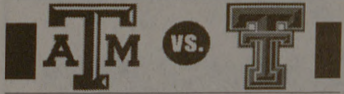


# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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## STAFF PREDICTIONS



**Tech 52, A&M 35** - Don't waste your time staying up to watch. It's going to last a while and won't be pretty.  
- Jeff Allen (0-1)

**A&M 3, Tech 0** - In what was billed as an offensive shootout, the Red Raider nation is stunned when a barrage of pregame tortillas injure quarterback B. J. Symons.  
- soon to be 0-2 True Brown (0-1)

**Tech 42, A&M 35** - A&M secondary can't withstand the aerial barrage of B.J. Symons and company.  
- Pete Burks (0-1)

**Tech 38, A&M 35** - Recent history repeats itself and the Aggies lose again in Lubbock in a four-hour shootout.  
- Michael Crow (0-1)

**A&M 34, Tech 31** - A&M rebounds after back-to-back losses to ranked opponents. Tech's defense is too weak.  
- Kyle Davoust (1-0)

**Tech 42, A&M 21** - Aggies get dominated through the air. Symons throws for 750 yards this week.  
- Blake Kimzey (1-0)

**A&M 48, Tech 38** - Neither defense has stopped anyone so far. A&M's isn't that great but better than Tech's.  
- Troy Miller (0-1)

**Tech 55, A&M 41** - Red Raider offense is just too much for the undermanned Aggie defense in a shootout.  
- Dallas Shipp (0-1)

**A&M 41, Tech 38** - A&M coach Dennis Franchione gets just enough from his defense in another shootout.  
- Rob Phillips (0-1)

## Aggies try to rebound on the road

### Rebuilding year turns into coming out party for Symons

By Michael Crow  
THE BATTALION

This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for the Texas Tech offense. And who would have blamed the Red Raiders if they had shown any sluggishness after losing starting quarterback and dark horse Heisman candidate Kliff Kingsbury to the National Football League? These kinds of transitions aren't made without a few early setbacks.

Well, perhaps someone should inform Kingsbury's replacement, senior B.J. Symons, who has thus far shown no regard for any low expectations.

Last week, Symons was named the Big 12 Player of the Week after igniting the Tech offense to a 49-45 win over Mississippi. Symons set a Big 12 record with his 661 passing yards, while passing for six touchdowns and running in another score.

And whose conference passing record did he break? His own from the week before, when he posted 586 yards against North Carolina State.

"Offensively, we're just really focused right now," Symons said. "The offensive line is doing a great job protecting, the receivers are getting open and I'm able to find them and get them the ball. We're just playing as a unit right now in all aspects."

Texas A&M (2-2) could certainly do without facing another strong passing attack. In last week's loss to Pittsburgh, the Aggies surrendered 283 yards through the air, allowing both Larry Fitzgerald and Princell Brockenbrough to eclipse 100 yards receiving.

A&M coach Dennis Franchione said he hoped keeping the ball out of Symons'

hands could help ease the burden for the Aggies' defense.

"Keeping their offense off the field, you would like to think, would keep them out of rhythm," he said. "But, time of possession does not win the game. Points still win the game."

The Red Raiders' (3-1) ground game has hardly been impressive, but it appears to be more a matter of choice than anything else. Tech coach Mike Leach promotes an explosive aerial attack, with the running game serving only as a change of pace.

Last week, for example, running the ball proved unnecessary as three Tech receivers — Carlos Francis, Wes Welker and Mickey Peters — had at least eight catches and 100 yards each.

Meanwhile, opposite one of the country's most dangerous offenses, the Texas Tech defense has been porous. Comprised largely of underclassmen and first-year starters, the unit has averaged an average of 33 points per game.

All aspects of the Red Raiders' defensive game have been equally abysmal, as they've relinquished 176.5 yards rushing and 302.5 passing yards per contest.

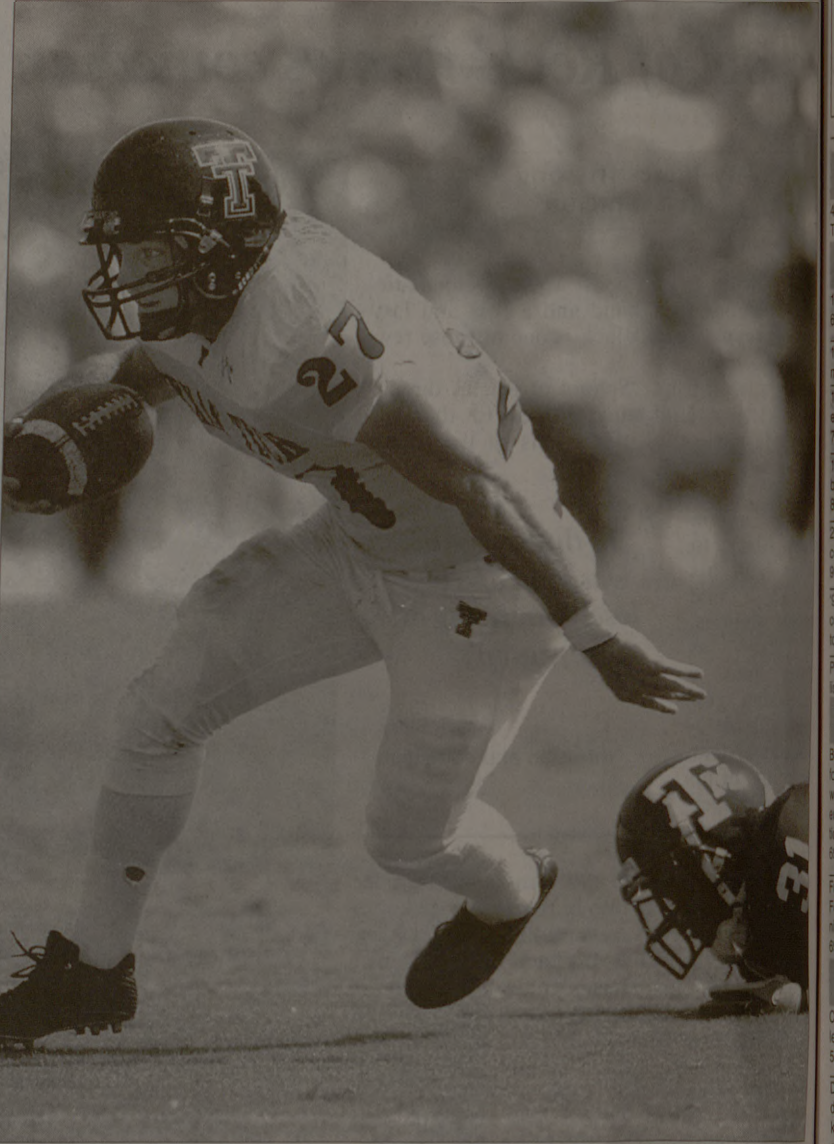
Leach said it's likely his defense has been trying to do too much, rather than focusing on simple execution.

"All we need to do is make routine plays," he said. "I don't know if there are guys out there trying to do too much or trying to make more out of a situation than there is. You can't go out there and try to make more happen. If you can make the routine play every time, you are going to be a hard team to beat."

Tech has certainly proved a test for the Aggies in recent years. The Red Raiders

*"It's college football and you never really know what can happen."*

— B.J. Symons  
Texas Tech quarterback



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION

Senior wide receiver and punt returner Wes Welker runs past a diving Sean Weston during a punt return last year in the Raiders fourth quarter comeback at Kyle Field.

have won six of the last eight meetings between the two teams, including a 48-47 comeback victory in overtime at Kyle Field last year.

"Really, I don't know if there's any explanation for that," Symons said. "You've got two good teams battling it

out, and fortunately we've been able to be on the winning side of that the past couple of years. It's college football, and you never really know what can happen."

Saturday's game will be the Big 12 opener for both teams, with kickoff scheduled for 9 p.m. in Lubbock.

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