

the sports

Aggies open against Lamar

Ladies begin state tournament play

By BETH YOUNG
Battalion Reporter

The Texas A&M Aggie Ladies basketball team set a goal for itself at the beginning of the 1978-79 season. That goal, according to Coach Wanda Bender, was to make it to the regional basketball tournament and be one of the top four women's basketball teams in Texas.

The Aggie Ladies will have the chance to achieve their goal this weekend at the TIAAW State Tour-

nament in Nacogdoches at Stephen F. Austin State University.

"Teams were selected to play in this tournament on the basis of their win-loss record," Bender said, "and a committee seeded the teams on what they feel like their records justified."

"It will be a 16-team, double elimination tournament," Bender said. "Out of the 16 teams, half of them are seeded according to their season's record and the other eight teams are placed by a draw."

The Aggie Ladies, who are 24-14, were not among the seeded teams and Bender said that they did not draw well.

"We needed to be in the upper bracket, bottom half," she said, "because there we would only have had to defeat one difficult opponent to be guaranteed fifth place and only have to play four games. Where we are, we'll have to face four difficult opponents and play five ball games."

The University of Texas is seeded No. 1 in the tournament but Texas A&M will not play the Longhorns because they're in a different bracket. However, A&M does have fifth ranked North Texas State Univer-

sity and third ranked Wayland in its bracket as well as second ranked Stephen F. Austin and seventh ranked Lamar, which A&M will play in the first round today at 11 a.m.

"The hardest team we'll face after we beat Lamar is SFA," Bender commented.

Bender said she feels it will be hard for the team to achieve its goal of being No. 4 in the state because of the way A&M is placed in the tournament.

"We'll have to beat SFA to do it," she said. "Realistically, we could achieve our ultimate goal and gain a berth in regionals."

This is Bender's second year to take the Aggie Ladies to the state tournament. Last year the Ags came out tied for seventh place.

"I feel like if we're playing good ball up to our capabilities like the last two games, we'll come out fifth out of 16," Bender said. "That would give us a berth in the regionals tournament which is at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Ok., March 8-10."

Bender said that she has been working the team on man-for-man defense, individual shooting, break-

ing a press and improving its own press.

"I think we maybe could have worked on man-for-man earlier in the season," she said, "and played more man-for-man as well."

Bender said that the Aggie Ladies lost a lot of games that they should have won this season due to injuries and sickness.

"I feel that on any given night we should be 34-4," she said. "Only two teams are capable of beating us anywhere on any night and they are the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas."

Bender described this weekend's tournament as the most grueling test of the season.

"We have to play five hard ball games in three days if we make it to the finals," she said. "The girls are ready. That will be our advantage. The players are up at their peak and we should go into this tournament on a high note."

The Aggie Ladies are ready. Junior guard Von Bunn said that she is looking forward to the tournament.

"We've played good in our last two games and we're not going to let Lamar beat us," she said. "I think

we're going to surprise everybody." Senior Margaret Byrne also feels that the Aggies will do well.

"I'm really looking forward to it," Byrne said. "We've been playing good ball lately."

Freshman Kelley Sullivan said, "It's going to be tough because we have to play a lot of games but our enthusiasm is good. I think we can get into the top five."

Bender said the starters for the first game will be Bunn, Byrne, Sullivan, Susan Kimbro and Peggy Pope.

"I always substitute freely," the Aggie coach said, "but not as freely in this tournament."

She said that Lisa Hughes, Cindy Gough and Julia Crawford will definitely see a lot of action. The Aggie Ladies will be playing without their third leading scorer, Pat Werner, who is out due to foot surgery last week.

Bender said that the Aggies plan to go to Nacogdoches and play the best basketball they've played all year.

"I will expect the maximum ultimate effort they're able to give in five games," Bender said. "If I get that effort out of these Aggie Ladies, we will achieve our goal."



viewpoint

By DAVID BOGGAN
Battalion Sports Editor

Metcalf and Ags wave banners high

One day last fall, someone went to the athletic department's chest, took four maroon banners out of the mothballs and hung them on the south wall of G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The four faded flags commemorate Texas A&M's Southwest Conference basketball championships in 1964, 1969, 1975 and 1978. These are the four SWC titles claimed by Shelby Metcalf in his 16-year coaching career at Texas A&M.

Now maybe the cleaning, pressing and displaying of the emblems was just a make-work task assigned to keep people in the department busy. Or perhaps the banners were taking up too much storage space. Or possibly this was Metcalf's way of saying to the omnipresent and omnipotent Aggie alumni, "Hey, look gang! I know we had a bye to the semifinals of the post-season tournament instead of to the quarterfinals last year, finishing 12-15 and all. But, see, I really have produced winners. And things are going to get better, honest."

WELL, YOU CAN PUT AWAY the ladder, boys. You won't be hanging a new SWC championship banner this year. But one thing is almost certain; things are going to get better for the Texas A&M basketball team.

As a matter of fact, things aren't too bad for the Aggies right now. Metcalf's young team finished a respectable third in the conference behind a Texas team composed of seniors and an Arkansas senior who composed a team. If not for three halves of bad basketball in the second half of the SWC season, the Aggies would have a bye to the semifinals of the post-season tournament instead of to the quarterfinals. And they just might have had to make room for a fifth banner.

THE AGGIES STARTING LINE-UP throughout most of the season consisted of junior Dave Goff, whose basketball smarts is just what having a coach on the court; sophomore Tyrone Ladson, a transfer who sat out last year gaining eligibility; sophomores Rynn Wright and Vernon Smith, the Dallas Duo who were more fierce on the court than rush hour traffic is on the Central Expressway and freshman Rudy Woods, whose hard work and youthful enthusiasm earned him an instant starting role. (The fact that he stood 6-foot-11 alongside Converse didn't hurt any, either.)

Add to that the bench help from David Britton and Albert Calhoun and later in the season from Steve Sylestine and Joey Robinson, and by golly if the Aggies didn't have a team that could play 40 minutes of fairly decent basketball.

Metcalf's men won two holiday classics. They defeated San Francisco, Nevada-Las Vegas and Kentucky on their way to an 11-2 post-conference record. They were beaten twice in the first half of SWC play, by SMU and Texas. It didn't seem to matter that the Aggies lacked a consistent outside shooter and a penetrating guard. The game was inside and underneath, where the big men hung out. We only five games remaining in the season, the youthful Texas Aggies were 9-2 and tied for first place in the SWC with the Longhorns.

BUT THERE COMES A TIME when experience wins out over youthful enthusiasm. That time came for the Texas Aggies when Arkansas, Texas and Texas Tech discovered that there is a way to defend Rudy Woods, short of handcuffs. Sagging defenses, coupled with A&M's poor first half performances, dropped the Aggies first to fourth in the conference. They finished the season with a 22-12 record, 11-5 and third place in the conference.

Now the Aggies set their sights on the SWC post-season tournament. If they hope to scale the rough wall to the championship in the Summit, they must defeat Texas Tech (provided the Raiders beat TCU Saturday), Arkansas and Texas (provided the Longhorns beat their semifinal contest). The odds of that happening are not in A&M's favor, despite the fact that 1978 tournament champion Houston defeated the same three teams in last year's tourney.

Nevertheless, a tournament championship, an NCAA bid or an NIT invitation all remain as possibilities in Texas A&M's immediate future.

And there is no doubt that the Texas Aggies are a team of the future. Wright and Smith will be around for two more seasons. Let Rudy Woods under the basket for three more years, provided he isn't lured away by the pros. And Metcalf is working hard to find a replacement to his awesome front line — a shooting guard.

Indeed, the next few years should be banner seasons for Aggie basketball.

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Mustangs sign top prospects

United Press International Southern Methodist University rounded up one of the top recruiting classes in the nation Wednesday and the Mustangs' overjoyed coach, Ron Meyer, said his club had become a contender for the 1979 Southwest Conference championship.

SMU, which pulled off the recruiting coup of the year last week in signing the state's top two prospects and a dozen more players of high regard, re-signed every one of

them to a national letter of intent Wednesday.

The Mustangs even managed to outgild Oklahoma for the services of one of the state's top linemen, Scott Gibson of Duncanville, who had previously signed with the Sooners.

Meyer personally signed the cornerstones of the recruiting crop — running backs Eric Dickerson and Sealy and Craig James of Houston.

Dickerson, perhaps the most widely recruited ball carrier in the country, signed with Meyer at 8:15 a.m. Wednesday and two hours later James signed on with the Mustangs.

"We had our plow in some pretty hard ground when we first came here," said Meyer. "But because of some tremendous dedication and some pieces falling together we're just making progress in leaps and bounds."

"This group really gives us good credibility with people. We're going to be young, but we will be unhibited."

"This group is going to get us into position to be able to mount a bonafide challenge for the conference title this year."

"This is a heck of a day as a coaching staff for us and as a university."

The work done by Meyer and his

band of assistants overshadowed the efforts of the rest of the Southwest Conference schools, although every team in the league signed athletes off the various blue chip lists.

Texas A&M and Texas Tech, however, lost players they had signed to SWC scholarship agreements last week. Running back Royce Coleman, who had signed with the Red Raiders, decided on Oklahoma instead and defensive back Donnie Fisher, highly recruited out of Port Arthur Lincoln, jilted Texas A&M in favor of UCLA.

The rest of the state's leading high school players backed up their commitments by signing national scholarship agreements Wednesday.

Quarterback Rick McIvor of Fort Stockton, tight end Dewey Turner of Lubbock Estacado and wide receiver Herkie Walls of Garland — the top players signed by Texas — stayed in the Longhorns fold.

Tech was able to keep quarterback Mark James of Gregory-Portland and lineman Matt Harlien of Corpus Christi King. Texas A&M, which had hoped to sign Dickerson last week, counted wide receiver Eference Murphy of Texarkana as its leading prospect.

Arkansas fought off Notre Dame for the services of lineman Billy Ray Smith of Plano and Baylor came up with an outstanding quarterbacking duo of Rick Money of Dallas and Vic Vines of Odessa Permiana.

TCU also had perhaps its best recruiting crop in a decade, highlighted by the signing of quarterback

Reuben Jones from Tulsa. Jones had been heavily recruited by Oklahoma, but the Sooners told him they wanted him as a running back.

Jones, a quick-footed option quarterback who also threw for 1,400 yards last year, wanted a chance to be a signal caller in college. Both Arkansas and TCU recruiters said they would give him the opportunity to play quarterback and after visiting Fayetteville last week Jones signed with TCU Wednesday.

The Horned Frogs recruited coast to coast, signing players from California, Georgia and Pennsylvania.

Oklahoma's annual invasion into Texas was limited to only a few gains this year. Dickerson was the Sooners' chief target and they lost Gibson to SMU.

In addition to the gains they made last week, SMU beefed up its forward wall by signing Brian O'Meara, a 6-6, 250-pound lineman from Cleveland.

Texas A&M signees

Charlie Lowe, wr, 6-3, 190, Beaumont Forest Park; Columbus Harris, rb, 5-11, 190, Bryan; Mack Moore, lineman, 6-4, 245, Farraday, La. (San Francisco City College); David Scott, wr, 6-0, 180, wr, Kilgore JC; Van Barnett, rb, 6-2, 185, West Orange Jeff Farrar, rb, 6-1, 190, Grapevine, Kenny Ingram, lb, 6-2, 205, Corpus Christi Carroll; Raymond Jackson, lineman, 6-5, 255, Wharton; Don Jones, lineman, 6-3, 190, Nacogdoches, Buzzy Lane, rb, 5-11, 190, For Worth Wyatt; Mark McQueen, qb, 6-0, 185, Temple; Charles Milstead, db, 5-11, 175, Houston Lee; Eference Murphy, wr, 5-10, 173, Texarkana; Bobby Stroger, lb, 6-2, 230, Haughton, La.; Elvis Walker, rb, 5-9, 15, Temple; Chuck Williams, lineman, 64, 245, Gregory-Portland; Will Wright, lineman, 6-2, 218, Dallas Roosevelt.

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