

sports

Moody Coliseum: a place the Aggies hate to visit

By PAUL ARNETT
Battalion Sports Editor

The Texas A&M basketball team doesn't like to play in Moody Coliseum. In this decade the Aggies have lost six out of seven times. "The SMU Mustangs are always

tough at home," coach Shelby Metcalf said. "But if we don't beat them now we may be playing them again in Dallas when the play-offs roll around."

"That's why I was burning candles for Rice the other night. If they had beaten them then we would have

been tied for fifth place."

Fifth place means home court advantage in the conference play-offs. SMU is currently in fifth place with a record of 4-5. Baylor and Texas A&M are tied for sixth place with records of 3-6.

"If we lose tonight, then the best we can hope for is sixth place," Metcalf said. "Tonight is a must game for us."

It's a must game for the Mustangs as well.

"We can't afford to lose this one," coach Sonny Allen said. "We lost a game in College Station earlier in the year that we had no business losing. This time I think our kids know what to expect."

The leader of the Ponies is Reggie Franklin. The junior transfer from Houston is the team's leading scorer averaging 12.3 points a game. Franklin proved earlier in the year that he can also play under pressure.

"We had one second left on the clock and Franklin made a shot that one us a ball game against Houston," Allen said. "He and Swanson have been our best players this year."

Senior Jeff Swanson is averaging 12 points and seven rebounds a game. He is a player Metcalf has al-

ways respected.

"We wanted Jeff real bad when he was in high school," Metcalf said. "He is real strong on the boards and can score down low. He has never had a real good game against us. I hope that holds true tonight."

The other three starters for SMU are T.J. Robinson, Phil Hale and Joey Cerovolo. All three are good on the fast break.

"My theory in basketball is to get the ball up court on offense as quickly as you can," Allen said. "This year's club is not as quick as teams we have had in the past, but we still look for the quick bucket whenever we can."

Metcalf has a completely different theory. A&M will try to maintain a slower tempo. Run and gun will kill them.

"We'll definitely try to play our style of basketball," Metcalf said. "We beat them at home by looking for the good shot; not by running up and down the floor."

The team that can play its style of basketball is the one who shall win. In Moody Coliseum the Mustangs have a distinct advantage. Metcalf hopes his team can overcome the Moody jinx.

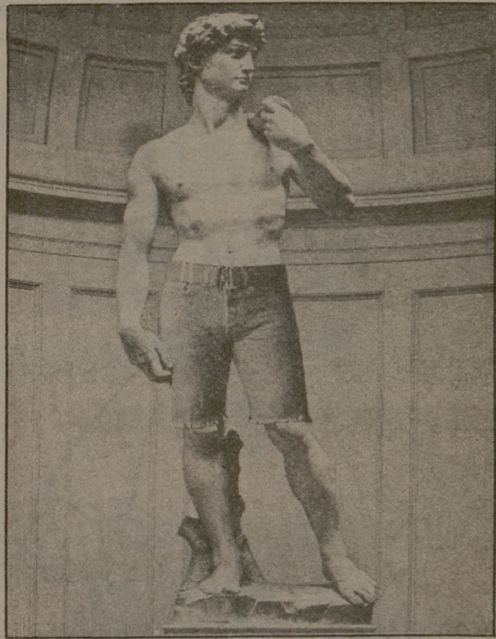


A&M forward Albert Culton (No. 33) tries to save an errant pass. Culton, a freshman from Ennis, had four points against the Baylor

Bears on Monday night. The Aggies defeated the Bears 58-56.

Battalion photo by Paul Arnett

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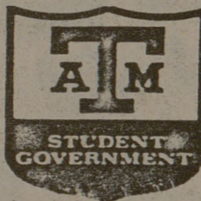
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David Boggan

A revolution has occurred

These are the times that try men's souls.

— Thomas Paine

Paine was talking about the American Revolution. Remember, the one in 1776? But his words of wisdom apply perfectly to the Aggie basketball revolution of 1978.

The last three home games have truly been times that try men's souls. In fact, if the times in G. Rollie White were any more trying, Aggie fans would probably squeeze

an entire generation of future Aggies into nonexistence.

Before the season started, coach Shelby Metcalf said that his team consisted of three separate groups.

"We have Karl (Godine) and Jarvis (Williams) from two years ago," Metcalf said in November. "We have Dave Goff and Steve Sylestine and that group from last year and we have this year's freshmen."

It was this lack of togetherness that was one of the Aggies' major

enemies in the first part of the season.

"They (the players) are all good people. They all wanted to win," Metcalf said Tuesday. "They just lacked unity and basketball depends on team work."

Then came the Aggie revolution—that point in the season where the team started playing as a team. A quick look at the history of the revolution shows that it started on Jan. 23.

It was on that day that with a 1-4 conference record, their best game of the season against the undefeated Texas Longhorns. In overtime Ron Baxter made the shot heard around the coliseum and gave Texas a 79-77 victory. But the Aggie forces proved that they were a spirited delegation that could produce 40+ minutes of good basketball.

Unfortunately, their next battle took the Aggies into the Valley Forge-like climate of Ft. Worth where they had more luck with snowballs than with basketballs. They were defeated by TCU 66-59.

Metcalf's army returned to their battleground on the Brazos where, in two soul-trying confrontations, they defeated the forces of Rice and Baylor 74-70 and 58-56, respectively.

"I think we bottomed out at TCU," Metcalf said.

"We had our first team meeting after that game and worked out our difference. Now the players have complete unity and respect for each other. I think that's one reason for our improved performance."

But it is not all downhill here for the Aggies. With a 3-4 conference record, very few of the remaining games will be easy.

With their new-found unity and long road ahead begins the battle against SMU, a team that is traditionally tough on the Aggie.

A victory over the Ponies would put A&M in a tie for the important fifth place in the conference standings. If the Aggies get a home court advantage in the first round of the SVC tournament, they must finish at least fifth.

Right to a home court is based upon the second through fifth place finishers, with the conference champions getting a bye into the finals of the tournament.

One interesting note is Baylor shot 28 more free throws than A&M did in Waco and in College Station the Bears shot only more free throws than the Aggies.

Inconsistency in officiating? So it so say that if the Aggie revolution had a battle cry, it would probably be, "Get some eyeglasses, re-

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