

'60s, early '70s continue lean years for Aggies

By Nick Georgandis
THE BATTALION

"I've got a play that's guaranteed to score a touchdown against Texas, if I've got the guts to call it." Stallings had the guts, and his players had heart, but not much else went right for Texas A&M in the 1964-1973 decade.

Stallings' play came in the 1965 UT-A&M tilt, a game the Aggies went into with a poor 2-7 record. The play was called the "Texas Special" and required perfect timing among the offensive players.

Aggie quarterback Harry Ledbetter took the snap from the center and threw a long lateral that bounced to halfback Jim Kauffman.

Kauffman and the entire A&M team looked disgusted, as if the play was an incomplete pass. But some 40 yards downfield, Aggie receiver Dude McLean briefly broke his fly pattern, then sprinted past the surprised Texas defenders as Kauffman hit him with a long pass for a 91-yard touchdown. Although Texas would come back to defeat the Aggies 21-

17, McLean enjoyed a banner receiving day with 13 catches for 250 yards.

The following year, 1966, the Aggies improved to 4-5-1 and enjoyed their first winning season in conference play in nine years. During the year, the Aggies found their starting quarterback for the next three seasons in sophomore Edd Hargett.

Hargett finished his career as the Aggies' all-time leader in touchdown passes and yards. Those two career marks were later broken by Kevin Murray, but Hargett still holds the single-game record for yards with 376 against Southern Methodist in 1968.

The 1967 season, of course, was A&M's miracle run of seven straight wins, including the first win over Texas since 1956 and an stunning upset victory over 8th-ranked Alabama in the Cotton Bowl.

Unfortunately, 1968 was a return to normalcy for A&M, as they slipped back to a 3-7. From then until the end of the decade, the Aggies could never muster another winning season, although they did change coaches following the 1971 campaign as Emory Bellard replaced Stallings.

One of the decade's bright spots was the play of two-time All-SWC safety Dave Elmendorf. As a senior in the 1970-71 season, Elmendorf became the first ever A&M athlete to be a first-team All-American in both baseball and football.

Elmendorf also recorded a 3.8 grade-point average and played in the NFL with the Los Angeles Rams. Elmendorf currently works as the color commentator on the Aggies' Radio Network.

Despite the team's lack of wins in the early 1970s, 1972 was a key year to the future success of A&M football. In 1972, freshman eligibility was restored



Photo courtesy of the Texas A&M University Archives

Barney Harris makes a leaping catch against Rice in the Aggies' 24-14 win at Kyle Field in 1968.

for Division I schools. Bellard and his staff began to aggressively recruit African-American student athletes for the first time, and the recruiting class of '72 produced three future All-Americans and 10 all-conference players.

One of those freshmen was Carl Roaches, who still holds the record for

punt return yardage by an A&M freshman with 287 yards, including an 84-yard return against Rice and a 97-yard kickoff return against Louisiana State.

The freshmen of 1972 became the seniors of 1975, a group that made a run at the national championship and won its first SWC crown in eight years.

The Decade in Review

Decade record: 36-68-1 (.347)

Best record: 7-4 (1967)

Worst record: 1-9 (1964)

SWC Championships: 1967

Highlights: 1968 Cotton Bowl victory over Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant

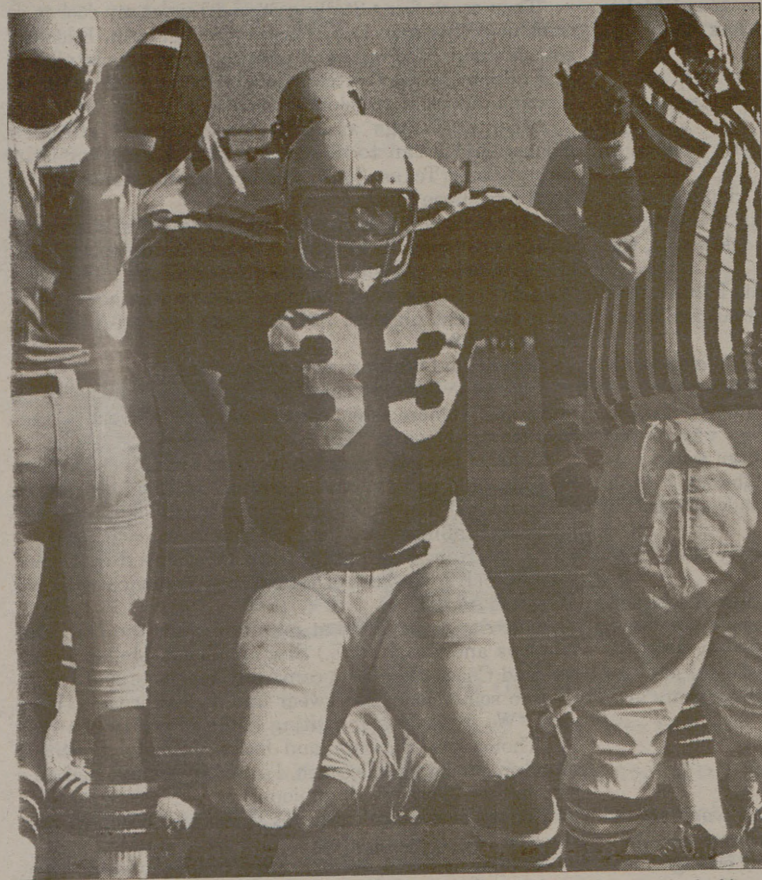
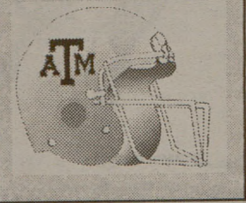


Photo courtesy of the Texas A&M University Archives

Running back George Woodard celebrates his second touchdown against Virginia Tech as A&M rolled to a 19-0 victory.

Wins return in late '70s

By David Winder
THE BATTALION

Coach Emory Bellard led Texas A&M to its first Southwest Conference title since 1967 in 1975, as the Aggies rolled to a 71-43-1 record for the 1974-1983 decade.

All-Americans Pat Thomas, Ed Simonini and Garth Ten Naple helped the Aggies to a 10-2 record as they captured the SWC Tri-Championship along with Arkansas and Texas. A&M placed 14 players on the All-SWC team as the Aggies led the nation in total defense by giving up just 183.8 yards per game.

A&M ended up falling victim to the dreaded "Sports Illustrated Jinx" when they appeared on its cover after beating Texas 20-10. The second-ranked Aggies lost their national championship hopes however, when they were beat by Arkansas 31-6 the following week.

In 1976, the Aggies finished the season 10-2, but only placed third in the SWC. A&M place-kicker Tony Franklin nailed field goals from 64 and 65 yards to defeat Baylor 24-0.

The 11th-ranked Aggies defeated Texas 27-3 for their first victory in Memorial Stadium since 1956. A&M went on to crush Florida in Sun Bowl 37-14.

In a 47-28 Bluebonnet Bowl loss, A&M and the University of Southern California set a bowl record with 1,143 combined total yards in 1977. Aggie Mike Mosley set a bowl record for quarterbacks with 180 yards rushing.

In 1979, the Aggies capped off a disappointing 6-5 season with a shocking 13-7 upset of sixth-

ranked Texas at Kyle Field.

"My most memorable moments were beating those Longhorns," running back Curtis Dickey said. "I don't care if we hadn't won a game the entire season as long as we beat the Longhorns. It made my entire season."

In 1982, Jackie Sherrill was introduced as the new head coach and athletic director of Texas A&M. On September 3, 1983, Sherrill debuted the 12th Man kickoff team which consisted entirely of non-scholarship students in a 19-17 loss to California at Kyle Field. In 1983, quarterback Kevin Murray began his illustrious career by leading A&M to a 30-7 win over Houston in his first career start.

Over the course of the decade, the Aggie offense centered itself around great running games. During the decade, running backs George Woodard and Curtis Dickey each enjoyed two 1,000 yard rushing seasons and tailback Bubba Bean recorded two seasons of more than 900 yards.

The Decade in Review

Decade record: 71-43-1 (.622)

Best record: 10-2 (1975, '76)

Worst record: 4-7 (1980)

SWC Championships: 1975

Highlights: Debut of the 12th Man kickoff team

