

Aggies Lose, 68-58, To Fired-Up Rice Five

By Mike Wright
Assistant Sports Editor

HOUSTON — It's a miracle what the smell of being in the first division will do to a team who has not won a basketball championship since 1954.

The Rice Owls, displaying a zeal for hitting the round circle, outplayed the Texas Aggies last night at Autry Court, 68-58.

The Owls, coached by little Don Knodel, have been on the rise under his reign. Knodel took over the Rice job after the Owls had found themselves in a "basketball drought" by winning only three games in two seasons.

But now, only three years later, the Owls are tied with Texas Christian University for second place in the Southwest Conference with a 3-1 record, while the Aggies, 2-2, have dropped into a third-place tie with the University of Texas at Austin.

The stage was set for the noisy bout when the house announcer asked for a moment of silence in memory of Aggie football player Mike DeNiro, killed in an automobile accident last Friday in Louisiana. DeNiro was buried Tuesday in Youngstown, Ohio.

After the silence, Rice jumped to a 6-2 lead on quick baskets by Tom Myer, Gary Reise, and Ted

Melay. The Aggies closed the Rice lead from the free-throw line. In the first half, they hit 13 of 14 attempts from the line to keep them from virtually being run out of Houston.

However, the Owls could do no wrong, feeding Reise and Myer with setups. Reise tallied 14 points, while Myer hit for 8.

The Aggies were completely frigid from the field, sinking only 5 of 14 shots in the first half. Rice, in the meantime, hit 13 of 26 for an even 50 per cent. Ironically, Rice was cold from the charity line, hitting 7 out of 13.

When the smoke had cleared after the first 30 minutes, the Owls held a 10-point lead, 33-23.

The Aggies battled back in the second half behind clutch baskets by Pat Kavanagh, Steve Niles, and Mike Heitman to close the gap to 3 at 46-43. But the surprise inside strength of Steve Wendel and the three key baskets of Jim Naples allowed the Owls to retain their lead. Rice held a comfortable 6- to 8-point lead throughout much of the second half.

The SWC's leading scorer, Reise had to work for his 21 points, as Kavanagh ran constantly with the Owl shooter and bothered his shots. Reise sank

only four field goals in the first half and two in the second. However, he was 9 for 9 from the charity line to add to his totals.

Myer had a terrific evening. His additional 10 points from the corners in the second half brought his total to 18 points.

Sitting dejectedly in a dark corner of the steaming Aggie dressing room, coach Shelby Metcalf could only mutter:

"Rice certainly wanted this one worse than we did."

Kavanagh, besides dogging Reise for the evening, contributed 13 points to the cause, as did Niles. Niles also had two rebounds. Heitman was the leading scorer for A&M, with 16 points.

Now, A&M must regroup during the next few days to face Southern Methodist University Saturday afternoon in College Station in a televised game.

Baylor still leads over the rest of the conference with a 4-0 record. However, Texas Tech University proved that the Bears were vulnerable at home, only losing out to the Green and Gold by one point, 47-46.

So now the stage is set. The Aggies either have to remember their lines or suffer the consequences of summer stock.

Fish Fall to Owlets, 70-63; Tempers Flare in Contest

By Mike Wright

HOUSTON — The Texas Aggie Fish fought back from a 38-31 Rice Owlet halftime lead Tuesday night, but fell short as the Owlets dropped the Fish from the undefeated ranks by a 70-63 count.

The affair was spiced by numerous outbreaks of tongue-lashings between Rice and A&M players. The poorly-called contest bred one "lip contest" between Owlet coach George McHaffey and Fish coach Jim Culpepper.

Earlier in the game, Culpepper

had received a technical foul due to a misunderstanding between him and the officials.

The Southwest Conference sportsmanship champions' crowd roared its approval as the Owlets' big man, Mark Wehrly, kept the Fish off balance with his clutch outside shooting. The 6-10 giant was deadly from outside the 20-foot barrier. Wehrly managed to hold A&M's Jeff Overhouse to 13 points and contained the leading Fish rebounder to 10 grabs.

With Overhouse leading the Aggie scorers, Bryan Mezger and

Wayne Howard chipped in 11 points apiece, while Ron Eeten and Bob Gobin sank 10 apiece. Bill O'Brian chipped in six points, while Charlie Jenkin sank one field goal.

The Fish could only tally 25 of 63 field goal attempts for a cool 39.7 per cent. The Owlets sank 28 of 63 for 44 per cent, with the three added goals being the main difference in the score.

The next outing for the Fish is against the Texas Christian University Wogs Feb. 7 in College Station.

Stegent Picked by Cards; 'Unbelievable,' He Says

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (AP)— "It's unbelievable. I'm overwhelmed," Texas A&M running back Larry Stegent said Tuesday when informed he was the first running back picked in the pro football draft.

Stegent was the eighth player picked as the St. Louis Cardinals' top draft selection. He was chosen ahead of Heisman Trophy winner Steve Owens of Oklahoma and Colorado's Bob Anderson, among others.

"It's really beautiful," Stegent said. "Those other fellows are great football players. I consider it an honor. I am very happy to be with St. Louis."

Stegent, Coach Gene Stallings, and a dozen other Aggie gridders were here for the funeral of Mike DeNiro, an Aggie end killed Friday in an auto accident in Louisiana. DeNiro resided in Youngs-

town.

"Really didn't have any idea that I would be picked this high in the draft," Stegent said. "I'll

be glad to rejoin my good buddy, Rolf Krueger." Krueger, also from Texas A&M, is a defensive end for St. Louis.

TIS General Manager Promoted To American Raceways VP Post

DETROIT . . . The appointment of Leo Margolian as a Vice-President of American Raceways Inc. has been announced by Leslie Share, Executive Vice-President of American Raceways Inc.

As a Vice-President of American Raceways Inc., which owns, or has a controlling interest in Michigan International Speedway, Texas International Speedway, Atlanta International Raceway, Eastern International Speedway and Riverside International Raceway, Mr. Margolian will as-

ist Mr. Share, in the coordination of all racing activities at American Raceways' facilities as well as assistance in the areas of construction and facility improvement.

Prior to joining the Detroit corporate organization, Mr. Margolian served as General Manager of Texas International Speedway located near Bryan-College Station, Texas—the newest racing facility within the ARI complex—completed in October 1969.

In Texas, Mr. Margolian was instrumental in the transformation of 800 acres of ranch land into the \$6 million dollar TIS oval and road racing complex in less than 8 months' construction time. Two successful professional races have already been held at the impressive Texas facility.

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