A&M drops to No. 19 in AP Poll

Irish keep hold of No. 1 spot, BYU plummets

From Staff and Wire Reports

Texas A&M took it on the chin Saturday night at Louisiana State's "Death Valley" Stadium. On Monday the 17-8 loss dealt the Aggies another blow — an eight-place drop in the Associated Press Top 25 poll.

A&M was ranked No. 11 last week and pushing for a Top 10 spot, but it dropped to No. 19 Monday.

The Aggies (3-1) haven't beaten LSU in Baton Rouge, La. since 1975. They open their Southwest Conference schedule this weekend at home against Texas Tech.

Elsewhere, there was a time when Georgia Tech frequently occupied a spot among the nation's elite in the poll.

That was during the days when Bobby Dodd was compiling a 165-64-8 record in 22 years. But when he left after the 1966 season, Tech's football program tumbled.

Bobby Ross is trying to get the Yellow Jackets back where they used to be.

His team achieved one goal Monday, moving to No. 23. It was the first time Tech appeared in the poll since 1985, when the Jackets were ranked as high as No. 12 and ended the season 19th with a 9-2-1 record.

"There's not any real special significance being ranked for the first time since I've been at Tech," said Ross, who left Maryland in 1987. "I think it's a nice honor. The goal is not to just get there, but it is to stay there and show a consistency in there, not only in this season but in the years to come."

Only three times since Dodd left has Tech been ranked in The AP poll at the end of the season, never higher than No. 13.

The Jackets moved into the poll this week with an impressive 27-6 victory over South Carolina, which fell from No. 25 out of the rankings.

Tech visits Maryland Saturday, concerned that quarterback Shawn Jones may not be ready because of a sprained right arch that had him on crutches Monday.

"Obviously if we don't beat Maryland, we won't stay there," Ross said of the ranking.

Notre Dame and Florida State continued to occupy the top two spots in the poll, but there was some juggling behind them in the Top Ten.

The Fighting Irish, who beat Purdue 37-11, received 49 first-place votes and 1,489 points. Florida State got 10 first-place votes and 1,420 points following a 39-28 comeback victory over Virginia Tech.

The only other first-place vote went to Virginia, which moved from seventh to No. 4, one spot below Michigan, which was ranked sixth last week. Virginia beat William & Mary 63-35 and Michigan beat Maryland 45-17.

The only team that fell out of the Top Ten was Brigham Young, dropping from fourth to 11th after a 32-16 loss at Oregon. Florida became the newcomer, moving up seven positions to No. 10 after beating Mississippi State 34-21.

Two Southeastern Conference powers fell slightly after playing to a 26-26 tie Saturday night — Auburn dropping from third to fifth and Tennessee from fifth to sixth.

Oklahoma climbed two positions to No. 7 with a 31-17 victory over Kansas, and Nebraska remained No. 8 after beating Oregon State 31-7. Miami moved up one position to No. 9.

Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Defensive back Derrick Frazier glances at the scoreboard in the final moments of A&M's 17-8 loss to LSU Saturday. The road loss dropped the Aggies to No. 19 in Monday's Associated Press College Football Top 25 Poll.

Behavior of Ags, Tigers reflecting intense competition

Nadja Sabawala

The Aggie football team finally had its first test. And taking on Louisiana State in Death Valley is like ... well ... taking on Louisiana State in Death Valley. There's just nothing quite like it.

It has an aura. Incoming teams are supposed to be terrified by the imposing Tiger Stadium and the well-established tradition of containing one of the loudest, most rowdy crowds in the nation.

So, these teams go into the game on the defense. They're not necessarily worried about the crowd influencing the Tigers' play. But they *do* know that the crowd hates them and would probably go out onto the field to personally rip the heads off each and every one of the visiting team.

The Aggies went to Baton Rouge to prove to the world that they can defeat a "real" team. And to prove to themselves that their victories over Hawaii, Southwestern Louisiana and North Texas were won on their skill and not the lack of skill by the other teams.

LSU went into Tiger Stadium after a humiliating loss to Southeastern Conference tackling dummy Vanderbilt to prove to the world that the loss was a complete fluke. And to prove to themselves that the loss *was* a complete fluke.

The two teams each had something to prove to others as well as themselves and weren't going to let anyone stand in their way. Even if they had to fight for it.

At 7 p.m. a battle broke out that saw no equal. Three minutes into the game, LSU offensive line coach Kenny Ferro was flagged for arguing with an official and the Tigers went back 15 yards.

At the end of the same drive, LSU was forced to punt. A&M's Shane Garrett lined up to receive the punt and an over-anxious Tiger *leveled* him before the ball was even caught ... giving the Aggies an

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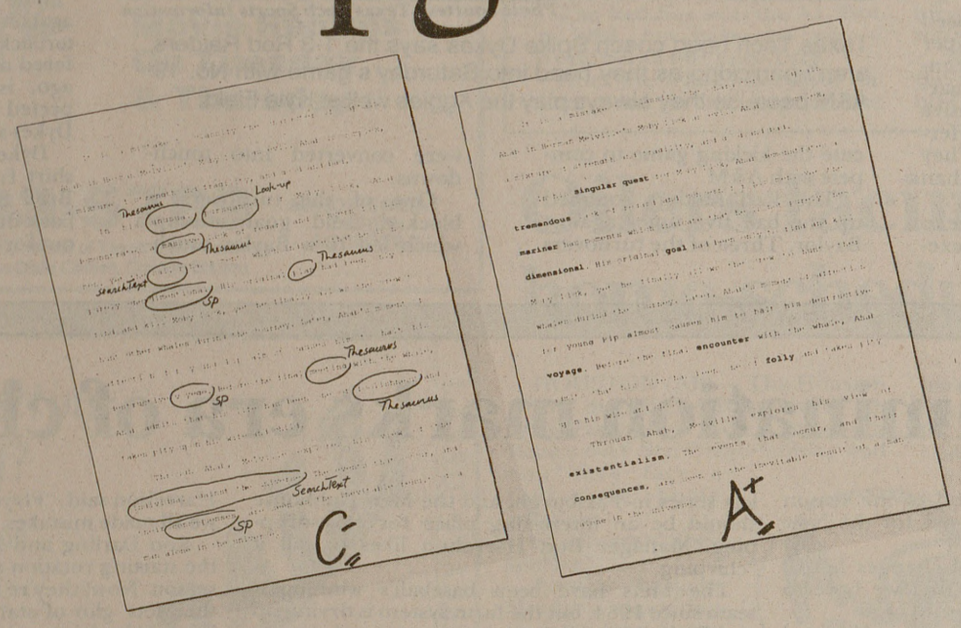

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