

# The Last days 100 days to the crown

By TONY GALLUCCI  
Battalion Sports Writer

(This concludes a two-part series chronicling the 1975-76 Basketball team's trek to the SWC championship.)

The last time Texas Tech had lost a basketball game in Lubbock was when the Aggies visited last year. No one figured it could possibly happen again, especially this year, the year of the Red Raiders.

But the Aggies managed to come from behind and before a TV audience and a packed house put on a fine show of coach Shelby Metcalf's patented four-corner stall. With the game on the line, Tech was forced to foul.

Sonny Parker made the two free throws with only seconds remaining to win the game for the Ags.

Sonny P was finally getting his due. He was beginning to be touted as All-America caliber, a status that was enhanced as the season progressed.

It got to where every game the Ags played was being called 'the shoot-out' or the biggest game of the season. One such game was against Arkansas in the Hills.

Last year, the Ags won the South-west Conference title when a buzzer

Sleeper Steve Jones proved he could play as well as his Olympian brother Dwight. Wally Swanson proved why he was a high school All-America as did Robinson. Sonny P., Davis, Ray Roberts and Gates Erwin showed why they were called the "greatest bunch of seniors I've ever had," by Metcalf.

shot by Mike Floyd gave the Ags a 64-62 victory in College Station. The Ags had been beaten earlier that year in double overtime in Fayetteville.

This year could have been a duplicate. This time the Ags fell victim to a clock malfunction and suffered their first SWC defeat of the year, again in double-overtime to those same hogs in those same Hills.

It was as much a spark as anything. The Ags responded with a win over Rice which brought Sonny P player-of-the-week honors.

Then came a pot bust that involved several athletes. Rumors persisted about the bust's effect on the team and who was involved, etc. The team responded by blasting Texas twice and iceing TCU at the buzzer with a well-planned and better executed shot by Karl 'Cool' Godine.

Then came a fateful trip to Dallas where the Aggies lost their second conference decision, also controversial. Barry Davis was called for a charging foul and a basket disallowed. Metcalf as well as most everybody present disagreed. Metcalf was more vehement about his protest, though, kicking the scorers table and tossing a chair on the floor.

What was left was a heavy week of must games, with none more important than the then upcoming match with Tech. A win or loss could make the difference between failure and a championship.

Not only did the fired up Ags pin a 74-63 loss on the Red Raiders, but Tech coach Gerald Myers admitted A&M was the best, Sonny as super, and his squad would be looking forward to meeting the Ags in the playoffs.

The Aggies now took a little time to sit back and relax. The season was far from over, in fact one of the toughest games was yet to come. UH in Hofheim, but two wins over Tech was just too good to waste.

The rest and relaxation didn't last long. Godine and Williams hadn't played well in their Saturday venture of the week before against SMU and there was a reason for it. Godine and Williams had been declared ineligible for the rest of the season. No more said, no less.

Panic arrived on the basketball scene. The players and coaches had known of the investigation but of course nothing was said. Rumors started up everywhere and newspaper after radio after TV after newspaper related opinions and tirades and rumors. Nobody knew the truth.

Godine and Williams hired a lawyer and filed suit to regain their

eligibility but the situation was not resolved before the big game at Houston. The rest of the team played what had to be the most remarkable game all season. Metcalf called it the "greatest game in A&M athletic history."

Kevin Jones sat quietly on the bench with emergency draftee Bryan Barrett, thus providing modern meaning to the true meaning of the "12th man."

The Ags proceeded to blast Houston 94-80 and satisfy the world that nothing was going to keep them from their second consecutive SWC title.

Nothing did. The next day a federal judge ruled that Godine and Williams' constitutional rights had been violated and gave the SWC 30 days to satisfy those rights. The pair returned to play for the rest of a rather uneventful season.

Unspectacular. That is at least until they smothered last place Rice in Houston and got into the locker room. Then the whole season suddenly had meaning. It was into the showers again for Metcalf and his tattered suit, and loads of champagne.

One felt, though, that an intense feeling of satisfaction was prevalent. This bunch wanted to go further. They weren't like last year's bunch, according to team co-captain Davis. "We aren't satisfied with just the conference championship. We think we can go much further in the NCAA playoffs. Last year we were satisfied with the SWC title."

It was all part of the determination

that made this team. "The greatest team in school history."

There were just too many roadblocks though as the Aggies dropped a notch when the second hearing of the SWC apparently found Godine and Williams just as guilty as they had before eliminating them from participation in the playoffs.

Tech made it to the finals of the tourney against the Ags and perhaps were fearful of losing to the Ags three times. Or maybe they felt it was their due, being picked to win in pre-season and all. But whatever, the Red Raiders turned the tables on the depleted martyrs from College Station.

The Techs stalled until the final seconds and hit a shot at the buzzer to win. It was a nightmare with the characters reversed. That buzzer had hurt many an SWC team this season, but that one smarted most.

The Aggies were left cold with a 74-72 loss. They were the AP's 19th-ranked team, had just been UPI's 16th-ranked team, they had the SWC's Most Valuable Player in Sonny P and the Coach of the Year in Metcalf and they were nationally ranked in several statistical categories.

Sonny P was also named District VI's most valuable player and was named honorable mention All-America by the Associated Press. He made the Pizza Hut All-Star team by finishing balloting in third place with almost 350 thousand votes. He will play on the West Squad along with

Rick Bullock. Meanwhile, the first 21 win season in Aggie history was done with, without an invite from the NIT or even the UIL. Now, 100 days after the start of the search for the crown, it's over.

Aggies have only to watch the playoffs, the allstar games, the All-America teams and dream of a future Aggie team that may have the chance to win 21 games in a season.

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