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SPORTS

t Co Ags try to prepare for UT Bonfire tragedy casts

The Battalion

It seems every year in the days add to the press leading up to the Texas A&M Footnt of a mediator ball Team's showdown with the et any concemb. University of Texas, words like "bitrosoft may gets: ter" or "heated" or even "hateful" The company's are used to describe the rivalry behigher yested tween the two teams.

an 4 percent, and But in the wake of Thursday's 89.81 1/4, as of Bonfire collapse, which killed 12 se of trading on Aggies and injured 27 others, those words have not been uttered by eiar, consumers ther team. Instead, the tragedy ises in San France served to put the "importance" of a

ge County, Call football game into question for New York; New everyone involved.
"When something like that hapass action state pens, it really puts football in person behalf of spective," A&M senior wide receiver Matt Burggardner said "But active Matt Burggardner said "But acti ceiver Matt Bumgardner said. "But lawsuits in Alas you still have to play the game. It's na are federal as really interesting to see how it's gos in New York as ing to turn out with the emotions

of the team."

The Aggies (7-3, 4-3 Big 12) and the it easier for contact Longhorns (9-2, 6-1 Big 12) will ag for products.

square off for the 106th time Friday al outcome of the at Kyle Field. The game is set to begin at 10 a.m. and will be televised nationally by ABC.

Texas senior wide receiver Ryan antitrust caseage Nunez said he expects the Aggies to dustry monopoly draw motivation from the accident.

"They can be really down, or mpetitors and pitchey could come out on a high emoent's action prometional level to play for those who were lost," Nunez said. "With the inity and camaraderie at that Uniersity, we expect them to come out extremely motivated.

The Longhorns will enter Friay's game assured of a spot in the g 12 championship game Dec. 4 in San Antonio. If No. 5 Texas deeats A&M and wins the Big 12 Championship, the Longhorns likeconfession," Bums ly will find themselves in the Fiesta

"I've been impressed with len Fahey said Bt them throughout the year," A&M n the Internet cont coach R.C. Slocum said. "They've a U.S. embassy and got a very balanced offense, and ce President Al Got defensively, they've gotten better out down for eight de each week. I think they've got a



Texas A&M senior running back **D'Andre "Tiki" Hardeman** runs the ball against the University of Missouri Nov. 13 in Columbia, Mo. The Aggies defeated the Tigers, 51-14.

really good defense.' Texas is led by quarterback Major Applewhite, who has followed up his strong freshman campaign with a stellar sophomore season. He has completed 251 of 414 passes for

3,132 yards and 21 touchdowns. But more importantly, Applewhite, who has 21 200-yard plus passing games to his credit, has enabled Texas to avoid the drop-off many predicted after the departure of Heisman Trophy winner Ricky

'He's the heart of the team, but he's also the brains of the

team," A&M freshman linebacker Brian Gamble said. "And you've got to go to the brain to beat them, kind of like in all the old science-fiction movies.

'He's what makes their offense click, and when their offense is clicking and their defense is playing well, it just steamrolls.

Gamble said the Aggies will try to limit Applewhite by constantly pressuring him.

"You have to try to confuse him," Gamble said. "You have to bring a lot of people to pressure him, and since he's not a real tall guy, you have to get your hands up when you're pass rushing to try to bat

A&M senior punter Shane Lechler said, at the very least, Friday's game will serve as a welcome diversion from the Bonfire tragedy.

"I'm glad we can be here to maybe take their minds off of it for 60 minutes," Lechler said. "Just anything to help [A&M] out. We're going to have to come out and play a good-attitude, errorfree game and just give everyone something good to go home with over the holidays.

different light on game

Friday morning, the Texas A&M University Aggies and the University of Texas Longhorns will battle at Kyle Field for the 106th time in their storied rivalry. But unlike the previous 105 meetings, this year's contest has a different

Instead of the bitterness normally present prior to the game, a solemn feeling has been cast over this year's game due to the Bonfire tragedy.

The Bonfire tragedy hit the football players Thursday when most of the team went out to the site to help their fellow Aggies. During the day,

when logs still needed to be moved, the football team spontaneously showed up and

started helping out. Senior offensive lineman

Semisi Heimuli said helping at Bonfire site was something he and the team wanted to do.

"We just wanted to do anything to help," he said. "We couldn't give blood because we had a practice that afternoon. I was walking to practice and I saw Tiki, Lechler and Andy Vincent getting ready to leave. I asked them where they were going and they said they were going to Bonfire. They said they needed people to help go move some logs. I said I might as well go with them, I want to help.

The tragedy has not just affected the Aggie side of the rival-

chipped in all they could to help with the tragedy. Last Friday, all the players who were not expected to play in the game against A&M went out and donated blood. Also, the annual Hex Rally was canceled and the UT athletic department decided not to go with its usual tradition of answering phone calls with the greeting, 'Beat A&M.'

Junior offensive lineman Chris Valletta said the Aggies appreciate the way the Longhorns have reacted in light of the tragedy.

"Just like us, they realize that this is a game and what happened here is a tragedy," he said. "They understand that honoring the victims and the families is more important than a football game, so that's the attitude they've tak-

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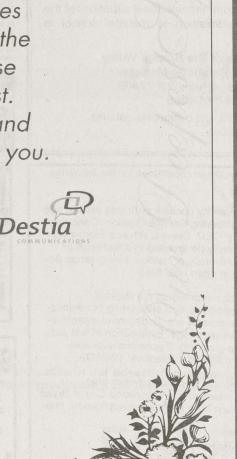
Senior punter Shane Lecher said the game should be played not for the players, not for the fans, but for the 12 Aggies who

"The lives that were taken at the bonfire," Lechler said, "I would almost promise you that if every one of them could walk through that door, and someone would say, 'Hey, what do y'all want to happen on Friday,' everyone of them would say, 'Beat the hell outta t.u.'

"You have to look at it in a way to realize what they would want, because they can't be here to support it. But everybody knows that they'll definitely be watching this game Friday.

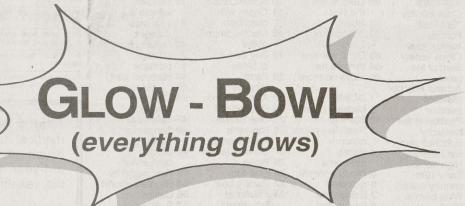


...to the families and friends of the students whose lives were lost. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.





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