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It's Not WHAT We Do. It's HOW We Do It.

SWC a powerhouse? Aggs remember when

By David Winder
THE BATTALION

Texas Christian versus Southern Methodist.

These days it would not be considered a big game, but when Yale Lary was young it was huge. Back then, the Southwest Conference was huge.

"My neighbor was a member of the 1939 (Texas A&M) national champions and we always went to see TCU and SMU," Lary said. "Then I got a scholarship to play at Texas A&M. Growing up the Southwest Conference was all I knew."

After Saturday's game between Texas A&M and Texas though, Lary will have to learn about the Big 12 and the Western Athletic Conference as the SWC ends after 80 years.

"Teams like TCU, SMU and Rice have a hard time competing in the conference now," Lary said. "The trouble is that there are only two teams that are dominating the conference. If you want to play big-time football, you have to play big-time games."

Texas A&M has been involved in some of the conference's biggest games, but the game that stands out to Lary is one where only bragging rights were on the line.

Entering the game at 4-3-2, the Aggies played host to No. 16 Texas on Thanksgiving Day in 1951. On the opening kickoff,

the Aggies lost star running back Bob Smith for the game with a broken jaw. But Glenn Lippman picked up the slack by rushing for 174 yards. The 22-21 victory over the Longhorns was the first since 1939.

"It was my senior year, and we hadn't beat Texas in 13 years," Lary said, "I scored two touchdowns and our victory gave the game some meaning. I went out with a real good feeling. We were the Fightin' Texas Aggies."

Texas A&M captured its only national championship in 1939 behind the powerful running of John Kimbrough. In the Aggies 14-13 victory over Tulane in the 1940 Sugar Bowl, Kimbrough rushed for 159 yards and two touchdowns.

But the moment that Kimbrough said he remembers most about that season did not even take place on the playing field.

"We were practicing for our game against Texas that Thursday," Kimbrough said. "All the other games were going to be played on Saturday. And they (SWC officials) came out during practice and told us we were the conference champions. That was great."

Kimbrough said he is saddened that the SWC will not exist after Saturday.

"I'd like to see it continue the way it was," Kimbrough said. "It's all about finances nowadays, academics are never mentioned. Money is the bottom line."

Kimbrough said it is a totally different game from when he played though.

"I don't know if it was a better game then or now," Kimbrough said. "These days though the boys just aren't in shape. They run for 40 yards and they have to go off to the sideline and get oxygen. Back then, we played offense and defense. Most of those boys probably wouldn't last five minutes."

Texas A&M guard Marvin Tate made it more than five minutes; He was one of only 27 players to make it through Bear Bryant's Junction training camp in 1954.

Tate said that the SWC was special in his days because few Texas schoolboys went to college outside of the state.

"When you played games against people like Georgia and Oklahoma State you didn't know any of those folks," Tate said. "But when you played in the conference you were playing against guys who had been on your team in high school or you had played against in all-star games. You got fired up, and the adrenaline started pumping for conference games."

Tate said he could see the eventual end of the conference coming while working with the different schools.

"I don't know exactly when the downfall of the conference occurred," Tate said. "But you could see the road map back in the '70s. You take a team like TCU, income and expenses causes problems for them. Besides

A&M and Texas, Texas Tech is the only other school that draws well."

After over a quarter century of involvement in the SWC, Tate said he is not sure how he will react when the conference ends Saturday. Will he laugh? Will he cry?

"I don't know," Tate said. "I guess it depends if we beat Texas or not."

Texas A&M University

Entered SWC: 1915
SWC Record: 249-211-30
All-Time Record: 567-363-48
Championships: 1917, 19, 21, 25, 27, 39, 49, 41, 56, 67, 75, 85, 86, 87, 91, 92, 93
All-Time Coach: R.C. Slocum 1989; All-time: 59-12-2, SWC: 39-4-2
Bowl Record: 11-10-0

- Top 5 Players:**
1. Darren Lewis, Running Back
 2. John David Crow, Running Back
 3. Quentin Coryatt, Linebacker
 4. Lester Hayes, Defensive Back
 5. Kevin Smith, Defensive Back



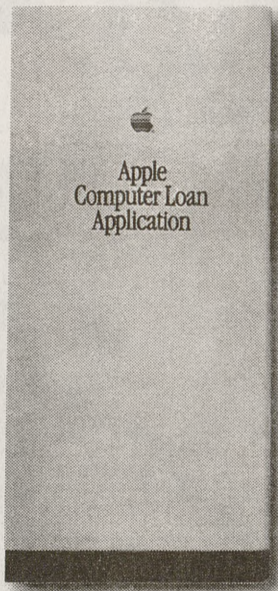
- Top 5 Games:**
1. Jan. 1, 1940: No. 1 Texas A&M 14, No. 5 Tulane 13: A&M wins its one and only national championship.
 2. Jan. 1, 1968: Texas A&M 20, No. 6 Alabama 16: The student bests the teacher as unranked A&M led by Gene Stallings upsets Bear Bryant and Ken Stabler's Crimson Tide.
 3. Jan. 1, 1986: No. 6 Texas A&M 36, No. 9 Auburn 16: The Blitz Brothers take out Heisman Winner Bo Jackson including stopping him four straight times inside the 1-yard line with the game close in the third quarter.
 4. Nov. 25, 1984: A&M 37, UT 12: The Aggies save their season (6-5) with the win. It begins an era of beating Texas 10 out of 11 years.
 5. Dec. 29, 1990: A&M 65, BYU 14: The Aggies set the still-standing bowl record for points scored and separated both of Heisman Trophy winner Ty Detmer's shoulders.



Texas A&M running back Keith Woodside breaks tackles against Texas in 1981.

Battalion File Photo

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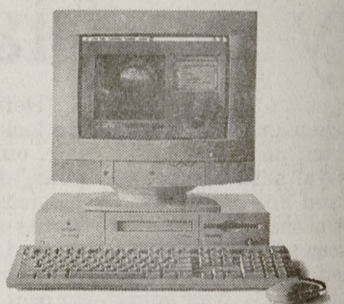
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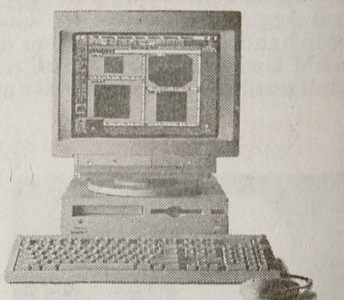
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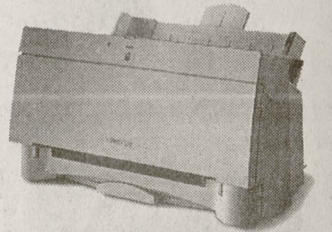
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