

the sports

# Crucial games ahead for Ags

By DAVID BOGGAN  
Battalion Sports Editor

Ah, it's that time of year: the miserable weather of February, the refreshing swimsuits of Sports Illustrated and the crucial games of the Southwest Conference basketball race.

If you don't believe that Texas A&M's conference contests are crucial, just ask Shelby Metcalf, who can see a championship glow at the end of the SWC tunnel.

"When you're playing for the championship, there's no way there should be a letdown," the Aggie coach said after his team got off to a slow start in its 66-58 victory over Houston Saturday. The victory gave the Aggies a 9-2 conference record and also gave Texas A&M the distinction of being the first major team in the nation to win 20 games this season. "No, I don't think there was a letdown. Houston played extremely tough. They just came out and put the fight to us."

If Metcalf believes that the Cougars were tough, well, he ain't seen nothing yet. The Aggies, who share the conference lead with Texas, must travel to Arkansas Tuesday and to Texas Tech Saturday before hosting the Longhorns one week from today. Talk about crucial games!

The Cougars were tougher Saturday than they were the first time they played Texas A&M this season. On Jan. 10 in Hofheinz Pavilion, Texas A&M defeated Houston 69-43 as the Cougs shot only 27 percent from the floor and managed only five points in the second half.

"They were a better team today," Aggie forward Vernon Smith said of the Cougars. "The first time we played them, it was just one of those nights. I knew it wouldn't happen two times."

The Aggies' slow start left them behind by eight points twice in the first half.

"We just couldn't get our running

game going," said Smith, who had an outstanding game for Texas A&M. The Dallas sophomore led the Aggies with 24 points and 12 rebounds and had four assists, two steals and one blocked shot in his 33 minutes on the court. "Coach Metcalf called a time out (with Texas A&M down by six) and we started talking. We realized that if we wanted to win, we couldn't continue to play like this all day."

With 3.5 minutes left in the first period, Rynn Wright stole a Houston pass and flipped the ball to Tyrone Ladson at midcourt. Ladson took the ball down the right side of the lane and made a layup that gave the Aggies a 28-27 lead. They never fell behind again.

"We was down today," David Britton admitted. "In the locker room we was even quiet today."

"Yes, he was even quiet," Rudy Woods said of Britton. "And when he's quiet, you better look out."

But Britton was anything but quiet on the court.

"We started slow, then I saw it — NBC — and something clicked in me," the New York native said. Britton proceeded to make it his self-appointed duty to taunt, tease and harass Houston's Kenny "Juice" Williams in any manner that he found effective.

"I was just talking to him out there and he's just totally upset with David Britton," Britton said of Williams. "I just told him he wasn't going to get 30 points and I reminded him that he went 1-for-11 in our first game. But tell Juice that I like him."

Obviously, Britton had fun against Houston. But Woods saw the game in a different light.

"I lost my composure out there today," Woods said, indicating that he was unhappy with some of the physical play that the Cougars got away with. "That's something I hope to never do again for a long time. That's not me."

Kenny Williams was playing street ball and I played street ball

with him and that's just not my game. I was acting like a child, but that's just the freshman in me."

Britton sees a different side of his 6-foot-11 teammate.

"Rudy has learned how to handle himself," he said. "The other day I was looking at his scrapbook and earlier in the season he looked like a high school kid playing college ball. Now, he looks like a No. 1 college center. He's intimidating."

With the crucial schedule the Aggies face in the coming week, it is going to take more than intimidation

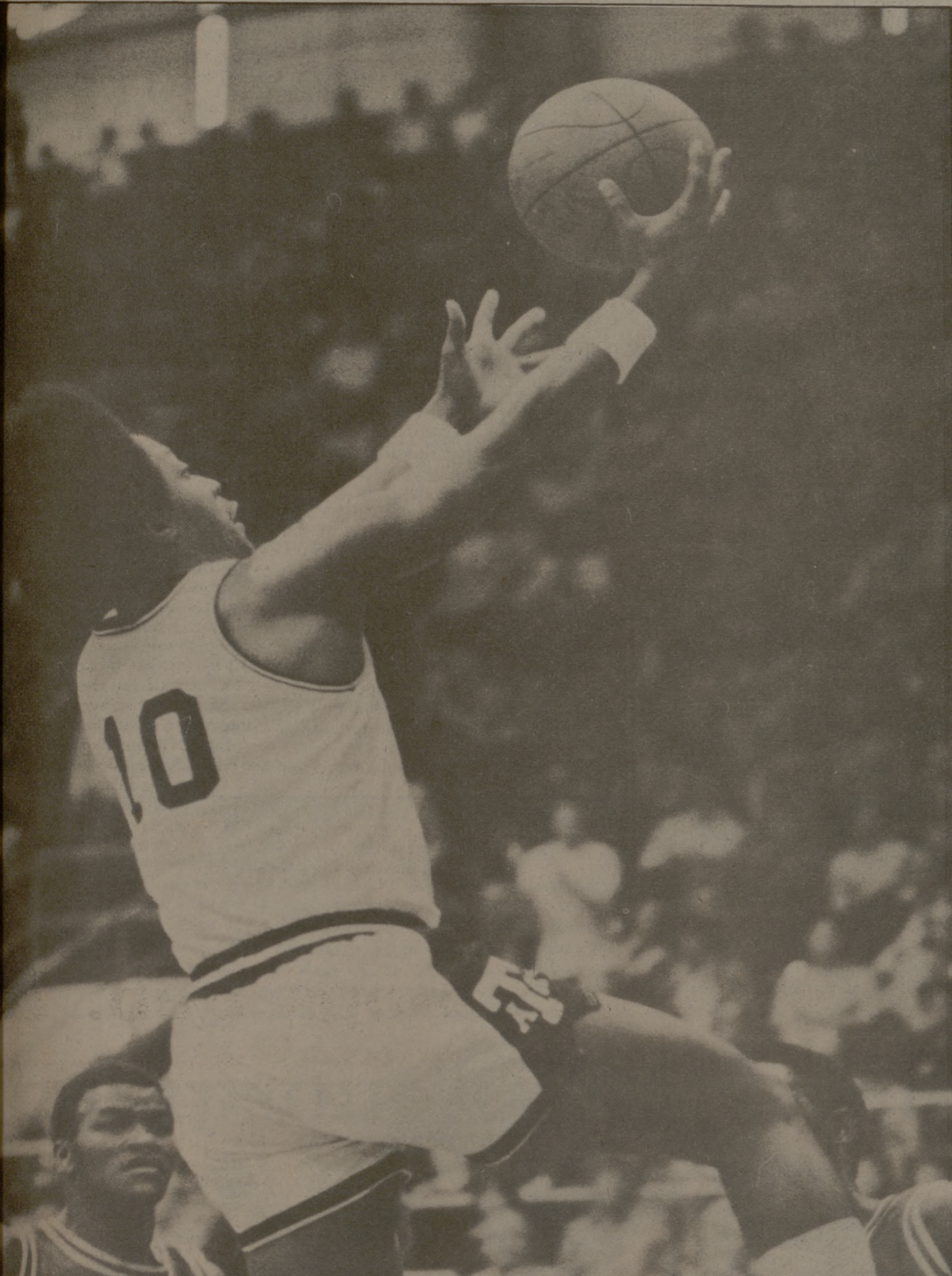
for Texas A&M to stay on top in the Southwest Conference.

BOX SCORE

HOUSTON (58)  
Walker 6 4-5 16, Ewing 6 0-1 12, Williams 7 0-0 14, Ciolli 1 1-2 3, Hamilton 1 0-0 2, O'Neill 0 0-0 0, C. Smith 0 0-0 0, Gibson 0 0-0 0, Sauls 4 3-4 11. Totals 25 8-12 58.

TEXAS A&M (66)  
V. Smith 11 2-2 24, Wright 4 2-5 10, Woods 4 3-3 11, Goff 2 1-2 5, Ladson 4 2-2 10, Britton 3 0-0 6, Culton 0 0-0 0, Sylestine 0 0-0 0. Totals 28 10-14 66.

Halftime — Texas A&M 37, Houston 31.  
Fouled Out — none. Total Fouls — Houston 15, Texas A&M 14. Technical Foul — V. Smith. A — 7, 161.



Texas A&M's Tyrone Ladson is flying high in Saturday's game against Houston.  
Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

## Strength coach hired

Permian's first state championship football team in 1965. He was recruited by Arkansas and played freshman football there. He dropped out of school one year to help with the family business in Odessa and then finished his education at Sul Ross College, where he was a linebacker. Flynt and his wife, Eileen, have a four-year-old daughter, Delanie.

Season ticket sales for the 1979 Texas A&M home baseball season will begin today at the Athletic Department ticket office in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Texas A&M faculty and staff will get first choice with sales to the general public beginning Feb. 12.

The price for a reserved season ticket is \$54 for 18 dates. However, faculty and staff may buy up to four season tickets at the discounted price of \$36 per season ticket.

All season tickets must be purchased in person at the ticket office. No phone or mail orders will be accepted. Seat selection will be made by the purchaser, and the priority for those seats will remain in effect as long as the season tickets are purchased each year and the employee remains on the Texas A&M staff. The same priority system will pertain to the general public.

Season ticket sales will continue until Feb. 23, the two-time defending Southwest Conference champion Aggies open the season Feb. 22 in an exhibition game against Hosei University of Tokyo, Japan. Season ticket holders will be admitted free to this game if they present a ticket to the LSU series which begins Feb. 23.

Head football coach Tom Wilson, recommended Flynt for the position, said: "We felt like we wanted to stress weight training and conditioning more to improve our team and we made an extensive search for the best man available. We were excited about securing someone capable as Mike Flynt for the position."

Flynt, who grew up in Odessa and graduated from Permian High, was head strength coach at the University of Oregon one year before accepting the job at Texas A&M. He served as assistant strength coach two years at the University of Nebraska.

This is a fantastic opportunity for Flynt, who will start the off-season conditioning program today. "Strength builds confidence and that combined with great talent at A&M should result in greater athletic success."

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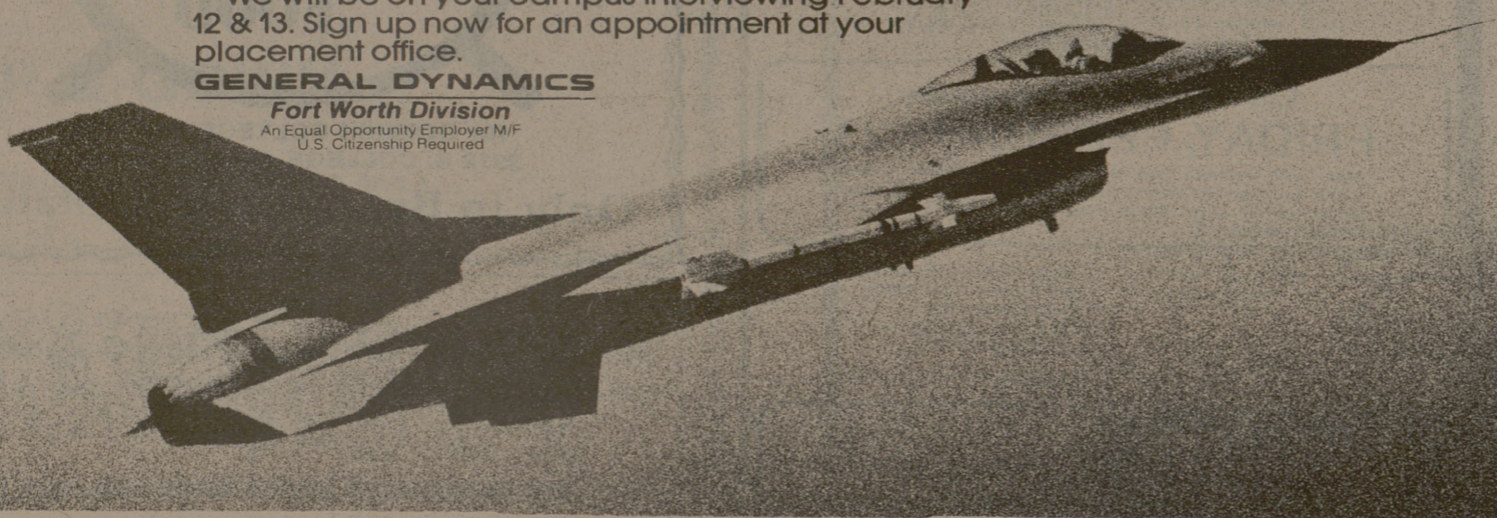
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