

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Aggies roll over Jayhawks on the road, 47-22

Offense explodes in record-setting performance

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Aggies took advantage of poor tackling and a weak secondary from Kansas on Saturday en route to a 47-22 thumping of the Jayhawks in front of 32,000 fans.

The Aggies scored more than 40 points for the third consecutive game for the second time in school history. The last time A&M's offense accomplished this feat was in 1941.

Sophomore quarterback Dustin Long led the way on offense, setting a new school record with 399 passing yards. Long set the Big 12 record for touchdown passes against Texas Tech earlier this season.

"Anytime you throw for 399 yards it's gonna be a good day," Long said. "I can't say it was all me, the receivers made some great catches out there so it was a team performance out there."

Long wasn't the only player to have a record breaking day. Junior wide receiver Jamaar Taylor tied a school record with his fourth 100-yard receiving game, hauling in five receptions for 131 yards.

Senior wide receiver Bethel Johnson wasn't far behind Taylor with 124 yards on six receptions. With his performance, Johnson is now No. 5 on the all-time list with 97 receptions and No. 3 all time in receiving yards with 1,457.

"Bethel (Johnson) is a dangerous guy," said A&M head coach R.C. Slocum. "He's got great speed and I'm really pleased that after all the trouble he's gone through that he is having fun playing football now, he's a weapon out there."

The receiving corps for the Aggies is considered by many, including

Slocum, to be one of the best in school history.

"I said going into this year that I thought our receivers were going to be much improved and that this could be one of the better groups that we've had," Slocum said. "They played as young players last year and this year they are getting better every week."

Sophomore running back Derek Farmer was not left out of the offensive exhibition on Saturday, rushing for 111 yards on 21 carries, his third 100-yard performance of the season.

The offense's performance against Kansas was only the second time in school history the Aggies had a 300-yard passer, two 100-yard receivers and a 100-yard rusher in the same game. The only other unit to accomplish that was in 1991 against TCU.

"(The offense) deserves it," said senior linebacker Brian Gamble. "They put in their time and all it took was a little bit of confidence and they gained that confidence. Ever since then they've just been rolling."

The Aggie defense turned in a solid performance on Saturday, especially in the first half. The Wrecking Crew held the Jayhawk offense to -2 yards rushing in the first half.

Junior linebacker Jared Morris led the way up front for the Aggies with two sacks and six tackles. The Wrecking Crew combined for five sacks on the game.

"We came out in the first half and I thought we played excellent defense," Morris said. "That second half was disappointing. We are going to go back and clean up some of the rough edges we had today. We thought we played pretty solid as a defense."

Redshirt freshman Jaxson Appel was the man in the secondary with his fourth interception of the year, tying Byron Jones for the most

interceptions on the team.

A&M racked up 115 yards of offense in the first quarter but was unable to put any points on the board.

That changed early in the second quarter when the Aggies scored on a 4-yard touchdown run by Derek Farmer to jump out to a 7-0 lead.

The Aggie Wrecking Crew stopped the Jayhawks on three plays, forcing them to punt the ball and give the Aggie offense excellent field position.

The offense took advantage, driving 62 yards on five plays, capped off by an 18-yard touchdown pass from Long to Johnson.

On the following kickoff, Kansas wide receiver Greg Heaggans coughed up the ball at the Kansas 15 yard line. Sophomore linebacker Randall Webb picked up the loose ball and carried it into the end zone for the Aggie's second touchdown in seconds of play.

"It was really frustrating out there," said Kansas middle linebacker Greg Cole. "We definitely felt the momentum swing for Texas A&M."

Freshman quarterback Reggie McNeal played three series in the third quarter but after two offensive turnovers the Aggies decided to put Long back in.

It didn't take long for the offense to start firing on all cylinders again following Long's return. On his second play back in the game, Long connected with Taylor for a 69-yard touchdown, giving the Aggies a 31-7 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

The Jayhawks added another touchdown on the first play of the fourth quarter on a 12-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Bill Whittemore to wide receiver Byron Gasaway. Kansas successfully converted its two-point attempt to cut the Aggie lead to 16.



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Sophomore quarterback Dustin Long scrambles out of the pocket in the second half at Memorial Stadium in Lawrence, Kansas. Long set a new school record for most passing yards in a game with 399 yards.

That would be the last time Jayhawk fans would cheer on Saturday.

The Aggies added another touchdown on their following drive on a 1-yard touchdown run by Farmer. After a failed two-point conversion by the Aggies, the score was 37-15.

Long wasn't done putting points on the board for the Aggies. On his final play of the game, Long found Bethel Johnson in the end zone for a 30-yard touchdown, giving the

Aggies a 44-15 lead.

Freshman kicker Todd Pegram added a 42-yard field goal with just over six minutes remaining in the ballgame.

"I'm really pleased to be able to come on the road and getting a Big 12 win," Slocum said. "We scored a lot of points out there, but I felt like we left a lot of meat on the table. Overall I was pleased with the offense and pleased with the team as a whole."

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