

Baylor prepares for final trip to Arkansas

WACO, Texas (AP) — After two straight losses dropped the Baylor Bears from the Cotton Bowl picture, coach Grant Teaff threw out the fancy mid-season schemes and had his players work on the fundamentals.

It worked. The No. 21 Bears beat Texas Christian 26-9, improving their record to 6-2 and keeping their bowl hopes alive.

"The TCU game was a very important one for us," Teaff said Monday. "It was a must-win

game for us. We were in a situation where we felt like we had to find a way to win.

"Now if we had lost, I would have really been questioned about going back to the basics in the middle of the year with a lot of senior kids. But part of that was confidence. Trying to restore what had been lost and we did that."

The victory gets the Bears back on track for one final trip to Arkansas.

The Bears (3-2 in the SWC) travel to Little Rock, Ark., on Saturday for the last time to face the resurgent Arkansas Razorbacks, ranked 24th with a 5-2 mark, including 4-0 in the SWC.

It will be the last SWC game ever played at Razorback Stadium.

Arkansas joins the Southeastern Conference in 1992.

The Razorbacks are perfect in league play despite ranking dead last in total offense.

O'Brien

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sure, he fought to the end.

Second, as Florida State head coach Bobby Bowden says, a team can only get up for two or three games a year, and for the Aggies this was not one of them. A&M won with superior talent on Saturday and will have to do the same against Rice and TCU.

Arkansas and Texas are the only games where A&M fans can expect an all-out, full-tilt effort.

Finally, UH head coach John

Jenkins and his team took a gut check and decided to start playing football again. If they can keep it up the rest of the season, the Cougars can beat Texas. The Longhorns already have one conference loss, so a Houston victory would knock the Texas out of the race.

If the Aggies keep playing like they did on Saturday, they won't have to worry about what the other teams do. They'll take care of their own destiny — like champions.

Modkins plays big for Horned Frogs

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — TCU running back Curtis Modkins, a small guy from a small town, looked tiny in the room that first day at freshman orientation in 1989.

"He looked like a peasant," TCU coach Jim Wacker said. "I don't think he'd lifted a weight in his life."

Modkins has since gained 100 pounds and more than 100 yards.

He has a tattoo on his left arm, some serious muscles and a large, sprained thumb.

Now he's big time.

Modkins, who had to twist Wacker's arm to play running back when he arrived from Marlin, went into last week's game.

Modkins' end's 26-9 loss to Baylor — he picked up 29 yards on 12 carries as the sixth leading rusher in history. He is fourth among Southwest Conference rushing leaders this week.

And he's only a junior.

Few would have believed Modkins would come so far.

Now 5-9, 190 pounds, Modkins suffered through two knee operations his sophomore and junior seasons at Marlin High School, 20 miles east of Waco — spent most of his senior year hobbling on crutches.

"One time I hurt my ankle and sprained an ankle on the play," Modkins said. "I was on crutches all year. I still play because I had to. I knew I'd be home if I didn't."

Such desire has been the driving force behind Modkins' success. He refused to change position when college recruiters offered him scholarships to play defense.

Only TCU and Houston offered him a spot on offense.

"When I came out I was about 160 pounds, with two operations," Modkins said. "One of the big schools said 'defensive back.' I said, 'No way.' (TCU) said 'make me a receiver.' It wasn't me. My head wasn't in the running back was all I'd played."

By refusing to change, Modkins placed pressure on his coaches. He began his first season, 1989, as the starting slotback — better than Tony Darthard and Cedric Jackson were firmly established at the running back.

"I got caught up in the numbers," Modkins said. "But I gave up."

His chance soon came when Darthard and Jackson were injured two games into the season.

Modkins never looked back. He rushed for 522 yards and 10 touchdowns, averaging 4.4 yards per carry, as a freshman. Last year he gained 893 yards and scored 10 touchdowns.

And through seven games this season, Modkins has rushed for 493 yards and three touchdowns, including 245 yards the past two games for the Frogs (2-2 in Southwest Conference, 5-2 overall), who average 406.7 yards per offense a game.

But Modkins' rise was difficult. He worked hard this summer in the weight room, pumping iron and gaining 12 pounds to 180. He awoke each morning at 5:30 a.m. and his time in the 400-yard dash improved from the 4:45 to 4:5-second range into the 4:4s and once as low as 4:36.

"I could set my watch by Curtis," strength coach Kevin Wacker said. "We had a lot of guys who were more dedicated to our off-season program than Curtis. He did miss a workout."

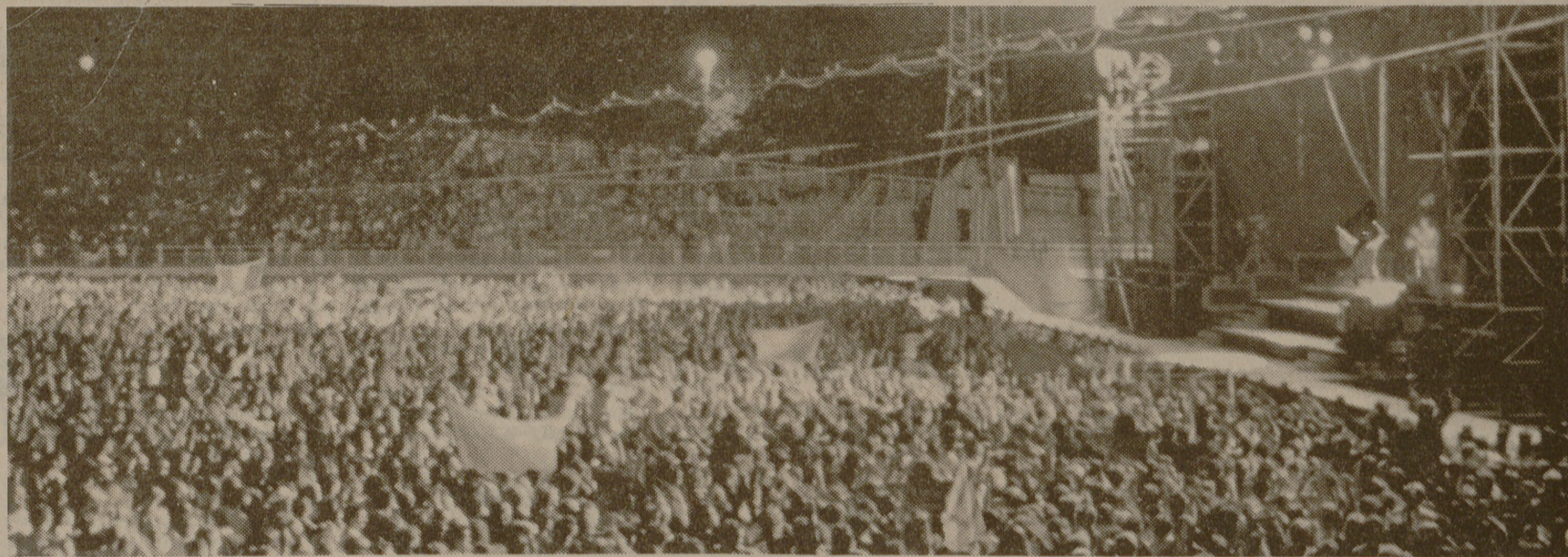
Not only did Modkins' strength improve, the rest of his game did, too.

Perhaps Modkins felt the same something to prove.

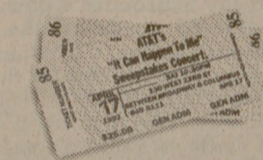
Having been considered too small to play running back, Modkins never wavered from his belief, despite sustaining a variety of injuries in his three years at TCU. Modkins played Saturday as a hip pointer and the sprained thumb.

"You always feel like you have something to prove," Modkins said. "I just knew I'd play running back somewhere. Once I got to the offensive side of the ball, I'd make it."

"It doesn't matter what you are. Once you get in the mind what to do, it just happens."



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