

# Back in business, and business is good

## Aggies run wild, destroy La. Tech 63-13 A&M ends turnover binge — even in heavy Tech 'traffic'

By TOM DAY  
THE BATTALION

was only a preview of things to come for the Aggies.

In a game that was every bit as ugly as the weather Saturday, the Texas A&M Football Team ran roughshod over Louisiana Tech for a 63-13 victory in front of a wet and rowdy gathering of 52,522 at Kyle Field.

Following an early field goal that gave the Bulldogs a 3-0 lead just 2:54 into the contest, the Aggies seized control of the game with a dominating running attack that would set the tone for the rest of the day.

After watching Tech grab the lead, A&M Head Coach R.C. Slocum said it was important for the Aggies to answer swiftly. All that entailed was getting the ball into sophomore tailback Eric Bernard's hands.

Following two rushing first downs by fellow tailback Sirt Parker, Bernard exploded for three consecutive runs of 15, 12 and 28 yards, the last one good for a touchdown.

Slocum said the Aggies' early scoring drive was a welcome change following the team's start against Colorado last week.

"It was important that we went right back and demonstrated that we would be able to move the ball," Slocum said. "In a game like that, you like to take control of it early. The longer you go (without scoring), the more confidence you give them and you get frustrated and it can go downhill on you in a hurry."

A&M would never take the heat off of the Bulldogs. Bernard's 52 yards on A&M's opening drive

Starting another drive at its own 30 with 4:28 left in the opening quarter, A&M called on the one-two punch of Parker and tailback D'Andre Hardeman to move the Aggies down the field. A 42-yard jaunt by Parker highlighted the drive before Hardeman plunged into the end zone from a yard out to put the Aggies up 14-3.

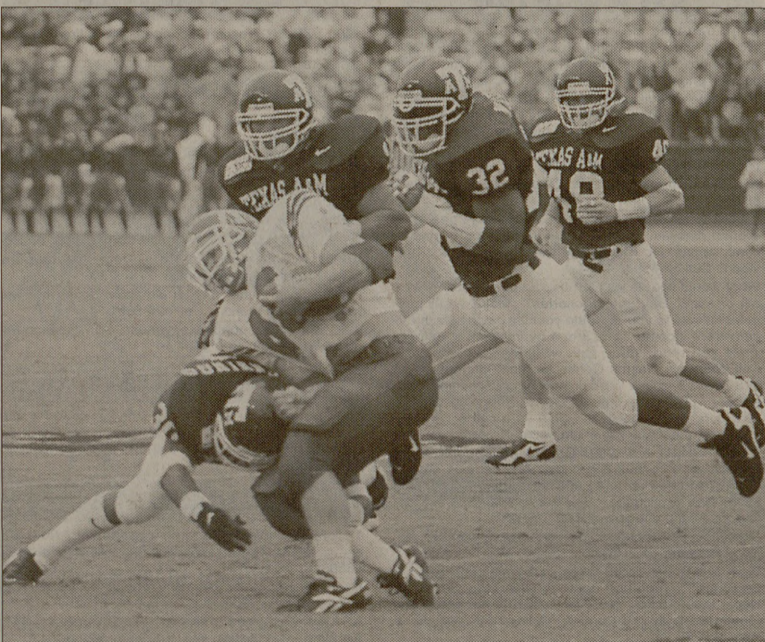
The running show was just starting for A&M. Opening up the second quarter with a little razzle-dazzle, senior wideout Albert Connell swept around the right side on a reverse play for 63 yards and another A&M touchdown.

Tech promptly answered with a 44-yard drive down to the Aggie 38-yard line before A&M cornerback Shun Horn stepped in front of a Jason Martin pass and returned it 26 yards.

Once again utilizing the talents of its powerful backfield trio, A&M marched down the field, consuming 5:30 of the clock before another Hardeman touchdown made the score 28-3 with just over five minutes remaining in the half.

Hardeman said A&M's multi-back rushing attack keeps opposing defenses off balance.

"It's something that started against Michigan last year," Hardeman said. "[Offensive coordinator Steve] Ensminger said he was going to equal it out between the three backs and give each one of us a chance to show our separate talents. We're three different running backs who run three different ways and the defense can't get accustomed to one person running the ball."



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

A&M freshman safety **Brandon Jennings** brings down Louisiana Tech fullback **Tyler Lasseigne** Saturday at Kyle Field.

A&M inside linebacker Dat Nguyen recorded his first career interception on the Bulldog's next possession, setting up a 34-yard Bernard touchdown scamper on the next play from scrimmage.

Following another Tech punt, the A&M moved another 66 yards down field, highlighted by a 27-yard Brannon Stewart pass to sophomore tight end Derrick Spiller. Two plays later, Hardeman would run another 16 yards for his third touchdown of the day and a 42-3 A&M lead.

Slocum said the Aggies' had planned on opening up their running attack going into the contest.

"It was by design," Slocum said. "We felt we needed to go in and control the football because of the explosiveness of their offense. We didn't want to get in a throwing contest, because coming into this game they had done a good job of moving and throwing the football. We felt like we needed to be able to control the tempo of the game by running the ball."

Louisiana Tech drove 66 yards to set up another field goal as the half expired, but by then the damage had been done. The Aggies had 300 yards rushing at the break.

"Last week we did not run the ball as much," Slocum said. "We got behind and were in a mode where if we ran the ball, we were really cutting our own throats. It was good for [the backs] and our offensive line to get some concentrated work on running the ball and I was pleased. We had some excellent runs today."

A 40-yard touchdown pass from Stewart to Connell just 1:36 into the second half and another interception by Nguyen with a 36-yard return for a touchdown put the game on ice.

The game also served as a showcase for the Aggie defense

and outside linebacker Keith Mitchell. The senior recorded five tackles — three for a loss of 28 yards — and two sacks.

"I was ready to play this game," Mitchell said. "They come out and pass without a tailback in the backfield, and that means one-on-one protection. I was looking for a big game with a lot of hits on the quarterback and I was fortunate to do that."

From there, Slocum emptied his bench. A fourth quarter 31-yard touchdown run by Dante Hall would round out the scoring for the Aggies.

A&M would finish the contest with 432 total running yards — Parker and Bernard each had 93 yards, Connell netted 63, and Hardeman finished with 58.

Hall took up most of the slack in the second half with 104 yards.

Slocum said his youthful team is continuing to improve.

"We still are a young team, but we are getting better," Slocum said. "We have proven there are some things we can do with this team and we're getting closer to having some balanced capabilities."

By MICHAEL LANDAUER  
THE BATTALION

Practicing last week to eliminate the endless stream of turnovers that has plagued the Texas A&M Football Team through its first four games, the Aggie running backs focused on one word — traffic.

Quarterback Brannon Stewart said running backs coach Ken Rucker yelled the word often at his backs to protect the ball from approaching tacklers.

"We kind of make fun of him because he says it constantly," Stewart said. "That's definitely helped us. The guys really focused on that, and it paid off for us today."

The payoff came in the form of a spotless game against Louisiana Tech Saturday as the Aggies played completely free of turnovers in their 63-13 victory. In sharp contrast to Tech's four giveaways, A&M relied on a steady running attack to score five touchdowns in the team's first six possessions.

"I knew all along what would happen if we didn't commit turnovers — I was just anxious to see it," Head Coach R.C. Slocum said. "It was refreshing to see it on the field. This was a lot of fun today. We didn't have any turnovers, we had very few penalties, and we executed very well."

Outside linebacker Keith Mitchell said if the team continues to execute like it did on Saturday, the team will steadily improve.

"If we play like this the rest of the year, without any turnovers, we will be OK," Mitchell said. "When we're clicking together, good things happen."

But when things do not click for the Aggies, they know it can cost them games. Slocum said the team was disappointed in the number of turnovers it had last week against Colorado and pondered what a difference an error-free game would have made.

"Our team was really disappointed with the mistakes (last week)," Slocum said. "Looking at that game, I think they felt that had we not had the mistakes, we would have had a chance to win."

Despite the impressive offensive numbers the Aggies have posted this season, Stewart said the turnovers have kept the Aggies from getting more points on the board.

"It just kills drives," Stewart said. "You look at [Saturday's] stats, and they're similar to our previous games — even against Colorado we had a good game. And you look again at the turnovers, and that shows how we put the points on the board [Saturday]. We didn't have turnovers, we had points. There's definitely a relationship between the two."

That relationship has been the topic of discussion among coaches for years, and Slocum said statements about avoiding turnovers have become trite.

"The reason why they're trite is because they're true," Slocum said. "If you don't turn the ball over, you don't give up the big plays, you don't get a lot of penalties, then your chances of winning go up dramatically."

Stewart said the team believes it can win when it is focused on protecting the football to avoid turnovers.

"Coming out (Saturday) and playing like we're capable of playing and not turning the ball over is definitely a big momentum boost for us," Stewart said.

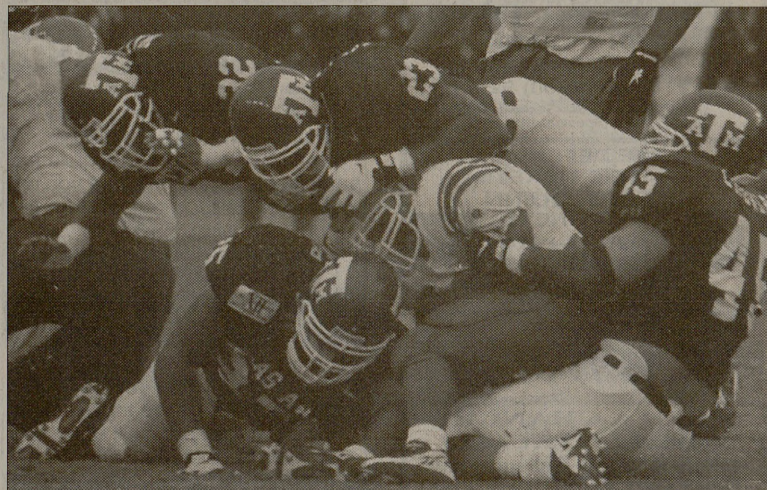
Inside linebacker Dat Nguyen said that momentum could be useful as the Aggies face a stretch of conference foes starting next week against Iowa State.

"There's going to be some mistakes," Nguyen said, "but the way we played today, the sky's the limit for us."



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

Sophomore running back **Sirt Parker** cuts through a big hole in the Louisiana Tech defense in the second quarter of Saturday's game.



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

The A&M defense shut down Louisiana Tech's running game by allowing just 113 Bulldog rushing yards.

### Texas A&M 63, La. Tech 13

La. Tech	3	3	0	7	—	13
A&M	14	28	14	7	—	63

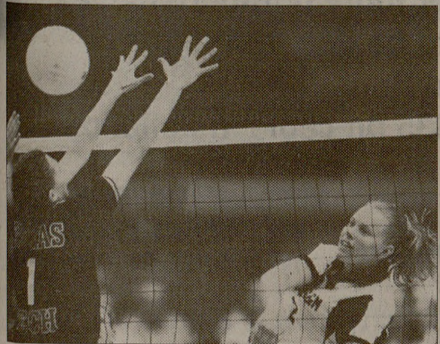
	A&M	La. Tech
First Downs	26	23
Rushes-yards	54-432	29-113
Passing yards	181	329
Comp-att-int	9-17-0	31-59-3
Return yards	115	8
Punts-avg.	5-42	6-44
Fumbles-lost	2-0	1-1
Penalties-yards	8-66	7-50
Time of possession	27:05	32:55

# Lady Aggies sweep Big 12 foes Texas Tech, Baylor

By ROSS HECOX  
THE BATTALION

A mere one hour and 15 minutes was all the time the 15th-ranked Texas A&M Volleyball Team needed to sweep Texas Tech University in three games Sunday in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The 15-4, 15-6, 15-13 trouncing of the 24th-ranked Red Raiders came after the Lady Aggies beat Baylor University in



Pat James, THE BATTALION

Freshman middle blocker **Blaire Tulley** nails the ball through two Texas Tech blockers.

three games Friday night.

Head Coach Laurie Corbelli said she was pleased with the Lady Aggies' 2-0 weekend finish.

"I'm really relieved," Corbelli said. "You never know what to expect the first time you meet a team in the season. You have to put a lot of trust in your players."

The Lady Aggies continued to prove they belong at the top of the Big 12 Conference, improving their conference record to 4-0, and winning three of those matches in three games.

Down 12-9 to Tech in game three, A&M refused to surrender, using a block by junior middle blocker Cindy VanderWoude to begin a five-point rally that put the team up 14-12.

Junior outside hitter Kristie Smedsrud's 12th kill of the match stopped Tech short of tying the game at 14, and when Red Raider senior Lacy Nye's shot sailed out of bounds, the Lady Aggies captured the game and match, 15-13. The game saw four lead-changes.

Corbelli credited her players for coming back in a tough game.

"Our passing broke down to give

[Tech] the lead," Corbelli said. "[The players] had a good sense of determination on their passing, and they blew off an error or two. They are learning not to get shaken, and that's maturity."

Tech took three consecutive points to open game two, but a service ace by A&M junior setter Farah Mensik began a 13-2 run to give the Lady Aggies their second win of the match.

Mensik's first of three service aces for the match gave A&M the opening lead in game one. The team never lost the lead and exploded to an 11-1 advantage on a kill by senior middle blocker Page White.

Mensik said the team improved considerably against the Red Raiders after hitting only .203 as a team against Baylor. "We were kind of out of sync (against Baylor)," Mensik said. "But we forgot what happened there and played well [against Tech]."

A&M never trailed against the Lady Bears in the first game, jumping out to a 12-4 lead and holding on to win the game, 15-7.

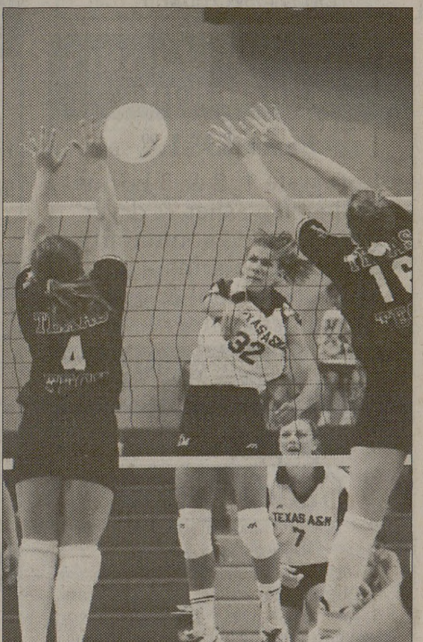
The team led 6-1 in game two when a kill by Baylor freshman Kia Young

sparked a 9-3 run that left A&M down 10-9. But the Lady Aggies responded by scoring the next five points. The Lady Bears threatened again by scoring the following three to cut A&M's advantage to 14-13, but White's kill ended the run and the Lady Aggies scored next to take the second game, 15-13.

A&M trailed 8-6 in the final game when freshman outside hitter Celia Howes entered the game for junior outside hitter Stacy Sykora. Howes promptly recorded her first kill of the match, setting up a 9-2 streak that ended with VanderWoude's match-winning block.

VanderWoude had her hand on six of the team's eight total blocks in the 15-7, 15-13, 15-10 defeat of Baylor. White lead the team with 14 kills while Mensik recorded five in addition to her 38 assists. Smedsrud said the team was able to distribute the ball to many different players, keeping opponents off guard.

"It's been one of our main goals the whole year to spread out our attack," Smedsrud said. "The past couple of weeks, we've been passing real well, and that allows us to spread out our attack."



Pat James, THE BATTALION

Outside hitter **Stacy Sykora** drives the ball through two Raider defenders.