

AGGIES' STEVE NILES (52) backs into TCU center Eugene Kennedy as he bids for two points in Saturday's regionally televised game which A&M lost to Texas Christian 64-59. Kennedy led TCU in scoring with 20. (Photo by Clifford Broyles)

A&M in Houston tonight...

Frogs keep Ags winless

By CLIFFORD BROYLES
Battalion Sports Editor

It's down to that part of the season where the Texas Aggies can't afford to lose. Only problem is the Aggies are facing that situation with 12 games left on the conference schedule.

And the first opponent on the list could be the roughest of them all as the Aggies take on the Rice Owls at 8 p.m. on Autry Court in Houston.

The Owls, defending Southwest Conference champions and unbeaten in two games this year, are tied with TCU for the SWC lead.

The Aggies lost their second consecutive SWC game Saturday afternoon when TCU outscored them 8-3 in the final 1:28 of play for a 64-59 win.

Rice returns three starters from last year's champs but the key to their season will be under the bucket, where two sophomores are beginning to play like the Owls had hoped.

6-8 Steve Emshoff and 6-10 Mark Wherle have helped the Owls tremendously. Emshoff, although missing part of the season with an injury, has hit on 60 per cent of his shots while averaging 7.1 points and 7.4 rebounds.

Wherle has played in all the Owls' games and is hitting on 51 per cent of his shots while scoring at an 13.1 clip and leading the rebounders with a 8.3 total.

Rice's shooting percentages really are impressive, with Tom Myer the leading scorer with 18.1 and 55 per cent from the field and All-SWC returnee Gary Reist is averaging 17.1 and hitting on .52 per cent of his shots.

Ted Melody, the third Owl starter, not known for his shooting, is hitting on 54 per cent and scoring at 11 per game.

Coach Shelby Metcalf is setting up with one change in his lineup for tonight's game.

Charlie Jenkins will start in place of senior Chuck Smith. Jenkins is averaging 2.8 per contest in limited duty.

Steve Niles, who is averaging 16.6 points and led the scoring with 21 against TCU Saturday, will line up at center.

Bill Cooksey, fresh from an 18-point performance against TCU, Bob Gobin and Jeff Overhouse will round out the starters.

TCU displayed some clutch shooting in the final minutes of a tight defensive struggle here Saturday afternoon and turned it into a win.

Saturday's game was regionally televised and the Frogs led nearly throughout with A&M leading only twice in the whole game at 2-1 and again at 54-52.

It was a cold start that did the Ags in as they never seemed able to overtake the Frogs after falling behind by as much as 9 points in the first 10 minutes.

Bill Cooksey, in his first starting assignment in recent history, turned in a hot offensive display with 18 points as he hit on 9 of 14 from the floor, but it wasn't enough.

The Aggies opened very sluggishly and the first few times down the floor TCU got three or four shots and usually either got a bucket or drew a foul. Coco Villareal tipped in a missed shot to give the Frogs a 9-4 lead after they had missed four previous attempts to typify the troubles.

Niles then tied with a jumper

in the middle of the lane just 35 seconds before the end of the half and that was the first time the Aggies had seen as much as a tie on the scoreboard since Niles' hook gave them a 2-1 lead early.

Jim Ferguson drove for layup with 14 seconds left in the half and TCU led 31-29 at the half.

TCU maintained their lead in the second half until Cooksey tied it at 34 with a shade over four minutes gone and then at 50 and 52 later in the period.

It was nip and tuck from there until Kennedy broke a 56-all tie with 1:28 remaining with a baseline jumper.

Then another Aggie weak point hit them right in the face as Cooksey missed the first of a one-and-one that could have tied it. A&M hit only 11 of 23 free throws in the contest.

Ricky Hall got his rebound and Gobin fouled him. He sank two free throws to put TCU up by four.

Then came a very decisive play in the game as Gobin drove the lane and tossed up a lay-in. He was called for charging and when he saw the call expressed his disapproval and was called for a technical foul.

Ferguson made the technical. That put the Frogs up by five with a minute to go and they had the ball.

Scoring in the TCU-A&M game:

A&M—Bill Cooksey 18, Bob Gobin 10, Chuck Smith 5, Jeff Overhouse 5, Steve Niles 21.

TCU—Jim Ferguson 7, Ricky Hall 12, Coco Villareal 9, Simpson DeGrate 14, Eugene Kennedy 20, James Williams 2.

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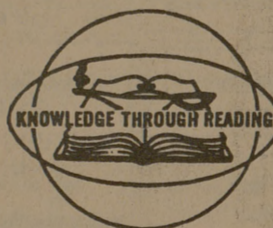
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