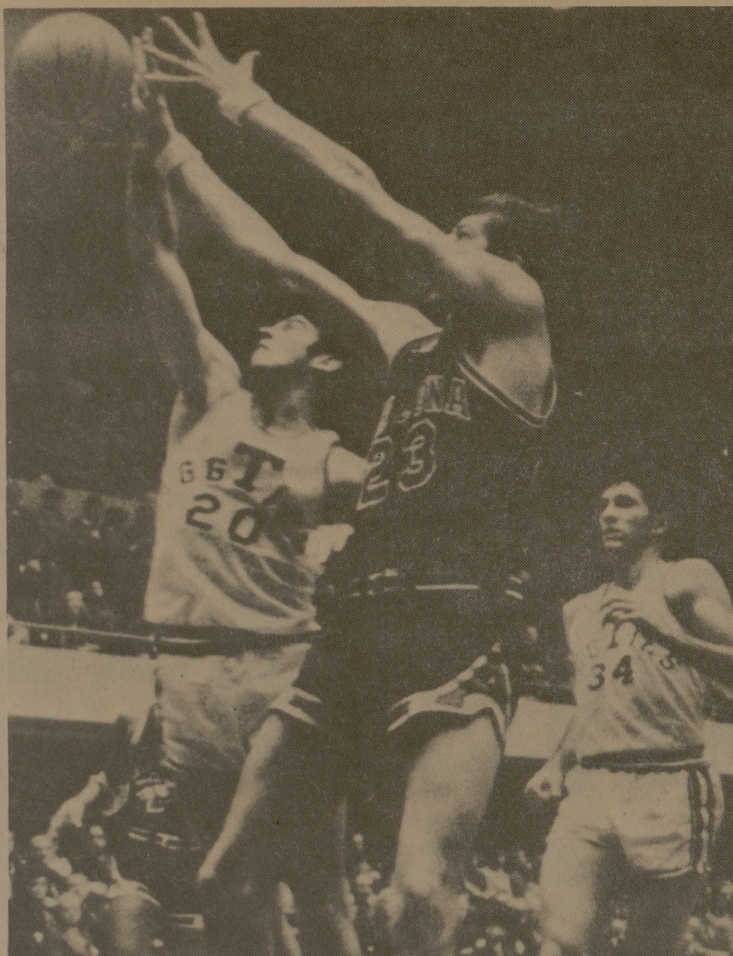


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Pat Kavanagh, 20, and the University of Arizona's Tom Lee, 23, battle for the ball during the opening game of the Poinsetta Basketball Classic in Greenville, S. C., as A&M's Bobby Threadgill, 34, looks on. The Ags lost, 90-76. (AP Wirephoto)

Worst cage season since 1967 Momentum sought as SWC race nears

By CLIFFORD BROYLES
Battalion Sports Editor
The Texas Aggie basketball team, off to the worst start for an A&M squad since 1967, gets its last shot at having some momentum going into the SWC race Thursday and Saturday night when they journey east for a pair of non-conference basketball games against The Citadel and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

The Aggies, currently 2-7 and on the wings of a three-game losing streak during the Christmas break, journey to Charleston, S. C., Thursday for a battle with The Citadel and then move over to Charlotte, N. C., on Saturday for a contest against UNC-Charlotte.

The 1967 A&M team, the only losing season suffered by a Shelly Metcalf coached team, opened its season on a 1-8 chord and things didn't get better as time went on as the Ags closed with a 6-18 record.

The three-game Christmas losing streak started against powerful Tulsa and continued in Greenville, S. C., where the Aggies bowed to Arizona in the Poinsetta Classic. The Aggies were the defending champions.

Tulsa—ranked in the top 20—broke away from the Aggies in a close first half struggle with a hot shooting start in the second period and dumped the Maroon 103-71.

Six-ten Dana Lewis, an All-American candidate, sparked the assault with 14 of 17 field goals in a 30-point, 20-rebound effort and the Golden Hurricane out-rebounded A&M 67-42.

Tulsa led at the half 42-34, but hit 63 per cent in the second half compared to 34 per cent for the Aggies. The difference was a 61-37 second half deficit.

That shooting lack was evident in the complete three-game trip and the Aggies possibly could have overcome Arizona in the Poinsetta opener had they shot well, but they hit only 33 per cent from the floor. SWC members Baylor and Texas Tech earlier had beaten Arizona.

In the UA contest, the Aggies trailed 35-33 at the half with Niles acquiring 16 points and 11

rebounds.
The Wildcats opened up the lead in the second half as the Aggies hit on only 27 of 81 shots.

Down 68-58 midway through the second half, the Aggies had a chance to get back in the game when Bobby Threadgill was fouled and on the play a technical foul was called against Arizona.

The possibility of five quick points loomed but Threadgill missed both foul tries and Niles made the technical. When A&M missed the field goal after taking the ball in, the 'Cats ripped off eight straight points and the downhill slide followed to a 90-76 defeat.

Host Furman caught the Aggies in a tailspin the next night and zoomed to a 48-39 halftime lead and an eventual 103-83 win.

Niles continued to play well, with 11 points and seven rebounds in the first half but Furman out-rebounded the Ags and forced numerous turnovers to lead. Three Furman players had at least 12 points at the half.

Furman also had a hot second half and Charles Slevy led the way with nine of 13 from the field for 21 points but Lisco Thomas drilled in 33 points for the Paladins.

Niles' play in the trip was especially encouraging, and his 47-point, 33-rebound tourney helped him to be named to the All-Tournament team. Chuck Smith had 30 points in the two-day event.

Metcalf also mentioned the play of sophomores Bob Gobin, Jeff Overhouse and Charlie Jenkins, who had double figure performances at Poinsetta.

Scoring in the Tulsa game: A&M—Steve Niles 21, Pat Kavanagh 11, Jeff Overhouse 8, Bobby Threadgill 9, Rick Duplantis 7, Chuck Smith 6, Bill Cooksey 4.

Tulsa—Dana Lewis 30, Steve Bracey 19, Clesson 14, Bob Horn 11, Larry Morris 17, Joe Voskuhl 6, Smiler 2, Rademeyer 2, Lofstrom 2.

Scoring in the Arizona game: A&M—Steve Niles 23, Chuck Smith 16, Bobby Threadgill 10, Bob Gobin 9, Rick Duplantis 8, Jeff Overhouse 5, Bill Cooksey 3, Pat Kavanagh 2.

Arizona—Eddie Myers 16, Tom Lee 14, Bill Warner 13, Walt McKinney 12, Lanny Mitchell 12, Bruce Anderson 12, Jim Huckstein 7, Tom Lawson 2, John Ugrin 2.

Scoring in the Furman game: A&M—Steve Niles 24, Chuck Smith 14, Jeff Overhouse 13, Charlie Jenkins 12, Bob Gobin 11, Pat Kavanagh 5, Rick Duplantis 2, Bobby Threadgill 2.

Furman—Lisco Thomas 33, Charles Slevy 21, Bernard Collier 16, Russ Hunt 13, Steve Dougherty 7, Steve Cockrum 4, David Whitener 4, John Campbell 2, Jerry Martin 2, Don Jackson 1.

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