

Defensive play sparks Ag victory

Beat Virginia Commonwealth 98-84, play Indiana next

By MARK WEAVER
Sports Editor
Strong defensive play in the first half put the Aggies ahead to stay as they beat Virginia Commonwealth 98-84, improving their record to 3-1.

The game was marred by 48 personal fouls as the officials seemed to have a field day. At times, they seemed determined to call fouls and

turnovers, even when there were none to be called.
VCU jumped off to an early lead, going ahead 4-0 in the first minute of play. It was back and forth basketball until the clock read 11:03. An assist by Mike Floyd to Jerry Mercer for a layup put the Ags ahead 17-16. They never lost the lead after that point.

A&M continued to take advantage of turnovers by the Rams, going ahead at halftime 54-30. VCU could only hit 36 per cent from the field in the first half, but the Ags hit a strong 47 per cent. The Aggies also led in rebounds at halftime, 28-23.
The second half started off completely different than the first, with both teams running and gunning. The Ags increased their lead to 26 points early in the second half with some hot shooting by Floyd, but the Rams slowly pulled back.
VCU switched to a zone defense in the second half and the Aggies began shooting less and turning the ball over more. But the Rams could not overcome the big lead as the Ags continued to put the ball in the bucket.

A&M hit a blistering 70 per cent from the field in the second half, although they did not shoot as much as they did in the first half. VCU also shot very well the second half, hitting 58 per cent from the field.
"Mike (Floyd) played probably his best game of the year," assistant coach Norman Reuther said. Floyd hit 15 points, had six assists and one steal.

Asked about the zone defense the Rams played in the second half, Reuther said, "We were not moving the ball quick enough. The change of pace caught us off guard."

Sonny Parker had another strong game, leading the Ags in scoring with 21 points. Barry Davis led both teams in rebounding with 12, also hitting 17 points.

Webb Williams had his best game of the season with 17 points and five rebounds. Jerry Mercer hit 13 points and had four rebounds.

"Jerry looked like his old self," Coach Shelby Metcalf said. "Mercer's play was a highlight of the game."

Other Aggies scoring were Captain John Thornton with seven, Chuck Tone with four and Ray

Roberts and Cedric Joseph with two apiece.

VCU was led in scoring by 6-5 Jimmy Jones with 24 points. But the playmaker Keith Highsmith played probably the biggest part for the Rams, using his speed and ball handling to run circles around the Ags. He finished the game with 18 points and five assists.

The Aggies travel to Indianapolis to play highly ranked Indiana Dec. 14. Their next home game will be Jan. 16 against Sam Houston State University.

Indiana beat 15th ranked Kentucky by 24 points and slaughtered

Tennessee Tech by 63 points in a rout.

"Indiana is awesome," Metcalf said. "They're like UCLA was to Bill Walton."

The Aggies played UCLA and Walton on their team and were soundly beaten, 117-53. But this year the Aggies have some new talent in Parker and Davis along with what is probably one of the strongest benches in the nation.

They have the potential to make their mark this weekend as a basketball power. But for now, they wait and see.

	fgm	fga	ftm	fta	reb	pf	tp
Thornton	3	6	1	3	6	4	7
Davis	7	12	3	6	12	3	17
Mercer	4	8	5	6	4	4	13
Parker	9	16	3	3	5	3	21
Floyd	5	8	5	8	3	2	15
Roberts	1	1	0	0	2	4	2
Williams	7	9	3	4	5	2	17
Joseph	1	2	0	0	4	1	2
Tone	2	6	0	0	1	2	4

TOTALS 39 68 20 30 41 25 98

	fgm	fga	ftm	fta	reb	pf	tp
Henderson	4	9	1	2	0	0	9
Highsmith	9	14	0	0	4	4	18
Price	3	6	3	5	11	4	9
Jones	3	4	0	1	5	4	6
Jones	8	17	7	8	5	2	23
Hudgins	5	10	0	0	1	3	10
Cain	1	5	0	0	0	0	2
Ellis	1	3	2	2	2	2	4
Tatum	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Motley	1	3	1	2	5	3	3

TOTALS 35 71 14 21 37 23 84



Jerry Mercer goes in for a layup

Basketball top twenty

The Top Twenty, with firstplace votes in parentheses, season record and total points. Points tabulated on basis of 20-18-16-14-12-10-9-8-etc.:

1. N. C. St. (39) 4-0 936
2. UCLA (3) 4-0 962
3. Indiana (4) 3-0 734
4. Louisville (3) 2-0 598
5. Maryland 3-0 543
6. So. Cal. 3-0 435
7. Marquette 2-0 361
8. N. Carolina 3-0 356
9. Kansas 3-1 319
10. Alabama 2-0 271
11. Notre Dame 3-0 232
12. Penn 3-0 192
13. S. Carolina 1-1 156
14. Memphis St. 2-0 78
15. Purdue 2-1 67
16. Michigan 2-0 64
17. Arizona 3-0 47
18. Oregon 3-0 33
19. Oklahoma 2-1 27
20. Providence 2-0 26

Others receiving votes, listed in alphabetical order: Arizona State; Boston College; Bradley; California; Centenary; Clemson; Davidson; DePaul; Detroit; Houston; Florida State; Kansas State; Kentucky; LaSalle; Manhattan, Minnesota; Nevada-Las Vegas; Oral Roberts; Oregon State; Providence; San Francisco; Stanford; Stetson; St. John's N. Y.; Tulsa; Vanderbilt.

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