

Moncrief shut off as Hogs lose

By SEAN PETTY
Battalion Staff

During the nationally televised Arkansas-North Carolina basketball game Sunday, former Marquette coach Al McGuire boldly stated that both teams would be in the NCAA tournament at the end of the year. Someone forgot to tell McGuire that the Razorbacks would have to meet and defeat the Texas Aggies before returning to the post-season tournament.

"It was a typical Aggie-Razorback basketball game," said Arkansas head coach Eddie Sutton. "We got over us or anything in the first half because we couldn't put down the easy shots. We shot seven out of 23 in the first half and were only down by eight at the half. The Razorbacks shot a cool 30

percent in the first half but warmed up in the second half shooting 63.3 percent from the field.

"A good part of the low scoring and poor shooting percentage was the A&M defense. They played very good in the first half," he said.

It seemed that the Aggies had six and seven men on the court at a time. The major factor in the game was shutting down the Razorback's All-America candidate, Sidney Moncrief. Moncrief is the moving force and leader of the young Hog team and when he is stopped, the Razorbacks are stopped. He is the leading scorer for Arkansas and he had a 24.3 point-a-game average going into the game with the Aggies. The Aggies swarming, aggressive defense held him to 10 points. Moncrief was also the leading re-

bouncer in the Southwest Conference with 11.3 a game before the Aggies allowed him only four rebounds the whole night.

"I have never seen Sidney Moncrief play like that since he's been at Arkansas," Sutton said. "He fumbled the ball, missed shots he would usually make and even missed a couple of dunks."

"I talked with (assistant coach Bob) Cleeland right after the game about Sidney's play and we just can't figure it out. And he just can't jump with that hurt knee."

"It's not that I couldn't jump, I just didn't," a dejected Moncrief said. "I just didn't concentrate when I missed those dunks. One of them I was so open I looked down court and saw someone coming and blew it."

It took 6-9 freshman, Scott Hastings, who came out of the Razorback locker room smoking after halftime to keep the Hogs in the game. After attempting only one shot in the first half and missing that one, Hastings opened up in the second half for 20 points while the Hogs battled the Aggies down to the wire and beyond.

"I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," Hastings said. "There were a lot of holes in their zone so we just kept breaking inside for easy shots."

"We forced the Aggies out of their defense at the beginning of the second half," Sutton said. "But then Shelby went back to the 2-1-2 zone and took away our inside shot."

"The last three teams we've played ran a zone defense and we lost all three games," he said. "We aren't a good outside shooting team and our main attack is inside. We can't afford to give up the easy baskets or miss free throws."

"Hastings is learning how to play major college basketball very fast," he said of the freshman. "He has matured a lot quicker than we thought. I guess he was a little timid about shooting in the first half but he certainly kept us in the game in the second half."

While the Hogs have had their problems shooting from outside, it was just that, a 27-foot jumper at the buzzer by freshman Tony Brown that sent the game into overtime.

"We felt we would win the game after Brown sank that shot at the end of the game," Sutton said. "But when Sidney missed that first shot after we had won the jump at the beginning of the overtime, I knew we were in trouble."

The Hogs were in trouble to stay as the Aggies regained their composure and scored 12 points to Arkansas's seven in the five minute overtime period.

"Although we lost the game, it helped everyone's confidence," Hastings said. "We are maturing together. Besides, we were picked to finish fourth in the conference and everyone knows we are cham-

pionship contenders now. "We just need to play 40 minutes instead of 20," he said, "we'll be ready by the conference tournament."

Everyone, including Al McGuire, knows that Arkansas is a championship contender. But before the Hogs prepare their travel plans for the NCAA tournament, they better make sure the Aggies don't have the same trip in mind.

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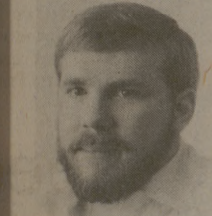
Bible courses for university credit will be offered this semester at the A&M Church of Christ on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:45. The courses are accredited by Abilene Christian University and are transferable to other universities. The courses offered are:

- Old Testament Survey (Bible 2323) which includes a study of Genesis through Esther.
- New Testament Survey (Bible 1302) which includes a study of Acts through Revelation.

Registration will be accepted Thursday, January 18, at 3:30, or Tuesday, January 23, at 3:30, which will be the first class meeting. The charge for course credit is \$10 — no charge for auditing.

viewpoint

By MARK PATTERSON
Battalion Staff



Last of the 'triplets' will be remembered

Sidney Moncrief. The name has commanded respect throughout the Southwest Conference for the past three seasons. The player has become a basketball legend in the hills of Arkansas.

It was he, along with teammates Marvin Delph and Ron Brewer, who propelled the Razorbacks into the NCAA semi-finals last season, losing to Kentucky 64-59. Followers of Razorback basketball said the 1978 team was the best ever assembled at Arkansas. It was hard to argue the point.

But this season the Razorbacks are struggling. Though the team started the year hot, jumping off to a 10-0 start, the Hogs have dropped three straight games. Two have come in conference play, to the Texas Longhorns last Friday night and to the Texas Aggies Wednesday night. The Hogs are 2-2 in conference play.

IT HASN'T BEEN AN EASY YEAR FOR MONCRIEF. One obvious reason is the absence of Delph and Brewer. The other two "triplets", as the three came to be known, were lost after last season. Brewer pursued his professional basketball career with the Portland Trail Blazers. Delph nixed the pro's offers and opted to join Athletes in Action.

Moncrief was left to piece together what remained of last season's conference co-champion. It's been a struggle.

In a game against Memphis State three weeks ago Moncrief injured his left knee. For the past five games the knee has hurt both Moncrief and the club. The injury was never more evident than against the Aggies Wednesday night.

Moncrief was held to 10 points in the contest while pulling down four rebounds, far below his 24.3-point scoring average and 11.3 rebounding average. Coach Eddie Sutton said after the Razorback loss he had never seen Moncrief play that kind of a game.

IN THE FIRST HALF AGAINST THE AGGIES the senior guard was held to six points, taking only three shots from the field. He blames himself on the poor performance.

"I can only blame myself, no one else," Moncrief said after the game. "I didn't have the initiative to go and get the basketball. I should have forced myself into the offense more."

"I just had one of those nights that no matter how I shot the ball it wouldn't fall. But I felt good out there. We came in ready to play. But unlike last year (a 80-79 Arkansas victory in G. Rollie White) when A&M had to play catch-up, we had to tonight. We've had to in our last three games and it's cost us each time."

Last season the Hogs were able to play their brand of basketball, a finesse game that forced their opponents into play at Arkansas' tempo. But the smooth ball handlers are gone, and this year's team must depend on muscle to produce.

"I'M FORCED TO HANDLE THE BALL MORE this year because this team is so young," Moncrief, one of the two seniors on the team, explained. "With our size (nine players 6-foot-5 and over) we have the power to go inside we really didn't have last year."

"But there is no way you can say this year's team is better than last year's. We're young. We haven't been together long enough to know how everyone plays. We have the potential to be good. It will come with time."

But time is the one thing Sidney Moncrief is running out of at the University of Arkansas. He's in his last season of basketball under Eddie Sutton. After this year it's on to the pros for the last "triple"

But the 7,667 people who watched the Razorbacks play the Aggies Wednesday night saw one of the best that has ever played Southwest Conference basketball at work.

The art of Sidney Moncrief will be missed. And remembered.

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