

Victory places Aggies atop SWC pedestal

BATON ROUGE, La. - Let the record be known that here in Death Valley, where men are men and Mom

Chris Whitley
Sports Editor

and Dad are cousins, the Aggies took their biggest step in the journey to the promised land of January.

Texas A&M did three things in Saturday's 31-22 win over Louisiana State that made this win so monumental. First, the Aggies broke the dreaded Curse of Death Valley, a feat that the men in maroon have not accomplished since 1975.

And winning in Tiger Stadium is no small task. For a team consisting primarily of freshmen and sophomores to play amidst 69,313 unfriendly voices and still win proves that this team can win in Columbia, Mo. and in Austin.

If you can win in Death Valley, you can win anywhere.

Second, the Aggies have an offense now. In fact, the offense won the game Saturday. Imagine that.

The same team who looked all over southern California looking for someone to move the ball against Stanford put up 31 points in enemy territory. Quarterback Jeff Granger showed dramatic improvement, completing 13 of 26 for 196 yards.

The defense that looked so stellar in the Aggies' opener had a couple of lapses, including a tremendous 76-yard run by Robert Davis. It was close to a mirror image of the Pigskin Classic.

However, it was the defense which made the play of the game. Derrick Frazier's interception of Chad Loup set up Rodney Thomas' 22-yard touchdown, which gave A&M a ten-point lead. But more than that, it switched the momentum of the game.

LSU was only down three points, and the crowd had been a dominating presence up to then. Frazier's interception and the subsequent touchdown gave the offense some confidence and brought cheers to the Aggie faithful camped on the end of Tiger Stadium.

Finally, A&M positioned itself at the forefront of the Southwest Conference Saturday - by default.

Every team in the SWC took a beating this weekend, save the Aggies. Tulane beat SMU. Louisiana Tech beat Baylor. Mississippi State beat Texas. Oklahoma beat Texas Tech on national television.

Another banner week for the league. If A&M had lost on national television to a team that finished 5-6 last year, not only would the SWC have had a winless weekend, but what little respect the nation had for it would disappear.

And the talk about a possible A&M national title comes one more step closer to reality. The toughest part of the Aggies' schedule is over, and they are still 2-0.

There will be no problem getting inspired against Tulsa next week. With 70,000 fans welcoming the Aggies in their home opener and revenge on the players' minds after last year's 35-34

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Aggies survive Death Valley

Fourth-quarter spark leads A&M to 31-22 win at LSU

By J. DOUGLAS FOSTER

Sports Editor of THE BATTALION

BATON ROUGE, La. - In Texas A&M's season opener against Stanford, the Aggie defense had the job of carrying the offense until it was finally able to put points on the board.

Saturday against Louisiana State University, the two units switched roles as the A&M offense piled up 457 yards to lead the Aggies to a 31-22 win over the Tigers.

The seventh-ranked Aggies improved their record to 2-0 with the win while the Tigers fell in their season opener.

Defensively, the famed A&M "Wrecking Crew" gave up 20 points for only the third time in the last 14 games, and LSU was the first opponent to score 20 against the Aggies since A&M's 38-21 win over Rice on Nov. 2, 1991.

After edging out to a 17-14 lead after three quarters, the Aggies pulled away from the Tigers in the final stanza, scoring two touchdowns while wearing down the LSU defense and securing A&M's first win in Baton Rouge since 1975.

The winning touchdown was set up as the blitzing Aggie defense caused LSU quarterback Chad Loup to force a pass to wide receiver Scott Ray. A&M cornerback Derrick Frazier stepped in front of Ray and intercepted the ball, giving the Aggies possession at the LSU 22 with 14:53 left to play in the fourth.

On the next play, A&M running back Rodney Thomas shot through the middle of the line and broke a tackle from the LSU safety on his way to a 22-yard touchdown run.

Frazier said although the Tigers were able to move the ball better than most teams do against the Aggies, he felt the blitzing defense wore LSU down and helped him grab the interception.

"I know when we blitz, he (Loup) did a lot of running around and getting sacked," Frazier said. "I was just happy to be able to contribute to the win."

A&M sealed the win nearly nine minutes later with an 80-yard scoring drive that was capped off by a 12-yard touchdown run by sophomore Cliff Groce.

A&M center Chris Dausin said he felt the Aggie offense was able to wear down the LSU defense, and said in the final quarter the fatigue started to show.

"I thought by the third quarter we were starting to wear them down," Dausin said. "We were pretty tired too, but we just told ourselves to keep pushing, and we would be able to tire them out."

LSU tried to make a final comeback, scoring on a 19-yard touchdown pass from freshman Jesse Daigle to Brett Bech and successfully completing the two-point conversion.

A&M head coach R.C. Slocum said he saw quite a bit of improvement from his squad from the season-opening victory against Stanford.

"I thought it was an outstanding ballgame," Slocum said. "I have to congratulate (LSU head coach) Curley Hallman and his team, because they played a great game."

"I thought we did some good things offensively today, because we knew coming here we were going to have a tough time playing here."

The Aggies set the tone for the game on the opening drive by starting at their own 35 and immediately driving 65 yards on eight plays, using only 3:42 of the clock and punching the ball in the end zone on a one-yard pass from quarterback Jeff Granger to fullback Doug Carter.

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KARL STOLLEIS/The Battalion

Linebacker Marcus Buckley lays a hit on backup Louisiana State quarterback Ryan Huffman in Texas A&M's 31-22 victory Saturday in Tiger Stadium.

Thomas, Hill give A&M offense reversal of fortune

By J. DOUGLAS FOSTER

Sports Editor of THE BATTALION

BATON ROUGE, La. - When former Texas A&M running back Darren Lewis played his final game in College Station, R.C. Slocum was faced with a problem he had not yet had as A&M's head coach - deciding which tailback to play.

Slocum opened the 1991 season with redshirt freshman Greg Hill waiting to take Lewis' place in the lineup, and high school sensation Rodney Thomas coming to town to try and earn the spot for himself.

A year later in Tiger Stadium, Slocum solved the problem of finding time for both by unveiling a new offense which involves using both backs at the same time. The formation, which was labeled the "Lion Offense" by offensive coordinator Bob Toledo, yielded the results Slocum was looking for, as the two backs

combined for 40 carries and 201 yards against Louisiana State on Saturday.

"We called it the Lion Offense," Toledo said. "Because the lion is the biggest, baddest animal in the jungle, and we tell them both to get in there together and go after them."

In '91, it was Hill who grabbed all the headlines, opening the season against LSU with 212 yards on 30 carries, and finishing the year with 1,216 yards.

Thomas, however, was used mainly as a reserve last season, but managed to gain 81 yards himself against the Tigers on 12 carries.

Despite Hill's exceptional freshman year, Toledo said he knew he needed to get some playing time for Thomas, who accumulated 8,441 yards and scored 111 touchdowns during an exceptional career at Groveton High School.

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KARL STOLLEIS/The Battalion

Fullback Doug Carter barrels through the LSU defensive line in A&M's victory. After a rough opener against Stanford, Carter picked up 98 total yards Saturday.

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Wed. Oct 28 - Nov 18

6-7:30pm

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\$25/nonstudent

Jitterbug

Mon. Oct 12 - Nov 9

6-7pm

\$20/student

\$25/nonstudent

Mon. Oct 12 - Nov 9

7:15-8:15pm

\$20/student

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Wed. Oct 28 - Nov 18

7:45-9pm

\$20/student

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