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Never before have the voices of Aggies and Longhorns rang out in such harmony.

The decades-old rivalry between Texas A&M University and the University of Texas was tempered with respect and friendship Friday, as the Aggies upset the Longhorns 20-16 at Kyle Field.

"There's not the same hatred," said Ben McHenry, a junior in A&M's Corps of Cadets. "We're all just here to watch football."

That camaraderie shined when Texas' band played Amazing Grace at halftime in tribute to the 12 Aggies who died after Bonfire collapsed early Nov. 18. It burned brightly from two ribbons -- one Aggie maroon, one Longhorn orange -- that a young fan pinned to her shirt in remembrance of the tragedy. Other students wore single white ribbons, the one color shared by the schools.

This from two universities that have clashed on and off the gridiron for years.

"Thank you," said an Aggie to a Longhorn after cannons announced A&M's victory. "Y'all have meant a lot to us. Drive back safely."

A flight of four F-16 fighter jets gave the day's first commemoration before kick-off. The planes, piloted by A&M graduates, flew near Kyle Field in the "missing man" formation to honor those killed in the Bonfire accident.

Later, halftime tributes drew tears from some of the 86,128 people in attendance, and a standing ovation for UT's band.

"May the Longhorn spirit and the spirit of Aggieland never die," an announcer boomed before the band launched mournful renditions of Amazing Grace and Taps. Afterward, the musicians removed their white cowboy hats in respect and slowly left the field.

The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band then marched onto the grass, drawing a wave of applause and whoops -- the class "wildcat" of A&M juniors and seniors. The Aggie Band also dedicated its performance to the 12 killed and 27 injured in the Bonfire collapse.

The cadet band, famous for its marching patterns, formed a block "T" on Kyle Field as the crowd watched in silence. Then, the cadets quietly marched off the grass, foregoing their traditional sprinting exit.

After the game, the crowd was anything but quiet. The A&M football team locked arms with members of the Corps as the band played the Aggie War Hymn. Those students on the field swayed in unison with Aggies in the stands to "saw varsity's horns off" -- the ending chorus of the War Hymn.

The annual football game between the two universities followed a week of grieving on both campuses after the Bonfire tragedy. Many Aggies said they were grateful for the support of Texas students, who sent cards, food, wishes and money for families of the victims. The university also set aside its annual "hex rally," meant to curse the Aggies before the football game, for a candlelight vigil.

Still, fans on both sides of the field said they predict the rivalry will persist, even with changes.

"The attitude was a little different this time," UT sophomore McKay Heim said. "But we still wanted to win just the same."

McHenry agreed.

"The rivalry will always be as intense as it's ever been," he said. "Tradition has it. It's pride in your school."

The Aggies' pride was both bruised and bolstered after Bonfire fell. They lost 12 members of their tight-knit family. Yet, in the aftermath, many drew strength from how current and former students came together to support each other and the families of the Bonfire victims.

Thursday night's special yell practice at Kyle Field, held instead of Bonfire, was the first sign that the Aggies were getting pumped up for the football game. The school's yell leaders guided an increasingly rowdy crowd through a series of spirit cries.

One yell that was left out from Thursday's practice was the infamous "beat the hell outta t.u." -- t.u. standing for the University of Texas. But it was back in full force during Friday's game, as the Aggies cheered their team to a comeback victory.

They didn't seem to want the game to be over after time ran out. As thousands of people filed out of Kyle Field, the Aggie War Hymn and various spirit yells echoed through the concrete stands.

"It's just good to have something positive happen," A&M student body president Will Hurd said after the game.

Hurd was moved not only by the camaraderie between the two schools, but also by that of the A&M football team and their Aggie fans. After Thursday's yell practice and memorial, team members hugged the Bonfire redpots, the student leaders in charge of its construction.

"Their show of love [Thursday] night for the redpots was incredible," he said. "They were a part of the student body. That helped give them that edge."

But Hurd said he was equally impressed by the show of mutual love between two schools that were brought together last week by tragedy.

"I think the relationship has forever changed," he said. "We will always be -- and should always be -- rivals on the field, but friends off."