Insufficient Offense Dooms Virginia Tech To 19-0 Shutout By Texas A&M

By Bill Mason
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COLLEGE STATION, Tex.—A tenacious defense coupled with an offense that never really rolled against one of the stingiest defenses in college football couldn't get it done against the big, fast, talented and spirited Texas A & M Aggies as the class of the Southwest Conference convincingly shut out Virginia Tech Saturday, 19-0.

It was Tech's first shutout since a 7-0 setback by the Virginia Cavaliers in 1970. Defense dominated the game at the outset before a vocal crowd of over 44,000 at Kyle Field.

Aggie quarterback was tagged with an 11-yard loss on a fumble on the first series of downs as Tech's Gene Bunn recovered. A & M's defense showed its teeth as Tech quarterback Mitch Barnes was sacked for a 10-yard loss on that series and another of 13 on Tech's next series.

The first quarter was scoreless, but A & M got its defense together at 9:04 in the second quarter after fighting off Tech's attempts to gain ground through the middle.

Shipman tossed a screen pass to fullback George Woodard who broke numerous tackles en route to a 43-yard gain, key play in an 81-yard 13 play touchdown drive. Shipman scored on a curl over right end on fourth and goal after Tech shut down the center of the line to Aggie runners. Barefooted sophomore place kicker Tony Franklin tacked on the PAT.

Soph Ellis Savage returned the ensuing kickoff 16 yards but was injured in a jarring two-man Aggie tackle and left the game.

Senior fullback Paul Adams cracked through tackle for 11 yards but Tech's momentum ended after another quarterback sack and A & M's shutdown of the outside when halfback Roscoe Coles headed that way.

The Aggies rolled again with only 26 seconds to go via passes from Shipman to Woodard for 11 and tight end Gary Haack for 23.

Shipman's pitch to right halfback Darrell Smith went astray and Tech's linebacker and defensive leader Rick Razzano recovered on the Tech three to thwart the drive just before the half.

The Aggies were in gear in the second half and mounted a 65-yard 11 play drive that included a perfectly executed run left on the option by Shipman for 17. A Shipman to left halfback Adger Armstrong screen pass for 20, a Shipman end run for 11 and another screen to Armstrong for another 11.

With right tackle Frank Myers (6-280) leading the way, Woodard scored the second touchdown and the PAT.

The Hokies remained in the game until an offensive miscue in the fourth quarter. A Barnes pitchout to senior Chuck Nuttycombe of Newport News failed to connect on the Tech 17 and A & M finally recovered the ball on the ten. Woodard went the distance through right guard for the touchdown on the first play. A two-point PAT run by Woodard was successful.

Tech's offense moved briefly with a 25-yard thrust through the middle before the Aggies slammed the door for the last time.

Defensive standouts for Tech included Razzano who had 14 tackles and six assists and recovered a fumble; Tom Beasley, who had 11 tackles; Keith McCarter who had seven tackles and four assists; Steve Cannon, who had seven tackles, a fumble recovery and a deflected pass; Gene Bunn, who intercepted a pass, caused a fumble and was in on three tackles and Mike Faulkner who sacked the Texas A & M quarterback twice.

A & M right tackle Jimmy Dean led the Aggies with five assists and a caused fumble and Jackson had 11 tackles, five assists, a fumble recovery and two sacks of the quarterback.

Offensively Paul Adams did most of the ball-carrying for Tech against a tough defense.

Coles received a possible shoulder injury; Savage had possible rib damage, tackle Tom Beasley and end Dave Dolphin also were hurt but the extent of their injuries wasn't immediately known.

A & M tacked up a total offense of 385 yards, 199 rushing and 186 passing while Tech was held to 71 yards rushing and 27 passing, its lowest game total in recent memory.

The Aggies host Kansas State next Saturday while Tech opens the home portion of its schedule against Southern Mississippi.

The statistics:
First downs, VT, 11; Texas A & M, 21; rushes-net yards, VT, 51-7; Texas A & M, 57-199; passes, VT, 2-47; Texas A & M, 11-17-1; total offense, VT, 57-98; Texas A & M, 74-185; yards, average, VT, 4 for 37.7; Texas A & M, 1 for 38.0; return, average (punts, interceptions), VT, 0; Texas A & M, 5; fumbles, lost of total, VT, 3 of 5; Texas A & M, 0; penalty yards, VT, 4 for 30; Texas A & M, 4 for 60; net yards passing, VT, 27; Texas A & M, 184; leading scorers: Woodard, A & M, 20 for total of 111; Dickey, A & M, 6 for total of 51; Adams, VT, 10 for total of 50; leading passers, Shipman, A & M, 8-11, 0-int., 139, TD-0; Barnes, VT, 1-5, 14, TD-0; leading receivers: Woodard, A & M, 3, 64, TD-0; Coles, VT, 1, 14, TD-0.

SHORT HOKIE TRIP—Tech quarterback Mitchel Barnes (left) hands the ball off to fullback Paul Adams in what proved to be a short run by the workhorse fullback. All Tech runners found the going rough in the Aggie secondary.

NOWHERE TO GO—Hokie back Chuck Nuttycombe (partially obscured, right) has nowhere to go as three Aggies close in for the tackle, including linebacker Robert Jackson (center).