COLLEGE STATION, TEX. — You had to be here to believe it but Vic Thomas, Tech's defensive line, was in a strong defensive performance and kept Texas A & M spinning its wheels for much of the stinging late afternoon.

Although the Aggies scored three touchdowns, the third coming as the result of a Tech offensive mistake and gained 199 yards on the ground in a total offense of 385 yards, it's likely that their point total would have been at least doubled against a team with less defensive second effort.

The Aggies are huge, most of them fast and all of them talented. If the Tech defense had been near their best (it appears the loss of half of their opening loss to tough Boston College that they are not) then they deserve to win the Southwest Conference title. If you're a bettor or you bet the best reason that A & M will be the titlist in that league which would up in a three way tie last season.

A & M has at least three players who could be pro prospects. Quarterly David Shipman, fast and agile, has good hands and on one occasion on a good fake on a keeper in the second half, nearly outran the entire Tech defense.

At the second half when Tech's "O" mounted the beginnings of a drive, the Aggies quickly pulled their reserves out and reinforced the number one defense, a tribute the battered but still stubborn Hokies.

Tech tried a variety of plays but stuck to the ground most of the afternoon. Going to the air more than the six times tried (two were completed) probably wouldn't have changed the outcome due to the Aggie defense which gives an opponent a choice between a ground and air attack.

The Tech offense, which never got cracked against A & M, should be ready to explode against Southern Mississippi Saturday in the home opener. The question also will be answered of whether East Carolina or Southern will slow a start.

Part of the reason for Tech's inability to score in the critical third quarter when the Hokies trailed by only seven was due to its own faulty ignition and part was due to the charging Aggie defense often led by massive, crashing no. 55, middle linebacker Robert Jackson who was a star.

Football fans in Aggieland were true to their team despite the temptation to stay home and watch a national football doubleheader on TV, in which Huston plays LSU. Also was the charge of the hill. The crowd of over 44,000 was impressive for the game and so was the pep rally turnout Friday night of 22,000.

The spirit of the Aggies had to be seen to be believed. A & M has a flock of traditional chants. In one of them everybody places their hands on their knees and looks at the ground as if about to lose at a game. Out come a train, a bad idea down here.

The crowd respectfully—but with hats still on heads—sang "Texas, My Texas" as the Lone Star flag was raised on staff. This came after the Hokie touchdown and the starting of the stars and stripes.

The pageantry and parading also came on strong, in a positive way.

The A & M cadet band—with its uniforms and high-top riding boots reminding you of a history book picture of Black Jack Pershing—aired enthusiasm before the game while the large corps of cadets on the field in an review and on the field contingent on the playing field brought up the rear. So help me.

At the end of the game while the Aggie players were still lapping water, the Tech football players hustled to the playing field, chased and caught the cheerleading "yellleaders," carried them away on their shoulders and tossed them into the nearby swimming pool with three levels of diving platforms.

It was a little like being trapped in a stampede. You could have cut the tradition with a dull plastic knife.

Tech's Tyrus

A sportscaster on a Houston TV station predicted that A & M would win by "at least 14." He was right.

The odds given by the regional press all were against Tech. Fifteen predictors on the Houston Post all went for the Aggies by margins ranging from four to 25 points. A week ago in the Hustonville, Tex. paper (the two-stayed at a Huntsville motel the night before the game) picked A & M by one, while his colleagues gave the Aggies a bigger edge.

Two A & M players came in for special recognition from the Southwest Conference sports writers who recently completed their conference tour.

Linebacker Jackson was chosen as prior selection in all-SWC (no argument here) and chosen New Player of the Year was freshman Chris Jackson, a 6-2, 220 coming back with a bang.

Luke Comments:

Before the game Tech equipment manager Luke Linden complained to the writer's years of being associated with football he had never seen a game that began at 4 PM (Central Standard Time).

The starting time helped keep participants and fans out of the sun down in Austin. The weather there was also a factor. It was the difference between very hot and bearable to anyone at field level until the coming of afternoon shadows in or second half.

The Hokies, having emerged from the Aggie fog, should be stronger. It still looks like a good—and maybe a very good—season.