

SWC Showdown: Red Raiders Vs. Aggies

By GERALD GARCIA
Battalion Sports Editor

Texas A&M's defense-minded Aggies, getting unexpected help from the University of Texas, upped their Southwest Conference basketball lead to two games after surging by TCU, 81-72, in Fort Worth's Daniel-Meyer Coliseum.

The Longhorns, who in past years have damped Aggie title drives, cooled Texas Tech's hot Raiders in Lubbock, 87-74, for Tech's second conference loss in six outings, compared to A&M's perfect 6-0 slate. The stage is now set for tonight's 8 p.m. meeting in G. Rollie White Coliseum between the Aggie and the Red Raiders.

A&M Beats TCU; Matson Injured

Texas Tech, pre-season SWC favorite and currently in second place, must win tonight to stay in the race, but an Aggie victory could virtually make the SWC race a one-team affair.

If the Aggies win tonight's encounter, Coach Shelby Metcalf's bunch will have a three-game lead at the halfway point in the conference chase. A Tech victory will give the Aggies only a one-game lead with seven games to go.

Ahead by only three points at intermission — 39-36 — the Aggies took command early in the second half against the Frogs and upper their lead to as much as 15 points with 10 minutes left.

Behind the rebounding of Randy Matson, who played the latter part of the first half and most of the second half with an injured left knee, John Beasley and Dick Stringfellow, the Aggs turned a close ball game into a run-away early in the second period.

Matson injured his knee three minutes deep in the game and did not return to play until nine minutes to go in the half. The big Aggie center had to retire to the dressing room for taping and treatment. He hurt the knee after sinking a two-hand "dunk" to bring the Aggies within one point of the aroused Frogs.

Beasley, who was celebrating his birthday before the largest turnout at Daniel-Meyer Coliseum — 6,354 — and a regional television audience, hit his birthday total in the first half — 22 — to give the Aggies the lead in the hotly-contested first half.

The 6-foot-9 Beasley, a prime all-America candidate, then con-

Aggie offensive rebound in the second half until the seven-minute mark. This, combined with a punishing man-to-man defense, pushed the Aggies to victory.

A&M allowed TCU to hit only three of 10 field goals tries in the first seven minutes of the second half.

Beasley led all scorers with 35 points. He hit 13 of 26 from the floor and nine of 12 from the charity line. Stringfellow and Eddie Dominguez followed with 13 and 12, respectively. Seven of Dominguez's 12 points came in the last four minutes of the game while the Aggies were getting a delay game as he hit seven of eight tries from the line.

TCU's Gary Turner connected for three straight buckets from the floor opening the second half to push the Aggies to a 12-point margin with 15 minutes to go.

The work of Matson, Beasley and Stringfellow under the boards did not allow TCU to grab an

for the rebound leadership with 12. Matson grabbed eight of his rebounds in the second half.

"They're (the Aggies) the best defensive unit we have met," said TCU's Buster Brannon. "They just wouldn't let us get off a good shot and their rebounding is excellent."

Aggie coach Shelby Metcalf praised the team for their hard work "and handling TCU's zone press very well in the second half," but added, "now we got to get ready for Tech."

Tech will bring a pack of hot shooters into G. Rollie, with senior Dub Malaise and Bob Glover, the conference's top rebounder, paving the way. A&M will counter with Beasley, the conference's top scorer, Stringfellow, Dominguez and Dick Rector, plus two of the conference's top reserves, Terry Trippet and Tim Timmerman.

General admission tickets for tonight's game with the Texas Tech Red Raiders go on sale at 5:15 p.m. today at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Reserves seat tickets are sold out and only general admission tickets will be sold before the game.

Texas A&M officials expect an overflow crowd for the game between the conference's top two teams.

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