

## Lubbock Letdown



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Texas Tech running back **Sammy Morris** stiff-arms senior defensive back **Brandon Jennings** during Saturday night's game. **Morris** had 170 yards rushing to lead Tech to a 21-19 win.

### Texas A&M offense sputters in 21-19 loss to Texas Tech

BY DOUG SHILLING  
The Battalion



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Texas Tech cornerback **Antwan Alexander** intercepts a pass intended for A&M wide receiver **Bethel Johnson** (left) late in the fourth quarter Saturday.

LUBBOCK — There is a reason they play the game in college football.

On paper, the 13th-ranked Texas A&M Football Team should have blown through the Texas Tech University Red Raiders Saturday night in Lubbock.

But as has been the case recently when the Aggies head out to West Texas, the Red Raiders found a way to send them home with a loss.

Tech kept the A&M offense out of the end zone for the second straight week and used 170 yards rushing from running back Sammy Morris to upset the Aggies, 21-19, in front of 53,513 fans, the largest crowd at Jones Stadium since 1978.

The loss was the Aggies' fourth loss in five games against Tech, including their last three at Jones Stadium.

"I'm really disappointed, [but] I can't say that I'm surprised," A&M coach R.C. Slocum said. "I knew it would be a charged atmosphere. I had a good regard for Tech's team. I've said all along that Tech's team is better than most people give them credit for."

The game started out well for the Aggies, as they took the opening possession of the ballgame and drove it to the Texas Tech 18-yard line. Three straight plays for no gain, however, left the Aggies to settle for a 36-yard field goal by junior place-kicker Terence Kitchens.

Later in the first quarter, the Wrecking Crew struck again, scoring for the second straight week.

Senior safety Brandon Jennings blocked a punt by Red Raider punter Eric Rosiles that was recovered at the nine-yard line by sophomore cornerback Jay Brooks, who took it into the end zone for a 10-0 Aggie lead.

By the start of the second quarter, however, the wheels started to come off for the Aggies.

Tech scored touchdowns on three of their four possessions in the second quarter to jump out to a 21-10 lead. The Red Raiders dominated A&M in the second, outgaining them 183 yards to 76.

The Aggies came out strong in the second half, recovering a fumble on Tech's first possession on their own 43. A 44-yard pass from senior quarterback Randy McCown to senior wide receiver Matt Bumgardner set the Aggies up on the Tech nine-yard line.

Once again, however, the Aggies could not punch the ball into the end zone, settling for a 27-yard field goal by Kitchens to cut the lead to 21-13.

Two more Kitchens field goals made the score 21-19 midway through the fourth quarter.

The Aggies had one more chance to win the game after Tech placekicker Chris Birkholz missed a 49-yard field goal.

A&M took possession on its own 32-yard line and drove it all the way to the Tech 27. After a three-yard loss on first down, an apparent 20-yard pass play to Bumgardner was wiped out when the Aggies were called for holding.

McCown was sacked for a five-yard loss on the next play, then threw an incomplete pass to junior wide receiver Chris Taylor on third down, setting up fourth-and-28 from the Tech 45.

Rather than let Kitchens attempt a game-winning 62-yard field goal, the Aggies decided to go for it on fourth down. But the threat ended when McCown's desperation pass was intercepted by Tech cornerback Antwan Alexander, sealing the Tech victory.

McCown, who finished the game 20-of-38 for 273

SEE UPSET ON PAGE 8.

### Season not over after loss to Tech

LUBBOCK — If you're looking for a column that will effectively turn that steam coming from your ears into words, this one isn't for you.

If you want someone to call for R.C. Slocum's reassignment to, say, that job where he would have to run around with the giant Hershey bar at A&M basketball games, look somewhere else.

Sure, the Aggies blew it Saturday with a 21-19 loss to Texas Tech, their fourth loss to the Red Raiders in five years. And this one hurt more than usual, considering A&M was ranked No. 5 in the nation coming into the contest, and Tech had lost to perpetual cellar-dweller University of North Texas just two weeks earlier.

As Tech fans carried the Jones Stadium goal posts into the chilly Lubbock night, the dejected A&M fans looking on knew A&M's na-

tional-championship hopes were quickly escaping as well. Let's face it. Barring a whole lot of unlikely upsets, the Aggies could win out and still be craving Sugar on Jan. 4.

"Forget it [a national championship] — that's not even a thought right now," A&M running back Dante Hall said. "That's what happens when you don't take care of each game, like we didn't today."

There is no defending the Aggies' performance. Tech may get more pumped for the A&M game than just about any other, but the Aggies are just too talented to play as poorly as they did.

You can probably cancel your hotel and plane reservations for New Orleans, but wait a second before you throw away your sports pass. The Aggies still happen to be a pretty good team, and more importantly, they seem to have the chemistry to help them stick together after tough losses like this one.

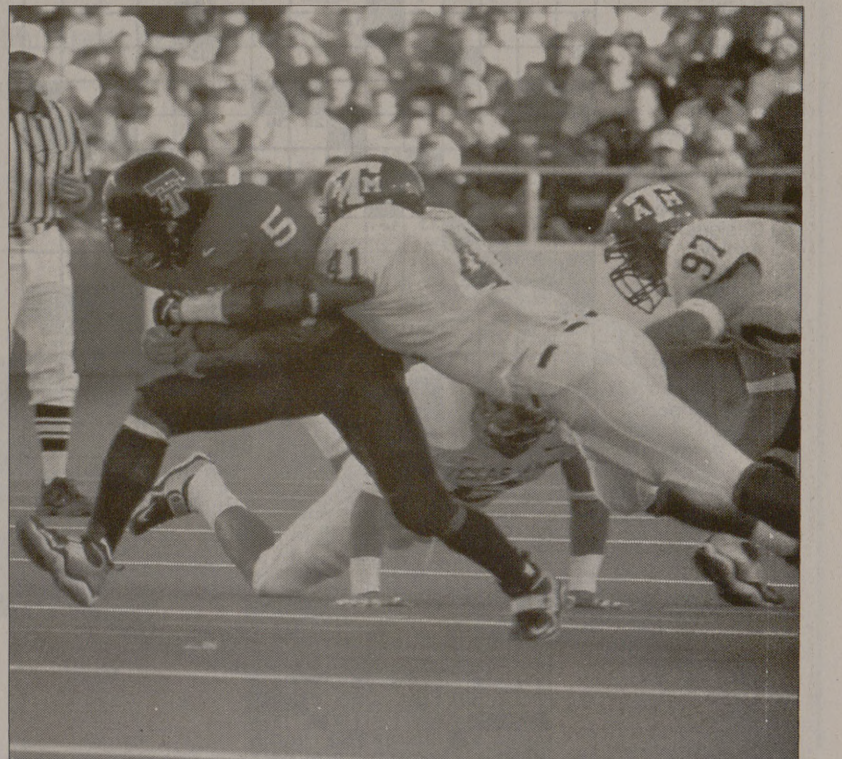
The problem with starting a

season ranked so highly is that it's easy to get tunnel vision. Fans start to think if the team is No. 5 on Oct. 2, then surely it can climb throughout the season and end up playing in the "big one." People get so caught up thinking about a national title, that the second their team loses, they are ready to throw in the towel.

Even if the Aggies had pulled out a last-second miracle against Tech, one thing would have been painfully clear: This was no top-five team. Not when it could manage just 52 rushing yards on 27 attempts against a suspect defense that two weeks earlier surrendered 170 yards on the ground to North Texas.

The Aggies' defense stepped up in the second half, but only after its alter ego, The Bizarro Wrecking Crew, made an appearance in the second quarter. That's when the Swiss cheese version of the Aggies' defense allowed Tech 183 yards and 21 points.

SEE SEASON ON PAGE 8.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

A&M linebacker **Harold Robertson** tackles **Morris** during the first quarter of Saturday's game.

the Battalion

#### SOUND BITES

The guys are heartbroken. It's a hard loss to come to Lubbock, play hard and come up short."  
— Chris Taylor  
the team's reaction to the loss

"Being a part of the Wrecking Crew, I take part of the loss because they scored 21 points"  
— Brandon Jennings  
the defense's role in the game

was hoping we could get down there and get me a chance to kick another one, but we didn't."  
— Terence Kitchens  
the team's last drive of the game

"It has nothing to do with coming out here to Lubbock. We just didn't execute. It's not what we did, it's what we did."  
— Dante Hall  
the Aggies' struggles in Lubbock

This definitely hurts, but it won't affect us a bit. We've just got to bounce back."  
— Randy McCown  
on how the Aggies will cope with losing to the Red Raiders

#### The Battalion Top 25 Poll

Team	Record
Florida State	(5-0)
Penn State	(5-0)
Nebraska	(5-0)
Michigan	(5-0)
Tennessee	(3-1)
Virginia Tech	(3-0)
Georgia Tech	(3-1)
Florida	(4-1)
Georgia	(4-0)
Kansas State	(4-0)
Michigan State	(5-0)
Alabama	(4-1)
<b>Texas A&amp;M</b>	<b>(3-1)</b>
Marshall	(5-0)
East Carolina	(5-0)
Mississippi State	(5-0)
Miami Fla	(2-2)
Purdue	(4-1)
Syracuse	(4-1)
Wisconsin	(3-2)
Ohio State	(3-2)
Texas	(4-2)
Mississippi	(4-1)
USC	(3-1)
Wyoming	(3-1)

#### Associated Press Top 25 Poll

Team	Record
Florida State	(5-0)
Penn State	(5-0)
Michigan	(5-0)
Nebraska	(5-0)
Virginia Tech	(4-0)
Tennessee	(3-1)
Georgia Tech	(3-1)
Florida	(4-1)
Kansas State	(4-0)
Georgia	(4-0)
Michigan State	(5-0)
Alabama	(4-1)
<b>Texas A&amp;M</b>	<b>(3-1)</b>
Miss State	(5-0)
Marshall	(5-0)
East Carolina	(5-0)
Purdue	(4-1)
Syracuse	(4-1)
Miami Fla	(2-2)
Wisconsin	(3-2)
Ohio State	(3-2)
USC	(3-1)
Texas	(4-2)
BYU	(2-1)
Minnesota	(4-0)

#### Big 12 Standings

	North	South
	W L PF PA	W L PF PA
Nebraska	5 0 185 44	
Kansas St.	4 0 150 52	
Colorado	2 2 152 124	
Iowa St.	3 1 102 52	
Missouri	3 1 116 119	
Kansas	2 3 141 163	
Oklahoma		3 1 162 65
Texas Tech		2 2 86 88
Texas		4 2 224 109
<b>Texas A&amp;M</b>	<b>3 1 141 57</b>	
Oklahoma St.		2 2 95 83
Baylor		1 4 86 170