

Saint Mary's Rugby Tops Texas A&M, 40-24

By Kevin D. Shallat



Photos Tod Fierner

Fifth ranked Saint Mary's continued their winning ways Tuesday, March 11, as they hosted the Texas A&M Aggies, and won in convincing fashion. It took the Gaels about a half to finally get into gear, but once they got going, there was no stopping the Saint Mary's rugby squad. After trailing the Aggies 24-21 well into the second half of play, the Gaels found their second wind to go up 28-24, and never looked back. Saint Mary's poured it on to take down the 12th ranked Aggies, 40-24.

The first half was uncharacteristically sloppy for the Gaels. Saint Mary's did a good job to get themselves plenty of scoring opportunities, but found themselves making some bad passes before reaching the try zone. If a team can be guilty of being too unselfish, the Gaels were just that in the first half of play.

Too often they elected to pass it off in traffic, as opposed to continuing the run, or simply taking the tackle and securing the ball. After

trailing the Aggies 7-0, Kevin Swiryn found himself in a break-away situation with a run down the field. The crowd had seen too many miss-handled passes, and when Swiryn looked to pass the ball, the home fans seemed to gasp in disbelief. Luckily for the Gaels, Swiryn elected not to pass and ran the ball all the way in for a 40-yard game tying try.

The Aggies did a good job of taking away the ball from the Gaels on gambles that paid off. They were able to step through the passing lanes and secure two interceptions.

After falling behind 17-7, the crowd appeared more nervous than the players. The players understood that Saint Mary's would make their run at some point. That run came when Chad Clark was able to pick up a loose ball near the try zone for the Gaels, and punch it in for the final try of the half. Despite the loose play, the Gaels stayed close, and trailed the Aggies 17-14 at half-time.

Blake McGahan started off the second half with a long run down the sideline for Saint Mary's. "We started to get the ball in hand a lot better (in the second half) and run with it. We started to play our game," McGahan said.

Brandon Vedder was also very active for the Gaels, and was rewarded with a try to put the Gaels up 21-17. Saint Mary's fell behind again, though, allowing the Aggies to re-take the lead, 24-21. As the game wore on, however, the Aggies seemed to slow down while the Gaels appeared to speed up. After Swiryn scored the go-ahead try to make it 28-24, the Gaels scored at will, finishing off the Aggies with a beautiful two pass sequence from Swiryn, to Austin Mount, and finally to Brendan O'Meara for the final try of the game.

