

A&M should roll to justify No. 5 ranking

In three early season wins against three tough opponents, Texas A&M fans have seen their offense struggle to put points on the board throughout the first three quarters, only to pull out a victory late in the game.



J. DOUGLAS FOSTER
Sports Editor

The questions from the doubters could be answered with the fact that the Aggies were playing quality teams. Stanford is in the top 25, LSU knocked off a tough Mississippi State squad last week, and A&M's win over Tulsa broke an eight-game winning streak for the Golden Hurricane.

But a struggling offense in week four of the season could raise even more questions from doubters. After a tie between Notre Dame and Michigan last weekend, the Aggies jumped to No. 5 in the Associated Press poll. Now, they must prove they are among the elite in college football.

This week, it's the University of Missouri. In Columbia.

Sure, they played Illinois a good game last week on the road, and probably should have won.

But it shouldn't matter.

These are the teams that make national championship seasons. Notre Dame had their Rice in 1988. Miami had their Cincinnati in '89. And if 1992 will be a championship season for Texas A&M, they will need to have their Missouri.

National championships are built

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No rest on the schedule Fifth-ranked Aggies just another tough opponent for Missouri

By **DON NORWOOD**
Sports Writer for THE BATTALION

You will have to excuse Missouri head football coach Bob Stull if he sounds cautious about Saturday's home opener against Texas A&M.

In the third game of a major rebuilding project at Mizzou, Stull saw his Tigers fall behind early in their 24-17 loss to Illinois last week as the result of several key miscues.

And although Missouri managed to make a strong comeback and provide a more respectable final score, Stull said Wednesday that that comeback was little consolation in the Tigers' disappointing season-opening loss.

"We made a lot of mistakes early," Stull said. "We were happy that we played hard and came back, though."

The comeback is something Stull knows about well, for few coaches performed the kind of resurrection he did at the University of Texas-El Paso during the late-80's.

After leading Massachusetts to a 10-12 record over two years, Stull strode into El Paso in 1986 to take over a team mired in a losing tradition.

Few things changed that first year, as the Miners finished 4-8. But the rebirth took hold the next year, as UTEP ended up 7-4.

In 1988, Stull helped UTEP do the seemingly impossible when the Miners capped off a 10-3 campaign with a 38-18 loss to Curley Hallman's Southern Mississippi Golden Eagles in the Independence Bowl.

A year after the first 10-win season in El Paso in many moons, Stull left the UTEP comfort zone for Columbia, Mo., where the previous five years saw Mizzou accumulate a less-than-impressive 15-38-2 record.

But with each year that Stull has tried to work another miracle with the Tigers, he has seen the Big Eight Conference

multiply in strength. Consequently, Missouri has averaged three wins and more than seven losses during a three year span.

In this young season, the trend in the Big Eight seems to be continuing. For Stull, that means double the strength of the competition, and double the effort needed by the Tigers to improve and have a winning season.

"We don't have to worry about competition—we get plenty of it every week," Stull said. "With Colorado, Oklahoma and Nebraska (in the Big Eight), those are three that are Top 10-caliber teams every year. Kansas is playing much better, and Kansas State had seven wins last year. "I think every team is getting better," he added.

As if the conference were not solid enough, the Tigers are in the midst of one of the more difficult non-conference slates around.

Opponents A&M, Illinois and Indiana all notched bowl appearances last season, with Division I-AA runner-up Marshall thrown in for good measure.

With one of those non-league opponents out of the way, Stull is eager to return home to face the Aggies in a game that should appeal to the Missouri faithful.

"We like playing at home, just like anyone else," Stull said. "Our fans are looking forward to seeing A&M, especially since they're fifth in the nation."

"That's what our fans like to see," he said.

What Tiger fans probably will not like to see is Greg Hill picking his way through the Missouri defense the way he did against Tulsa. And even though A&M's much-heralded "Lion" offense has thrust Rodney Thomas into a more prominent role, Stull said stopping Hill is job one for the Tiger defense.

"For a freshman to come in and lead the conference (behind Rice's Trevor Cobb) is pretty good," Stull said. "And, he had 125 yards last week. That's our



Missouri head coach Bob Stull (right), faces the fifth-ranked Aggies this weekend in what will be a long list of ranked teams on the Tigers' 1992 schedule.

number-one concern on defense.

"Defensively, you can name guys down the line, like (Marcus) Buckley and some of the others. They're a good, all-around ball team."

Although a sellout is not in the cards Saturday at 62,000-seat Faurot Field, Stull said that 45-50,000 fans are expected for the third all-time meeting between A&M and Missouri.

Henneman, Haas hold off Rangers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT— Tony Phillips' two-run double keyed a three-run seventh and David Haas combined with Mike Henneman for a two-hitter as the Detroit Tigers defeated the Texas Rangers 4-1 Wednesday night.

Haas (5-2) went seven innings, giving up one run and both hits. Henneman pitched the final two innings for his career-best 23rd save to complete the game, which was the lowest hit-total contest thrown by the Tigers' staff this season.

Texas starter Roger Pavlik (4-3), who had gone 4-1 in his previous five outings, gave up three runs on five hits in six-plus innings.

The score was tied 1-1 when the Tigers started their seventh with three consecutive walks, two off Pavlik and one off reliever Edwin Nunez.

Chad Kreuter's sacrifice fly to center scored Mickey Tettleton with the go-ahead run.

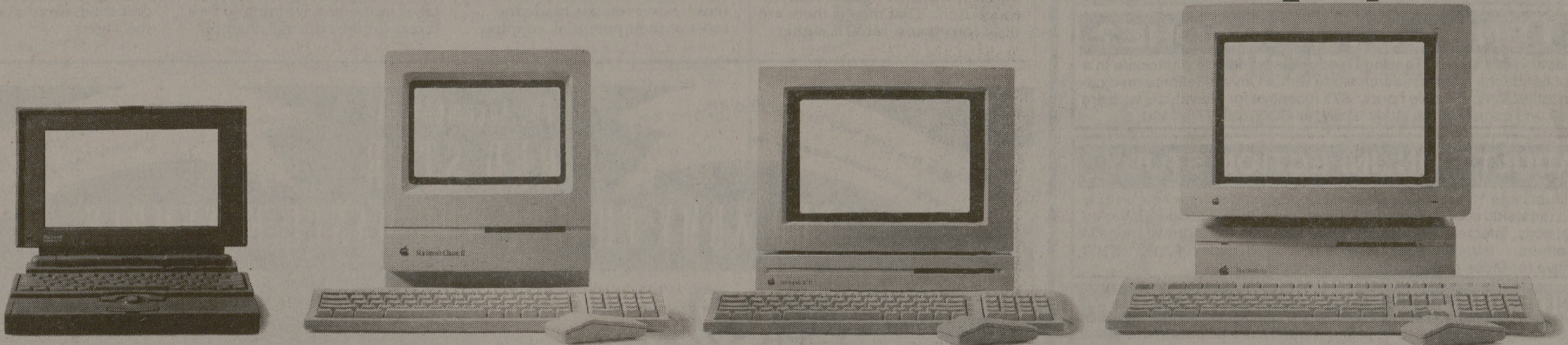
Skeeter Barnes hit a grounder that forced out Mark Carreon before Phillips lined a double to the wall in left-center, driving in Rob Deer and Barnes for a 4-1 lead.

The Rangers took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Jose Canseco doubled and scored on an RBI single by Juan Gonzalez.

It was the 100th RBI for Gonzalez, who joined former Texas stars Ruben Sierra and Larry Parrish as the only Rangers to drive in 100 runs more than once during their career at Texas.

The Tigers tied it in the sixth. Lou Whitaker reached on a grounder that forced Barnes, who had walked. Whitaker moved up on a wild pitch by Pavlik and scored on Travis Fryman's single.

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