

Ags Break The Ice, 78-76, Over SFA

By GARY SHERER
"We played well," Coach Shelby Metcalf commented Tuesday night after the Aggies' first win of the season, a 78-76 cliff-hanger, over a young Stephen F. Austin five.

The Aggies treated a poor turnout of 2500 to some skin-prickling basketball and the small crowd responded to fill G. Rollie White Coliseum with happy cheers.

Led by the second half shooting of Sonny Benefield and the floor generalship of John Underwood, the Aggies matched basket-for-basket with the Lumberjacks in a hot-shooting final 20 minutes.

The Maroon and White tossed in a respectable 16 of 31 in the second half for a fine 51.6 floor percentage. Though out-rebounded, 53-44, the Aggies did very well on the boards and only the presence of the Lumberjacks 6-11 center George Johnson, gave SFA an edge.

Johnson scored 24 and fouled out with 2:21 to go. The Nacogdoches-based cagers had tied the score 70-70 in a comeback that was led by Johnson and 6-6 Surry Oliver.

Defense was Johnson's weakness. Ronnie Peret, high for the Aggies, got most of his 18 points on shots under the basket as he put up the shots past the outstretched but unmoving Johnson hand.

The Aggies took over the lead in the first half after seven minutes had elapsed. They went to the dressing room with a 37-29 lead. Larry Ditto, the 6-8 center from Breckenridge, displayed a hot hand as he looped in three hook shots and a short jumper to lead first half scoring for the Aggies. The hook shot, called by some "the forgotten shot of basketball," brought approving response from Aggie partisans.

Moving the ball well and displaying outstanding poise, the Aggies kept the first half lead and displayed the brand of basketball seen in G. Rollie in past seasons.

Hitting on 17 of 43 from the floor, the Aggies depended on the field goal in a relatively foul-less first half. They had four attempts from the charity stripe, making good on three. The good shooting percentage was welcomed by Metcalf. He had expressed disappointment at the teams shooting on the recent Aggie road trip.

Metcalf's happy smile turned to a frown starting the second half though, as the Aggies were slow getting started. After several missed shots, A&M finally broke out of it on a jumper by Underwood.

Meanwhile, the Lumberjacks led by Oliver had shaved the Aggie lead down to two points at the 14:03 mark of the final stanza. Where the first half was free of excess fouling, the two teams extra efforts brought whistles into action.

With the partisan crowd yelling its disapproval, the harried

officials stayed in control and kept the game moving. Things really got hectic on a questionable call with about three minutes left. Johnson who had four fouls, grabbed a rebound and backed into Peret. The whistle blew and the finger of the referee pointed at Peret, sending Johnson to the bonus throw line.

It was Peret's fifth foul and a blow to Aggie board strength.

Anything called against the Aggies afterward was greeted with more disapproval than usual as the Aggies lost the lead on Johnson's two foul shots. A minute later, Johnson fouled out pushing Billy Bob Barnett and the Brenham sophomore had a chance to break the 70-70 deadlock.

Barnett missed the first shot of a one-and-one opportunity but followed up 18 seconds later with a short jump shot that gave the Aggies the lead. The Lumberjack's Marvin Polnick sank two foul shots and with 1:52 remaining, the score was knotted again, 72-72.

Terry Trippet rolled up four straight points and seemingly put the game on ice for the Aggies. In the last 59 seconds, Oliver and Barnett traded foul shots for a 77-74 reading. Wayne Fults pulled the Lumberjacks again to a one-point deficit on a jump shot with 10 seconds left.

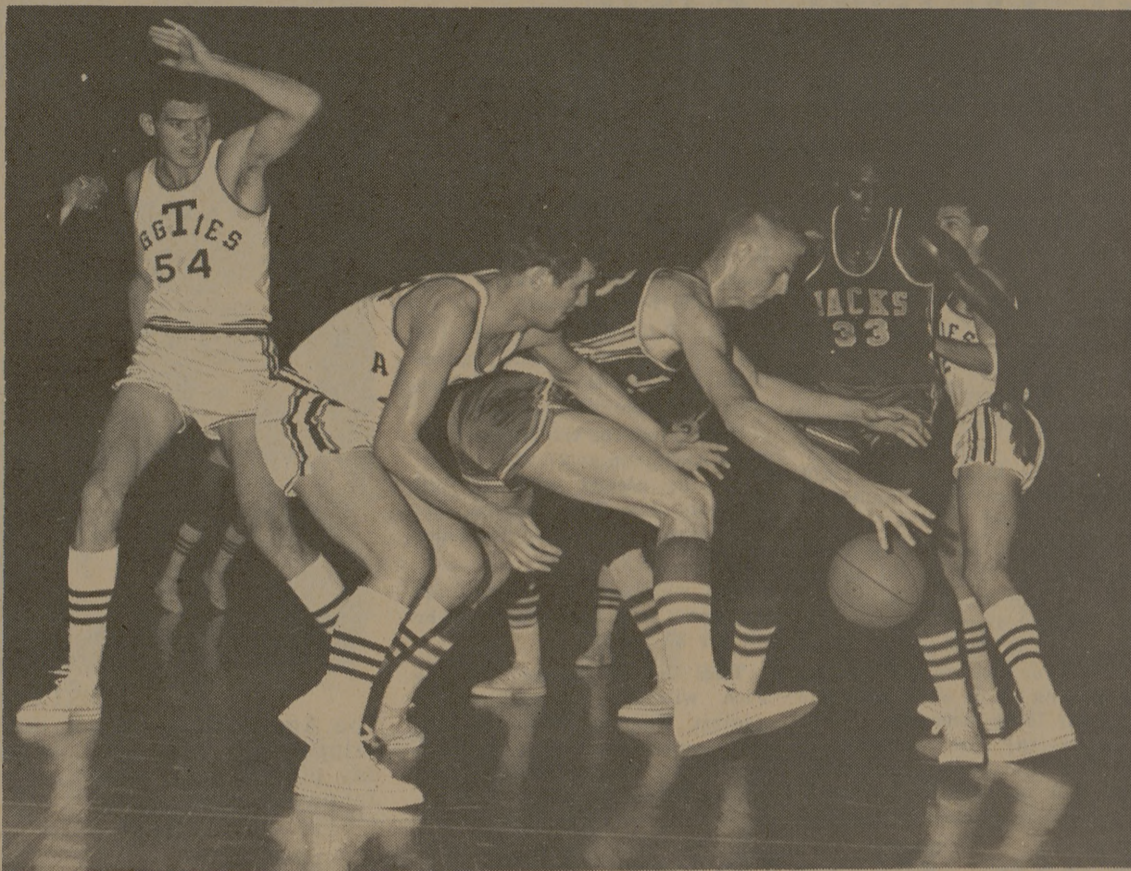
As the Aggies brought the ball out, they were confronted with a full court press. Dick Rector was fouled by Oliver. The Dumas senior sent both shots through the hoop and it looked like it was all over.

The climax was delayed a little longer on an unusual infraction called on the Lumberjacks. With Rector sinking the first shot, a new player came in for the SFA five. Metcalf had all four of his remaining players down court to prevent a fast break following a possible miss by Rector. As Rector's second shot fell through, the Lumberjack player who had just some in was called for moving around the foul circle. Rector had to shoot again, and missed.

The Lumberjacks grabbed the rebound and they had a chance to tie the game with two seconds remaining. Following a timeout, the Lumberjacks Ervin Polnick sent a long pass the length of the court to Johnny Hawkins. Hawkins desperate shot fell short and the Aggies had their first win.

Along with Peret's 18 points, Benefield and Ditto had 12 apiece and Barnett chipped in nine. Johnson's 24 led the Lumberjack cause with Oliver tabulating 19 and Hawkins 12.

The Aggies will be in action again Thursday night at G. Rollie White in an encounter with the North Texas State Eagles. Metcalf issued an invitation to the student body following the game to begin their Christmas vacation by attending the game and cheer the Aggies on. Gametime is 8 p.m.



LOOSE BALL
The action occurred in the Aggies 78-76 victory Tuesday night at G. Rollie White Coliseum.
Sonny Benefield (in white) battles Stephen F. Austin's Ervin Polnick and George Johnson (33) for a loose ball as Larry Ditto (54) and Buzzy Myatt (behind Johnson) look on.

College Professor Declares UCLA Plays Easy Slate

By DICK OTTE
COLUMBUS Dispatch Sports Writer
COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—UCLA will play a basketball schedule easier than 86 other major colleges this season.

Kentucky is involved in a card the caliber of which is surpassed by 164 other teams.

Rhode Island, for example, plays a lot tougher than Kentucky. In fact, only 41 other teams have a more demanding schedule than the Rhode Island Rams.

These and other wise assertions come from Gordon L. Wise, assistant professor of marketing at Wright State University in Dayton.

Professor Wise teaches a course in statistics and uses them in what he calls "an objective preseason analysis of the strength of the basketball schedules as played by 233 selected National Collegiate Athletic Association colleges and universities."

It's 45 points for playing UCLA on a neutral court, instance.

If Lew Alcindor and his team who are virtually conceded national title at UCLA for the years, rate far down the list, if Texas Western's recent NCAA champs are no better than 52nd in schedule difficulty, who has the hardest way to go Michigan State?

No. It's the team the Spartans beat 103-68 last Saturday: Wichita State.

Wichita plays nine other teams, six of them twice a season and the Shockers' schedule packs a shocking 391 points. UCLA's schedule has 117 points, Michigan State's 117, Kentucky's 93.

Wise's system lists point value for all 47 teams he found mentioned in any of the press ratings. Home courts, tournaments and similar factors taken into account.

Once the ratings are assigned, the rest is pure mathematical computations.

Wise's figures show the Missouri Valley Conference, which includes Wichita, plays the toughest teams, including each other than anybody else. Atlantic Coast teams rank second.

Washington Quarterback Selected As NFL Offensive Player Of Week

By JACK HAND
Associated Press Sports Writer
NEW YORK (AP)—The score was tied at 31-31 in the Cotton Bowl at Dallas. Quarterback Sonny Jurgensen ran two plays into the line for the Washington Redskins deep in Dallas territory.

The clock was running when Sonny strolled over to talk to the official with the clock as the seconds ticked away. Finally, with eight seconds to play, Sonny called for the time out.

In came Charlie Gogolak, the soccer-style place kicker, to boot a 29-yard field goal that beat Dallas 34-31 and delayed, for at least one week, the Cowboys' attempt to clinch the Eastern Conference title.

Jurgensen's cool performance under heavy pressure was enough to earn him The Associated Press' designation as offensive Player of the Week in the National Football League.

The veteran quarterback completed 18 of 33 passes for 308 yards, including an 11-yard TD to Jerry Smith and a 65-yarder to Charley Taylor in the final quarter. Earlier he connected with Bobby Mitchell on an 11-yard toss.

Dallas appeared to have the game locked up until Sonny started to hit and the Redskins started to swap touchdowns with the Cowboys in the final period. Then came the winning field goal.

Jurgensen, slimmed down to meet the requirements of new coach Otto Graham, has been having a great year, especially since Graham moved Taylor to outside receiver.

Houston, Rice Host Bluebonnet Bowl

HOUSTON, Tex. (AP)—Ninth ranked Houston and Rice will be hosts to Centenary and Idaho State in the Bluebonnet Basketball Classic tonight and Thursday night.

Houston meets Centenary in the opener Wednesday. Rice plays Idaho State in the second game. Houston plays Idaho State and Rice meets Centenary Thursday night.

The tournament is part of the Bluebonnet Bowl program which is climaxed with a football game Saturday afternoon between Mississippi and Texas.

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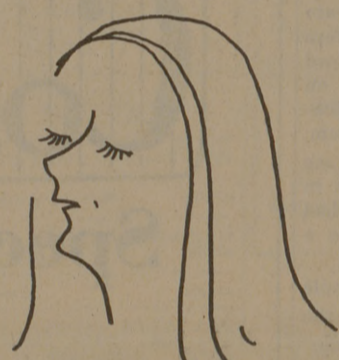
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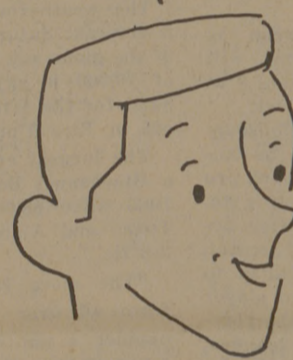
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