

Texans offense continues to struggle, Colts win 23-3

HOUSTON (AP) — David Carr avoided what's become a customary afternoon-long physical beating but couldn't produce much offense. Carr suffered only four sacks — all late in Sunday's game against Indianapolis — but any improvements in his offensive line failed to generate many points as the Texans fell 23-3 to the Colts.



CARR

"At least we could get some confidence with the offensive line," said Carr, who admitted the overall offensive woes were becoming a source of frustration. "I'd be lying if I said I wasn't."

In Houston's first two games, he was sacked 15 times, including nine a week ago in a loss at San Diego. Against the Colts, he was taken down four times, all within the final four minutes of the game.

"You get a little frustrated when you score only three points when you're used to scoring more," said Carr, which completed 12 of 22 pass attempts for 99 yards. "But we're getting better."

The Texans, however, are still without a touchdown in more than two games now.

"We are dropping balls, getting balls tipped at the line of scrimmage for interceptions," center Steve McKinney said. "Those are the things that we have to stop."

The Colts' Peyton Manning had touchdown passes of 42 yards to Qadry Ismail and 43 to Reggie Wayne and helped set up three field goals by Mike Vanderjagt.

"They looked like they'd

been together for a long time," Carr said of the efficiency of the Colts offense, with Manning frequently changing the play at the line of scrimmage. "That's the way we want to be. There's no indecision. They know what they're doing. We want to get to that point."

Manning, who threw three interceptions in last week's loss to Miami, quieted the boisterous Texans crowd of 69,204 with a perfectly lofted pass to Ismail, who slipped behind the secondary in the first quarter.

Manning completed 21 of 28 passes for 272 yards. He didn't have an interception and

Houston's only score, a 23-yard field goal by Kris Brown. "I wanted to come out and be aggressive," said Wells, who finished with 93 yards on carries. "I just wanted to get out and attack."

That 13-3 lead stood at 4:06 remained. Manning on the sideline to Wayne, who caught the ball after it bounced out of the hands of cornerback Marcus Coleman, and untouched into the end zone.

The Texans asked for replay review to see if Wells was out of bounds, but the review stood. Coleman also burned by Ismail on his third down catch.

"I have to stand up and be a man, be accountable for them," Coleman said. "I played hard and all that, but that's not going to put 'W's' in the column."

Vanderjagt kicked his yarder with 1:11 to play. "The Colts executed better," Capers said. "We had some opportunities and were able to take advantage of them. They took advantage of our opportunities."

"The thing we have to do is we have to learn from the game. We're a young team. Right now, we are efficient enough. Our offense fought hard against a defense that's very capable of scoring a lot of points. We just can't make any errors."

Carr said Manning told him after the game to not worry to not lose his confidence. Colts coach Tony Danovich offered much the same.

"I think he's going to be a great player," Dungy said. "He's going through more than what rookie quarterbacks go through... But he's a tough, he's mobile, he appears to be very smart, takes good care of the ball."

"You get a little frustrated when you score only three points when you're used to scoring more."

David Carr
Texans quarterback

was sacked three times for 21 yards in losses.

"When you're playing against a quarterback like Peyton Manning, you have to play with good technique or he'll make you pay for it," Texans coach Dom Capers said.

Vanderjagt had field goals of 26 and 39 yards in the second quarter, the 26-yarder set up by Idrees Bashir's interception at Houston's 41, giving Indianapolis (2-1) a 13-0 lead at the half.

The Texans (1-2) tried for a comeback in the third quarter behind the running of rookie Jonathan Wells, who rushed 42 yards in a 56-yard drive to

Va. Tech

Continued from page 7

Warren recorded a career high 13 tackles in the game, five of them counting for negative yardage.

"When you play in a game like this, nobody is perfect," Warren said. "They made fewer mistakes than we did today, but we have to come back next week and correct the problems we had. There's a long road still ahead of us."

The loss was the first home non-conference loss since Slocum became the Aggie head coach in 1989. He was 29-0 coming into Saturday's game.

"I'm really pleased that our football team could come in here and beat a team as good as Texas A&M," said Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer. "This is a team that hadn't been beaten here (by non-conference opponents) in thirteen years. It's a credit to R.C. and his program and their consistency. It was just a tough fight out there all day long. It was tough, but a great win for our program."

The total of three points was the lowest amount scored by the Aggies at Kyle Field since the 1987 season opener against No. 6 Louisiana State University when the Aggies lost 17-3.

"I'm obviously disappointed that we came out of a contest only scoring three points," Slocum said. "I'm disappointed in our offensive production, and our total offensive numbers were disappointing as well."

Offensive

Continued from page 7

demonstrate more mobility at the quarterback position, if we are able to get out and scramble and make some plays, I think that will take some of the pressure off of the rushing game."

There is a reason that Long and McNeal were sacked five times for a loss of 32 yards and had nothing to do with their ability to scramble.

There is a reason why the running backs managed a total of 38 yards rushing combined. The offensive line, or lack thereof, is the common denominator that is plaguing both the quarterbacks and the running backs.

Late in the third quarter Fleming was tackled for a loss of five and McNeal was sacked on two consecutive plays for a loss of 20 yards on two plays. The three play sequence moved A&M out of range for freshman kicker Todd Pegram to attempt what would have been a 47-yard field goal attempt that could have tied the game 6-6 to end the third quarter.

Instead, the Aggies were forced to punt and gave up the only touchdown of the game on the following drive.

"We just didn't execute offensively today," said freshman quarterback Reggie McNeal. "We have a lot of work to do."

The offense will continue to disappoint if the offensive line does not improve on its performance through the first three games of the season.

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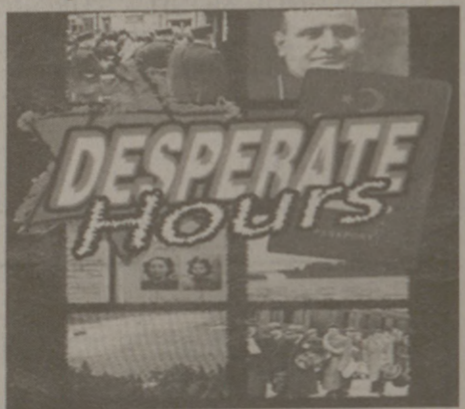
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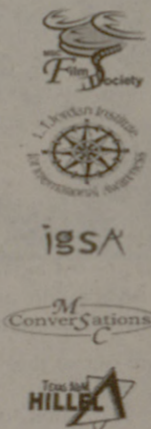
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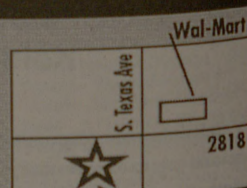
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