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Aggies take out rage on Cajuns, 66-0

Wrecking Crew forces eight USL turnovers to erase memory of '96 loss

By CHRIS FERRELL
Sports editor

Without saying a word, senior guard Steve McKinney summed up the entire afternoon for the Texas A&M Football Team. As he sat back with a confident smile, his shirt did all of the talking for him. Its sleeves were cut off and it was drenched with sweat, and the three words printed on the front of it, "BREAK THEIR WILL," said everything that needed to be said about the day.

The Aggies broke the University of Southwestern Louisiana's will early and often in every phase of the game as they rolled to a 66-0 victory Saturday at Kyle Field to avenge last season's 29-22 loss to USL.

"It was very important to come out and get going right away and say, 'Hey, this is a different deal here. We're not going to give you a bunch of opportunities here to do something with,'" coach R. C. Slocum said. "And I think we did a good job on both sides of the ball of taking control of the game and really getting the game over fairly early."

The breaking of wills started with the defense.

After getting off to a slow start two weeks ago against Sam Houston, the Wrecking Crew held the Ragin' Cajuns to 32 yards in the first quarter, limiting them to just 14 plays on four possessions.

"I was excited because normally it takes a while for our defense to start clicking," se-

nior defensive end Brad Crowley said. "We came out the first drive and just stuck it to them and didn't stop the whole game and I was real pleased with that."

Junior linebacker Dat Nguyen said the defense improved over the off week.

"Overall, I think we're making progress every week," Nguyen said. "Overall I think we looked aggressive, everyone was flying to the football. That's what we try to emphasize all spring, all summer, in camp also. Everybody flies to the ball is pretty much the tradition of the Wrecking Crew."

USL could not find an answer for A&M's defense. The Ragin' Cajuns put the ball on the ground seven times, losing six of them and threw two interceptions, the first one to sophomore cornerback Sedrick Curry and the second to junior corner Shun Horn.

The turnover bug struck one last time for USL as sophomore linebacker Sean Coryatt returned USL running back Baron Roger's fourth quarter fumble for A&M's final touchdown of the day.

The only bright spot of the day for USL came when junior wide receiver Brandon Stokley became the school's all time reception leader with 176 career catches. However, it was quickly turned into their biggest loss of the day when Stokley, the team's main offensive threat, tore his ACL shortly before halftime.

The Ragin' Cajuns finished the day with 245 yards of total offense and no points. The Wrecking Crew has yet to allow a touchdown through two games this season.

Then the A&M offense took its turn.

It took the Aggies just 1:44 to cover 59 yards on five plays as junior quarterback Brannon Stewart kept from 1-yard out to give A&M a 7-0 lead.

"Truthfully, we could have killed those guys and they knew it from the first play," McKinney said. "We scored on our first five drives."

"We got out there the first drive and we were like 'All right, we're going to score a touchdown, no messing around with these guys. We're going to break their will from the first drive and keep on breaking it.' That's what we tried to do."

They were successful, racking up 399 yards of offense. Three hundred twenty-one of those came in the first half.

A&M scored on eight of their first nine possessions including their first five.

"It always feels better to have points on



RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Junior quarterback **Brannon Stewart** keeps for a 1 yard touchdown against USL. Stewart rushed for two touchdowns and passed for two more in the Aggies 66-0 victory.

the board early," Stewart said. "It lets you relax a little bit more and you don't feel as much pressure."

A&M's quarterback tandem of Stewart and sophomore Randy McCown proved successful once again. Stewart finished the day six of 11 for 105 yards, two touchdowns and an interception. He also ran for two scores. McCown was eight of nine for 76 yards and a touchdown.

Not to be outdone, A&M's special teams took advantage of the chance to break the Cajuns' spirit as well.

First, it was sophomore Dante Hall who followed a wall of blockers down the right side of the field and spun out of the grasp of a USL defender to return a Chris Shaw punt 70 yards to a touchdown.

Punter Shane Lechler was next to get in on the action pinning the Ragin' Cajuns inside their own 15 yard line on three of his four punts.

Lechler's punts and senior kicker Kyle

Bryant's kickoffs pinned the Cajuns down all afternoon as USL's average starting position was its own 24.

A&M's total domination helped to erase the memories of last season's game.

"It's amazing the difference a year makes," Slocum said. "I told the players it was a great lesson in life. Probably a year ago, pulling out of that stadium down in Lafayette was about as low as you can get. This game was quite a bit different."

The victory also helped put last season's slow start behind the Aggies. As opposed to last season when the team's confidence hit rock bottom, Saturday's victory has A&M flying high.

"When you go into the third game of the season being 2-0 instead 0-2, with two big blowouts like that, you've got to imagine how high our confidence is going," McKinney said. "Right now, we feel like we can beat anybody. That's the attitude we have to keep for the rest of the season."



DEREK DEMERE/THE BATTALION

Sophomore tail back **Dante Hall** returns a punt 70 yards for a touchdown Saturday against Southwestern Louisiana. The punt was the second Hall has returned for a touchdown in his career.

Stokley loss looms larger than score

By JAMIE BURCH
Staff writer

The only thing spicy about the Ragin' Cajuns brand of football was All-American wide receiver Brandon Stokley. Now that Stokley is most likely lost for the year, it appears fans in the swamp land will have to stomach a hard season.

Stokley was injured late in the first half of the Aggies 66-0 blowout win over Southwestern Louisiana (0-3). The senior wide out caught five passes for 60 yards.



Stokley

USL head coach and Brandon's father, Nelson Stokley, said he fears the star receiver may be lost for the remainder of his junior year.

"I think he tore his ACL," coach Stokley said with an obvious look of frustration in his eyes. "They (the team doctors) will reexamine him tomorrow, but, it doesn't look good."

Losing Stokley for the season would be an even bigger blow to the Cajuns than Saturday's 66-point spread or their three consecutive losses.

"We don't have many weapons offensively," coach Stokley said. "And he was one of them. Actually it was tough for us to get him the football a lot because we hadn't had anyone else step up and be effective at wide receiver."

"So, that's gonna take another weapon away from us on offense and we don't have many. We might not have any now."

In just two seasons at USL, Stokley captured all but one receiving record. The one Stokley didn't own, he captured Saturday afternoon against the Aggies. On a 33-yard reception to begin the second quarter, Stokley passed Clyde Butler, 171 catches (1989-92), for the most receptions in USL history by a receiver. Stokley ended the day with 176 career receptions for 2,529 yards.

But Stokley's accomplishments far exceed the past history of USL. Prior to his knee injury, the phenom wide receiver was closing in on several of the NCAA's career records, including career receptions and yards.

The wide out came in as freshman known to outsiders as 'the coach's son'. Many doubted his abilities, believing Stokley made the squad because pops was the one holding the whistle. Ignoring the doubts and misguided assumptions of the Cajun faithful, Stokley went out and performed the only way he knew how.

En route to becoming the most prolific freshman receiver in college football history (1995), Stokley caught 75 passes for 1,121 yards and nine touchdowns. All of this in just his second year of organized football.

"I just went out and did what I had to do," Stokley said. "I played my game and everything just flowed pretty good. So, their really wasn't anymore pressure on me (being the coach's son)."

"I already put on a lot of pressure myself as it is to perform every game that the outside pressure doesn't get to me much."

Stokley exceeded those tremendous feats in his sophomore campaign. He finished with 81 catches for 1,160 yards and seven touchdowns. Stokley had five 100-yard plus receiving games, including a span of three straight of such efforts.

One of the century marks came against the University in Houston, a game in which Stokley grabbed nine passes for 189 yards, not including a 58-yard touchdown pass he threw on a reverse pass.

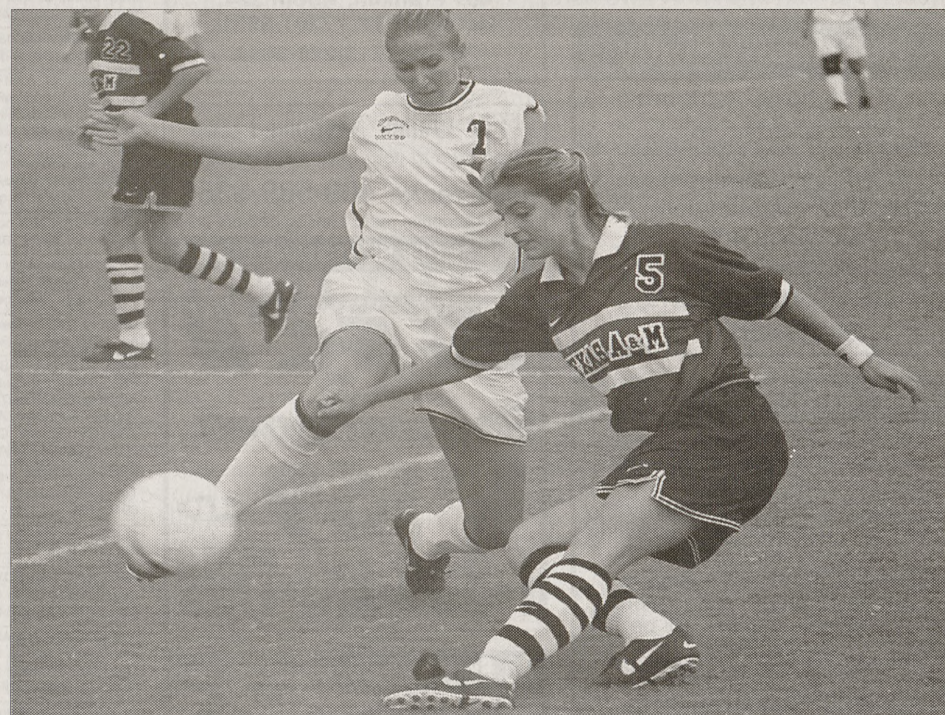
But now, after playing just three games in his junior season, Stokley must sit idly by, watching from the sidelines. "It's gonna be real tough," a saddened Stokley said. "I've never had any injuries my whole life. In high school and college I played every game. This is the part of our schedule we have to win. We're playing teams we can beat and should beat and I'm gonna be on the sideline."

A&M returns to AP Top 25

The Top Twenty Five teams in The Associated Press college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Sept. 20, total points based on 25 points for a first place vote through one point for a 25th place vote and previous ranking:

Record	Pts	Pv
1. Florida (32)	3-0	1,699 3
2. Penn St. (28)	3-0	1,675 1
3. Nebraska (7)	3-0	1,601 7
4. Florida St. (1)	3-0	1,530 5
5. North Carolina (2)	3-0	1,475 6
6. Michigan	2-0	1,412 8
7. Ohio St.	3-0	1,287 9
8. Auburn	3-0	1,180 12
9. Tennessee	2-1	1,158 4
10. Washington	2-1	1,148 2
11. Iowa	3-0	1,062 13
12. Michigan St.	3-0	968 17
13. LSU	2-1	805 10
14. Virginia Tech	3-0	770 18
15. Washington St.	3-0	767 19
16. Colorado	1-1	725 15
17. Clemson	2-1	547 16
18. KansasSt.	2-0	495 20
19. Georgia	3-0	444 25
20. Stanford	2-1	403 21
21. Alabama	2-1	329 11
22. Texas A&M	2-0	290 —
23. Brigham Young	1-1	215 —
24. UCLA	1-2	181 24
25. Arizona St.	2-1	177 14

Others receiving votes: Air Force 129, N. Carolina St. 73, Southern Miss. 66, Pittsburgh 26, Wyoming 18, California 11, Colorado St. 11, Oregon 11, Kansas 10, Texas 9, Oklahoma St. 8, Arkansas 7, Kentucky 6, South Carolina 6, Miami 5, Southern Cal 5, Toledo 4, Boston College 1, Georgia Tech 1.



DAVE HOUSE/THE BATTALION

Senior **Diana Rowe** battles for the ball Sunday afternoon against Oregon. The Aggies won the game 3-1 to improve to 8-0 on the season.

Blalack leads A&M sweep

By STEPHEN BOUDREAU
Staff writer

The third-ranked Texas A&M Soccer Team (8-0, 5-0) continued to roll with two solid victories over Utah (3-6) and Oregon (3-4) in this weekend's GTE Aggie Soccer Classic at the Aggie Soccer Complex.

Senior All-America Bryn Blalack electrified the crowd with her first hat-trick of the season Friday night as the Aggies steamrolled the Utah Utes, 4-0.

"The team just did an incredible job of giving me easy opportunities," Blalack said. "When you're in the position to place the ball in the net, that's what you've got to do. The team was just phenomenal."

The three-goal performance was the seventh in her college career.

Freshman Nikki Thrasher added the other goal in the 74th minute with a blistering shot to the top left corner of the net. The goal marks the third of the season for Thrasher.

"Our attack is relentless. We never let down in our pursuit of going and making things tough for our opponents," coach G. Guerrieri said. "Our players are very aggressive and very attack-oriented."

The Aggies outshot the Utes, 22-5, and controlled possession of the ball for most

of the game. Sunday afternoon against Oregon, Blalack struck again.

Before a crowd of nearly 1,300 fans, Blalack sent the Ducks back north empty-handed. With two swift kicks, Blalack put the ball in the back of the net twice in the 3-1 victory.

"We scored good goals this weekend. We had to in order to tally anything," Guerrieri said. "It's a real credit to our players and obviously to Bryn, who scored the majority of them. It shows we can do great things."

Blalack broke a 1-1 tie in the 79th minute. The goal was set up with a pass down the left sideline from senior Sonia Ibanez to fellow senior Diana Rowe. Rowe took it off her right foot and fed Blalack a perfect ball in the middle of the penalty box. Blalack headed it past Oregon keeper Amanda Fox and the Aggies never looked back.

Four minutes later, Blalack scored her 70th career goal with a shot from the top of the box.

"We played a lot better as a team this weekend. It's just going to keep getting better as we gain more chemistry and experience with each game," Blalack said. "This weekend was really good for us as far as taking more strides on improving."