

Cowboys squeak past Bucs while Oilers sack Saints

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Michael Irvin felt like himself again Sunday. More importantly for Dallas, he played like the big-play wide receiver the Cowboys expect him to be.

Irvin's 28-yard touchdown reception with 23 seconds remaining set off a wild end-zone celebration reminiscent of his college days at Miami and gave the Cowboys their second victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in three weeks.

Troy Aikman completed three of six passes for 60 yards and scrambled 20 yards to the Bucs' 28 to set up the winning points. Two weeks ago, he directed a 14-10 victory over Tampa Bay (4-3) but didn't think Dallas (3-4) earned the respect it deserved.

"All week long (the Bucs) were saying we

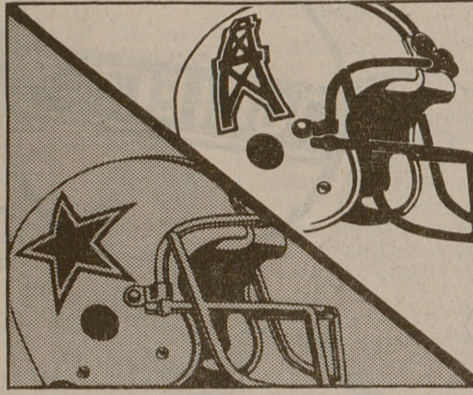
were just lucky to win, and that they were a much better team," Aikman said. "They weren't giving us any credit, and that was on our minds."

Irvin missed the last 10 games of 1989 as well as the first four weeks of this season recovering from knee surgery. Until he caught a 14-yard pass to begin Dallas' decisive march, he didn't have a reception in 1990.

"To tell you the truth, there really wasn't any pressure on me," Irvin said. "It's a situation I enjoy being in. That's where I get my nickname 'The Playmaker.' It was just a chance to make a play."

"I just said, 'Get it to me, get it to me,' and he did," Irvin added. "Troy made a

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HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Oilers, presented with the mystery of Steve Walsh making his first start at quarterback for New Orleans, decided a relentless defensive charge would be the solution.

"The line kept constant pressure on him after that first drive and then he started to feel the pressure more," defensive end William Fuller said after Walsh was sacked four times, fumbled once and intercepted once in Houston's 23-10 victory Sunday.

"Steve had a good game," Saints coach Jim Mora said. "It wasn't a perfect game by any means, but I'm encouraged by his performance. Houston has an outstanding defense."

Walsh said his short time with the Saints was a factor in his performance.

"I'm still not where I'd like to be, but I feel like I'm making progress. I've learned the system. I just need more experience with it."

He also noted that the Oilers' defensive players were talking a lot and it upset some of his rhythm.

"That hurt us on some of the snap counts," Walsh said. "The pressure was good. The only time they were able to get a lot of heat on me was on obvious passing situations late in the game."

"They get good pressure on the quarterback. They get in the passing lanes and give you a lot of trouble when you're trying to make some reads."

"Walsh will help them a lot once he

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Frogs, Horns in driver's seat for SWC race

Nov. 17 is looming as one of the big dates on the Southwest Conference football calendar.

That's when the Texas Longhorns and Texas Christian Horned Frogs collide in Fort Worth. Should both teams stay on track, the game could have "Cotton Bowl" written all over it.

Texas kept things on cruise control over the weekend, destroying Arkansas 49-17 in the Hogs' last appearance as an SWC member in Austin.

"SEC, SEC, SEC" the crowd yelled after Texas scored the most points on Arkansas since 1916.

Texas is 2-0 in SWC play. Texas Christian leads the league 3-0.

Houston is 5-0 but ineligible to compete for the conference title because of NCAA sanctions.

In conference action over the weekend, Houston defeated Southern Methodist 44-17, Rice routed the Texas Tech Red Raiders 42-21, and Texas A&M and Baylor battled to a 20-20 tie.

TCU was idle.

In games this week, SMU is at Texas at noon (Raycom TV), Rice is at Texas A&M at 2 p.m., Baylor is at TCU at 2 p.m., Arkansas is at Houston at 4 p.m., and Miami is at Texas Tech in a noon televised game.

The collapse is complete for the defending champion Razorbacks who are out of the race at 0-3.

Arkansas hasn't lost three straight conference games since Frank Broyles' first year as coach of the Hogs in 1958.

Broyles recently orchestrated Arkansas' defection to the SEC, which won't begin until after next season in football.

Texas players said they didn't pile it on the Hogs because they were leaving the conference.

"We didn't hold a grudge. They can go to the moon for all we care," said linebacker Brian Jones.

Jones said Texas was getting it all together.

"I feel we can play with Notre Dame or anybody," Jones said. "We're not a flake."

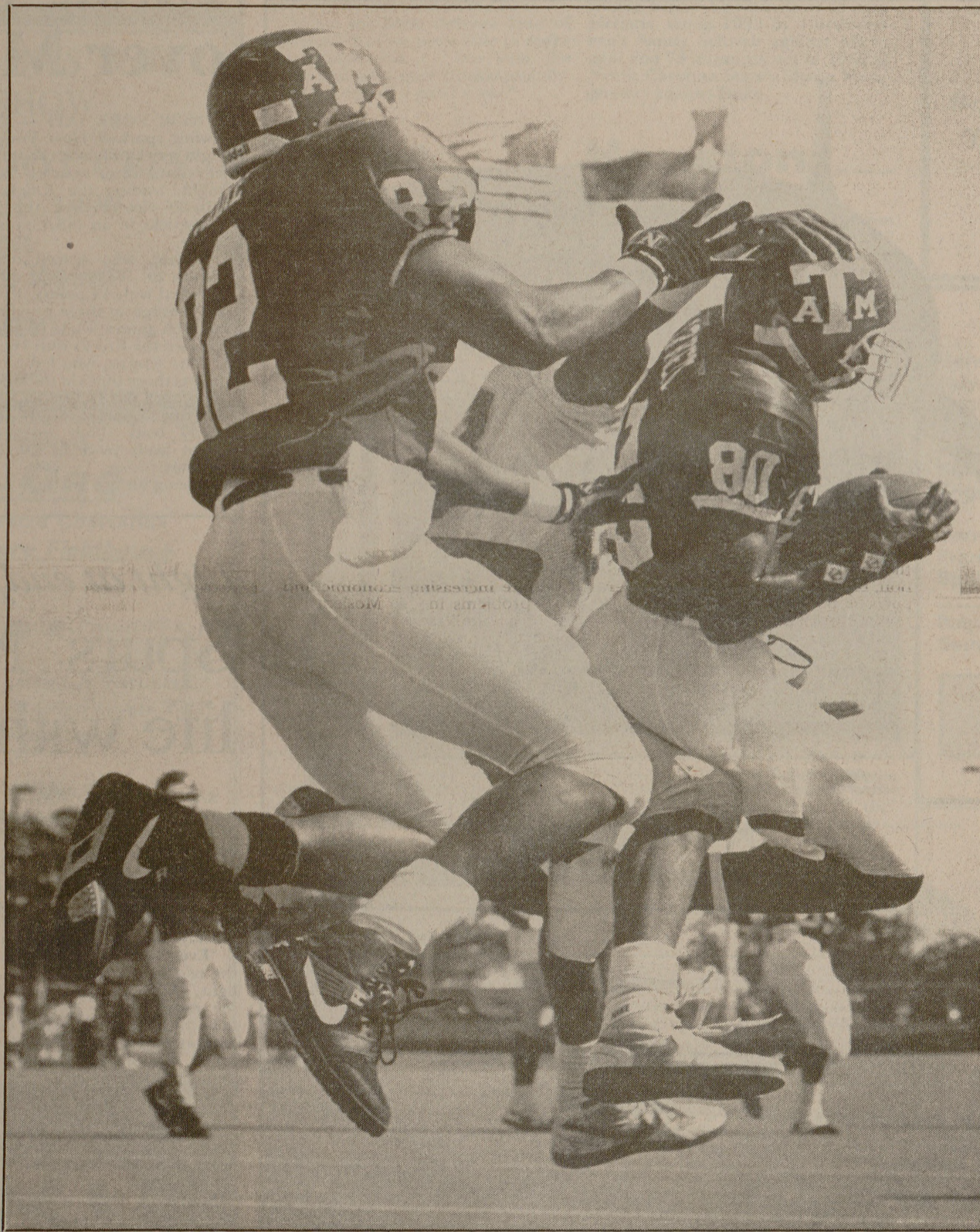
Defensive end Oscar Giles said, "We took another big (step) on the ladder to win the conference."

Texas A&M, the preseason favorite, took a giant step backward. The Aggies, who now have a loss and a tie, are teetering on the brink of elimination.

"We hurt ourselves severely in the conference race," said A&M coach R.C. Slocum. "This hurts as much as a loss. Our chances to win the conference now

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Slocum: 'Obviously, we're not very sharp'



A&M's Shane Garrett catches a touchdown pass in the second quarter of Saturday's 20-20 tie with Baylor.

By RICHARD TIJERINA
 Of The Battalion Staff

Layne Talbot's last-minute missed field goal may have been a blessing in disguise. As it is, head coach R.C. Slocum knows his team is in trouble. The 20-20 tie was just the latest game where the Aggies didn't play well.

With a loss and a tie three games into its Southwest Conference schedule, A&M is a team on the ropes, and has to look for other teams to help it out.

"Being realistic, we're not leading the race," Slocum said Sunday. "There's a lot of football left to be played. A lot can happen with the race. Houston's pretty good. I don't see a bunch of other teams beating them in this league."

"A tie certainly helps a lot more than having a loss there. It gives us the opportunity now to go play those other teams and give them their second loss, provided they lose to Houston."

Houston still must play Texas and Texas Christian.

But if the Aggies now must rely on the Cougars to beat the Longhorns and Horned Frogs, they still have to win the rest of their conference games — a tall order for a team not playing well.

"I'm very disappointed," Slocum said. "To me, my biggest concern is just our consistency. If we were playing better, I would feel a lot better about it. Obviously, we weren't very sharp. We're just not getting the execution."

"You hate to panic because if we kick the field goal, then you say we're fine. That's a win. We had an opportunity to do that. Had we won the game, I'd still be very concerned about them running the ball on us like they did."

A&M's defensive front couldn't stop the Baylor ground game. The Bears' 303 yards rushing was the most the Aggies have given up since 1982, when Baylor had 320 yards.

"We had known all along that we were not very physical at (defensive line)," Slocum said. "They kind of took advantage of us. We've got to play better than that, there's no question. They manhandled us pretty good. We've got to get better somehow."

A&M hosts Rice Saturday. The Owls are coming off a 44-21 thrashing over Texas Tech — the same team the Aggies had to hold off in the last minute to win.

"As a coach, you don't start pointing the finger at this guy, that guy, this position or the offense or the defense," Slocum said. "You look at everything, and really pay attention to all the little details to make sure that everything's done exactly right."

Not much went right for Slocum against the Bears. Tailback Darren Lewis had another solid game. He rushed for 179 yards and needs just 173 more to become the SWC's all-time leading rusher. Talbot ended the first half with a career-high 59-yard field goal.

Still, the few bright spots the Aggies had couldn't conceal the fact that they're not playing well. Coming off a disappointing 36-31 loss to Houston, A&M was expected to be flat. But not this flat.

"When things don't go exactly as they're planned, a lot of people lose focus," Slocum said. "Organization becomes fragmented. We can't allow that to happen, and won't allow that to happen on this team. We've got a lot of our schedule left, and we can still have a good season."

"You've got to do something to shake things up a little bit. You've somehow got to get out of this slump or whatever it is we're in. We didn't play very well as a team."

To make matters worse, the Aggies have to face a Rice team that features running back Trevor Cobb, who ran for 203 yards against Tech.

Slocum said A&M's defense — ranked No. 1 in the SWC before the Baylor game — has to stiffen before the Aggies improve.

"Baylor did things to us that we haven't had anyone do all year," Slocum said. "There's not a lot of guys to shuffle."

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AP Top 25

Here's how the top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college football poll fared Saturday:

Rank	Team	Result	Next opponent
1	Virginia (7-0)	def. Wake Forest 49-14	No. 11 Georgia Tech
2	Miami, Fla. (4-2)	lost to No. 6 Notre Dame 29-20	at Texas Tech
3	Tennessee (4-1-2)	lost to Alabama 9-6	at Temple
4	Nebraska (7-0)	def. Oklahoma St. 31-3	at Iowa St.
5	Auburn (5-0-1)	def. No. 7 Florida St. 20-17	at Mississippi St.
6	Notre Dame (5-1)	def. No. 2 Miami, Fla. 29-20	at Pittsburgh
7	Florida St. (4-2)	lost to No. 5 Auburn 20-17	Louisiana St.
8	Illinois (5-1)	def. No. 24 Michigan St. 15-13	at Wisconsin
9	Houston (6-0)	def. Southern Methodist 44-17	Arkansas
10	Michigan (3-3)	lost to No. 23 Iowa 24-23	at No. 20 Indiana
11	Georgia Tech (5-0-1)	tied North Carolina 13-13	Duke
12	Clemson (6-2)	def. North Carolina St. 24-17	New Mexico
13	Washington (6-1)	def. Stanford 52-16	California
14	Colorado (6-1-1)	lost to No. 10 Michigan 41-10	No. 16 Oklahoma
15	Southern Cal (5-2)	lost to Arizona 35-26	at Arizona St.
16	Oklahoma (5-2)	lost to Iowa St. 33-31	at No. 14 Colorado
17	Florida (6-1)	def. Akron 59-0	No. 5 Auburn
18	Mississippi (6-1)	def. Arkansas St. 42-13	at Vanderbilt
19	Texas (4-1)	def. Arkansas 49-17	Southern Methodist
20	Indiana (4-1-1)	lost to Minnesota 12-0	No. 10 Michigan
21	Wyoming (8-0)	def. Weber St. 21-12	at Texas-El Paso
22	Clemson (6-2)	def. North Carolina St. 24-17	at Wake Forest
23	Iowa (5-1)	def. No. 10 Michigan 24-23	Northwestern
24	Michigan St. (2-3-1)	lost to No. 8 Illinois 15-13	Purdue
25	Texas A&M (4-2-1)	tied Baylor 20-20	Rice

Cincinnati blowout leaves questions

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — There are probably people still waiting for the Cincinnati Reds to blow the World Series, or expecting the Oakland Athletics to rally to win it.

One day after one of the most stunning upsets ever, there's only one question going around baseball: How did the Reds do it?

How did this team, which had played below-.500 ball since the first week in June, manage to beat the defending champions in such easy fashion?

"It has to do with how you're peaking as you come into the series," Oakland manager Tony La Russa said after the Reds finished a shocking sweep with a 2-1 victory. "I give credit to Lou. He had his club peaking at the right time."

Nevertheless, it was Oakland that came into the World Series with a 10-game winning streak in the postseason after a sweep of Boston. It was Cincinnati that had to struggle in the playoffs, beating Pittsburgh in six games.

But from the instant Eric Davis hit a two-run homer off Dave Stewart in the opener, the Reds seized control. They became the first team to sweep a club that has swept through the playoffs.

"We were the aggressive ballclub for four games," Cincinnati manager Lou Piniella said.

Hitting, pitching, fielding — the Reds were better by a lot. And, in somewhat of a surprise, Piniella, managing for the first time in the World

Series, was far better than the more experienced La Russa, on and off the field.

In the battle of the bullpens, it was Piniella who made the moves to get the Nasty Boys into the game while La Russa hesitated.

Going into the series, the A's were 91-2 when they took leads into the eighth inning. Twice they

They are one of the major reasons we are here."

In the clincher, Jose Rijo was pitching a two-hitter and had retired 20 straight batters when left-handed hitting Harold Baines came to the plate in the ninth with one out and nobody on base.

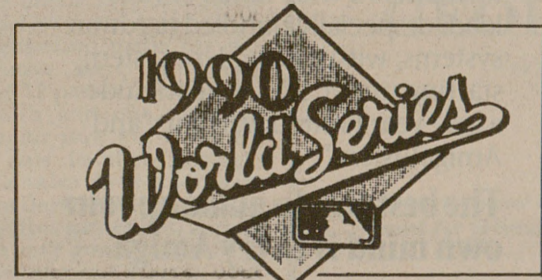
"Baines is a great hitter. We only had 14 complete games all year. With Randy and Dibble out there, you're almost in a situation where you're forced to bring those guys in," said Piniella, who brought in the left-handed Myers. Jose Canseco, who did not start because of an injured finger, batted for Baines.

"I knew (La Russa) was going to hit for Baines with Canseco, but it was only a situation where the game could be tied, as opposed to having a situation later on where someone was on and (Canseco) could win the game," Piniella said.

"Myers came in and did the job and we had Dibble ready behind him."

Eckersley, the most dominant reliever in the majors this season, never got into the game. Instead, he was warming up all through the eighth as the Reds loaded the bases with no outs on a single, a bunt hit and a bad throw on a bunt by Stewart, his first error of the season.

So Eckersley, La Russa and the A's watched as the Reds tied the game on Glenn Braggs' forecourt and then went ahead on Hal Morris' sacrifice fly.



were ahead going into the eighth against Cincinnati, but Oakland blew it both times and Dennis Eckersley was not in the game either time when it slipped away.

"How can you go wrong when you have a Randy Myers and a Rob Dibble out there?" Piniella said. "They've done the job for us all year."