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by Eric Bogosian

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Aggies, Ponies, to play at Cotton Bowl

Rossley wants real wins, not moral victories

By DON NORWOOD

Sports Writer of THE BATTALION

Do not try to tell Southern Methodist head football coach Tom Rossley about moral victories. That is the last thing he wants to think about.

The second-year SMU boss saw his team nearly pull off the biggest upset at the school since the Mustangs returned from the NCAA "death penalty" in 1989 last weekend in Lubbock against Texas Tech. SMU held a 25-20 lead late in the third quarter in that contest before Tech put on a late comeback, defeating SMU 39-25.

The positives for SMU in the game were many. Quarterback Dan Freiburger had his fifth game this season with more than 200 yards passing. The SMU defense grabbed four turnovers in the first half, including strong safety Richie Butler's 62-yard interception return for a touchdown. And receiver Jason Wolf edged his way up the Southwest Conference all-time leaders list to third behind ex-Houston Cougars Jason Phillips and Manny Hazard.

But Rossley is more concerned with the final score, which will always be the most important statistic in any sport.

"I think our players played hard for the first three quarters," Rossley said Wednesday. "But it's hard to find a lot of good in a loss."

Rossley did find a few rays of hope with his defense, whose swarming style is reminiscent of the style utilized by Atlanta Falcons head coach and Rossley's former boss, Jerry Glanville.

"They played hard on defense," he said. "It (Butler's touchdown) was the first time we've had a defensive touchdown since coming back from the death penalty."

"That (turnovers) is going to be a key for us. A&M's offense has gotten better each week

with their young quarterbacks."

Rossley has a pretty impressive young quarterback himself in the form of Freiburger, who has led the Mustangs' run-and-shoot offense this year with a .585 completion percentage and 1,639 yards passing. Those are not bad numbers, especially since Freiburger had virtually no experience in the sport when he entered SMU.

"This is Dan Freiburger's first year to play a lot of football," Rossley said about his quarterback, who suffered from mononucleosis and hepatitis before entering SMU. "He didn't play at all in high school."

"I think he's improved a lot each week. I think he's got confidence in himself, and as a result, the other players are confident in his ability."

Freiburger is not the only area of confidence

of the ever-rising Mustangs. SMU's laden team owns more overall experience than any other team in the SWC. And opponents are starting to take note.

"The experience they have on their side is showing up," Slocum said. "They're gaining some confidence."

The Mustangs might have an added source of confidence Saturday as they move into the Cotton Bowl to face A&M.

That switch from a 23,783-seat stadium to an expected Cotton Bowl crowd of 50,000 might make for an intimidating situation, especially since more than half of the expected crowd will probably be A&M supporters.

But Rossley is fired up about the prospect of a fresh switch that he would like to see more often.

"I'm glad that it's going to be at the Cotton Bowl. It's a great crowd and a great atmosphere," he said. "I like the atmosphere in the Cotton Bowl. Our stadium is a good one for us. But there's certain situations, like against A&M in Texas, when it would be better to play in the Cotton Bowl."

Obviously, an SMU win Saturday would rank among the greatest upsets in Division I history. And Rossley is realistic about that.

pecially after the Aggies recently welcomed the SWC to a year ago with a 65-6 massacre at College Station. But call him shrewd, insightful or just plain crazy because he refuses to rule an upset out.

"It would do great things for our program," he said. "It would probably be kind of fun on the conference, though."

"In 1989, when Arkansas had clinched the conference championship, we beat them until the fourth quarter. That was the last game before the Cotton Bowl. So, strange things have happened."



"That (turnovers) is going to be a key for us. A&M's offense has gotten better each week with their young quarterbacks."

- SMU head coach Tom Rossley

for the Mustangs, whose 3-4 start has already guaranteed them of their best record since 1986.

Rossley said that while his players are not on par with Texas A&M yet, the future might hold better things for the Mustangs, and they are starting to believe it.

"I think they do think they can win," Rossley said. "They know they're going to have to play their best and that they're going to have to have the ball bounce their way."

"We're getting closer to the level they're playing at."

A&M head coach R.C. Slocum is well aware

Foster

Continued From Page 7

Miami game.

But the thing was, with a team that was no better than the Cougars were, people in the media were actually talking like Houston was a national championship contender. No matter how average this team was, those brilliant media-types said Houston could actually end the season near the No. 1 spot.

But, of course, the Coogs went down the drain, ending the season with a dismal 4-7 record, going 3-5 in Southwest Conference play.

Why was a team that was this

bad mentioned as one of the top in the nation before the Miami game?

Simple. Jenkins knows how to run it up on the patsies. The boys from Louisiana took it, 73-3. SMU has taken it from the Cougars by a total margin of 188-58 since the Ponies returned from the NCAA "death penalty" in 1989, the worst of those being a 95-21 trouncing in that '89 season.

And those wins weren't so big because Houston scored a lot early and then let their second and third teams play as those squads happened to score a few themselves. No, sir! This is a team that left Heisman Trophy winner Andre Ware in long enough for him to throw 41 passes, complet-

ing 25 of them for six touchdowns and 517 yards in the '89 massacre. I'm sure Houston needed that sixth touchdown pass for insurance.

And Tech got to see David Klingler, Houston's starter last season, stay in the game until he had thrown nine touchdown passes. NINE TDs. Klingler finally left with the Cougars barely in the lead by a score of 70-0.

The point is the 7-0 Aggies are 10 times better than Houston was last season, but ESPN is not talking about A&M as a possible national champion. As a matter of fact, during the last few weeks, the fifth-ranked Aggies have been inching down the polls in points as Florida State has moved closer to replacing A&M in the

top five.

So, if the Aggies want to impress AP voters and get back in the hunt for the number three or four position, which would mean a shot at the top team in the Mobil Cotton Bowl Classic, it's time to pretend we're at UH.

Of course, if the 12th Man wants to act like Cougar fans, no one will show up for the game Saturday.

Roll, R.C., roll. Forty, 50 or 60 points would be nice. If it's to show that the Aggies can embarrass people much worse than the lowly Cougars. Not only that, they could use the media attention this weekend.

Don't be surprised if we see R.C. dye his hair blond this weekend. Why not? We are talking about a full Jenkins costume.

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