settled for field goals after driving to first downs at the Houston 2-yard line, lost for the first time in three games to all but end their chances of making the playoffs for the first time since 1984.

"The Steelers have a young team and this was their first big pressure game, and they played it like a playoff game," Oilers coach Jerry Glanville said. "It wasn't real pleasant out there, but you couldn't tell it by the way they played. But our goal-line defense was great ... it changed the game."

"For some reason we just couldn't get it in when we got it close," said the Steelers' Tim Worley, who had 103 yards for his first

NFL 100-yard game. "We just couldn't get it in."

After Gary Anderson's third field goal made it 16-16 with 5:43 to play, Moon hit Haywood Jeffries for 37 yards to the Steelers' 27 and White, who didn't start, ran 26 yards on two carries ahead of his own go-ahead touchdown on a second-and-goal play.

"We had a long way to go against the wind, but we did it," Moon said. "I threw that ball to Jeffries with all I had. I didn't think I couldn't complete a long pass under those conditions."

The Oilers then intercepted Bubby Brister's desperation last-play pass on a snow-covered field to preserve their third consecutive victory in Pittsburgh and sweep the season series.

In a game that took more than 3½ hours to play because of the snow and frequent instant replay reviews, the Oilers were able to weather the awful playing conditions, but the Steelers couldn't overcome their inability to score from close range.

"We had chances to win it, chances to punch it in but we couldn't do it ... it was frustrating," Brister said. "When you have as many opportunities as we did from inside the 2, you've got to cash 'em in, but we didn't."

Moon hit Curtis Duncan on an 18-yard touchdown pass on a third-and-18 play with 1:54 left in the second quarter, making it 10-7. The score ended a 57-yard drive and came a play after Moon was sacked by Greg Lloyd for a 12-yard loss.

Then, after forcing Pittsburgh to punt, the Oilers — playing for the first time this season in frigid weather — drove 68 yards on seven plays for Moon's 27-yard touchdown pass to Drew Hill with 10 seconds left in the half and a 14-10 lead.

Hill, according to Glanville "one of 14 guys we had who were playing hurt," played for the first time in three weeks despite a painful back injury.

Anderson kicked his second field goal early in the third quarter, but the Oilers tackled punter Harry Newsome in the end zone for a safety following a bobbled snap for a 16-13 lead.

Houston later forced Pittsburgh settle for Anderson's tying 18-yard field goal with 5:43 to play after the Steelers had driven 78 yards to a first down at the Oilers' 2. Merrill Hoge gained just a yard on two carries and Brister couldn't find a wide-open Worley in the end zone on a third-down incomple- tion.

On their first possession of the game, the Steelers took Anderson kick's 18-yarder and a 3-0 lead rather than gamble on fourth-and-inches after Hoge and Tim Worley were stopped for no gain on the two preceding downs. Worley's 12-yard run had given the Steelers a first down at the 3 ahead of Hoge's 2-yard run.

Ags brawl, then maul Longhorns; UT streak continues for seniors

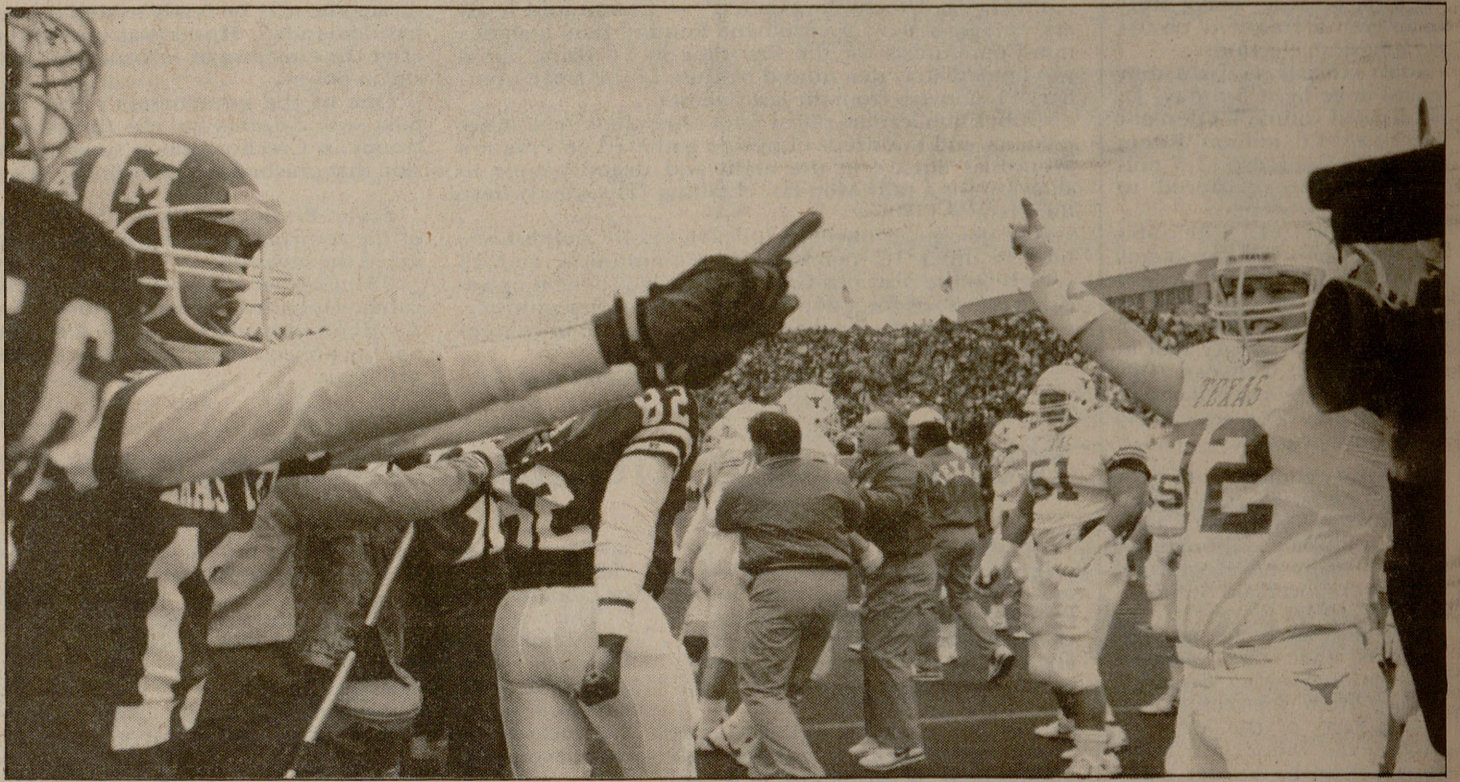


Photo by Phelan M. Ebenbach

A&M and Texas players exchange pre-game taunts, which led to a brawl.

By Richard Tijerina
Of The Battalion Staff

Texas A&M senior tight end Mike Jones walked off the field Saturday night wearing a Longhorns baseball cap. It probably belonged to a Texas fan, but that didn't matter after the Aggies' 21-10 victory.

He owned it now.

Funny in a way. The Aggies seemingly have owned the Longhorns for the last six years.

The last time the Longhorns beat the Aggies, a 45-13 victory in College Station in 1983, A&M quarterback Lance Pavlas was a sophomore at Tomball High School, fighting for playing time behind senior Robbie Legg.

Pavlas, who threw the crucial last-minute interception in last week's 23-22 loss to Arkansas that eliminated the Aggies from the Cotton Bowl race, was named ESPN's Player of the Game against Texas.

The junior completed 13-of-25 passes for 187 yards and one touchdown. In his first full year as A&M's starting quarterback, Pavlas has led the team to a 8-3 record and a Dec. 30 John Hancock Bowl appearance against Pittsburgh.

Pavlas made the play of the game against

the Longhorns when he connected on a 45-yard touchdown strike to a wide-open Percy Waddle with no time left on the clock to end the third quarter.

That proved to be the game-winner, as it put the Aggies up 14-10 going into the fourth quarter.

The victory is the longest Aggie winning streak in series history.

Texas still owns the series' longest winning streak with 11 victories from 1940-1950. A&M has won seven of the 10 games this decade.

"It's always good to beat Texas," A&M senior linebacker Aaron Wallace said. "It was really important to this group of seniors to go out by keeping the streak alive."

Wallace was the Aggies' leading tackler with 13. He also had three sacks of Texas quarterback Donovan Forbes, including a big 10-yard sack on a second-and-10 late in the fourth quarter.

Aggie senior linebacker Jeroy Robinson, who finished with 10 tackles, said he saw former A&M linebacker Todd Howard Friday night at Bonfire. Robinson said Howard kidded him about having to keep the winning streak alive.

"Coming into the game, most of the seniors had a lot of pressure on us," Robinson said. "We knew we had a streak against

them. We didn't let it try to worry us to the point where we were careless."

"We knew the offense was going to come through, so we kept working hard."

The tone of the game was set even before the first whistle blew, as a fight erupted at midfield.

As the Aggies lined up at midfield to start the "Spirit of Aggieland," Longhorn players lined up directly in front of them. Words were exchanged.

Then shoves.

Then fists.

Soon, fights were breaking out all over the field, and it took officials a few minutes before order finally was restored.

A&M Coach R.C. Slocum said he was embarrassed and disappointed about the altercation. The Aggies always go out to sing the song, he said, and the Longhorns knew that.

Pavlas said the fight showed the Longhorns had "no class."

"Every game we come out and sing our school song," Pavlas said. "They didn't show any class by what they did. I didn't appreciate it. I thought the game was played

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