

## Aggies going for NIT title

United Press International  
Texas A&M is bent on keeping the National Invitation Tournament championship in the Lone Star state. The University of Texas won the IT crown last year; the Texas Aggies are convinced they can do the same in 1979. A&M defeated favored Nevada-67-64 in a second round game Monday night and has the advantage of a home court when the Aggies meet Alabama Thursday night. Everything is big in Texas, except perhaps the Aggies' own field use, where the seating capacity is 100. Instead, the Crimson Tide game will be played at Houston's Summit, where 15,676 can crowd into the arena and shout support for their state favorite. "Our forwards have played exceptional games in this tournament," comments Texas A&M Coach Elby Metcalf. "And they play well under pressure. We might get beat,

but it won't be from pressure. We'll blame it on the sun or moon." Vernon Smith and Rynn Wright combined for 35 points against Nevada-Reno and dominated the boards.

Alabama can compete with the Texans under the boards. The Tide proved this point by out rebounding Virginia 53-33 while edging the Cavaliers, 90-88. They also have 6-6 Reggie King, who scored 26 points against Virginia after suffering a dizzy spell earlier in the day.

In the other third round matchup Thursday night, 14th ranked Purdue, the only rated team in the NIT, plays Old Dominion at West Lafayette, Ind.

Despite co-holding the Big Ten title with Michigan State and Iowa, Purdue was passed over for NCAA consideration.

The winners of Thursday's games move on to the semifinal round next Monday night at Madison Square Garden in New York. Indiana and

Ohio State play the second half of the doubleheader that evening. The championship game is scheduled for Wednesday night, March 21, at the Garden.

Purdue emerged from second round action with an 84-70 victory over Dayton. Joe Barry Carroll, a 7-1 center, led the Boilermakers with 25 points.

The Boilermakers' ability to switch defenses, from a zone to a man-to-man, could cause Old Dominion some problems. OD also has a strong defense, taking Clemson into double overtime Monday night and beating the favored Tigers, 61-59. In addition, the team from Virginia has the knack of scoring the winning basket in the waning seconds. OD won five games this season in the last five seconds.

Ohio State earned its trip to the semifinals by defeating Maryland 79-72, and Indiana stopped previously unbeaten Alcorn State, 73-69.

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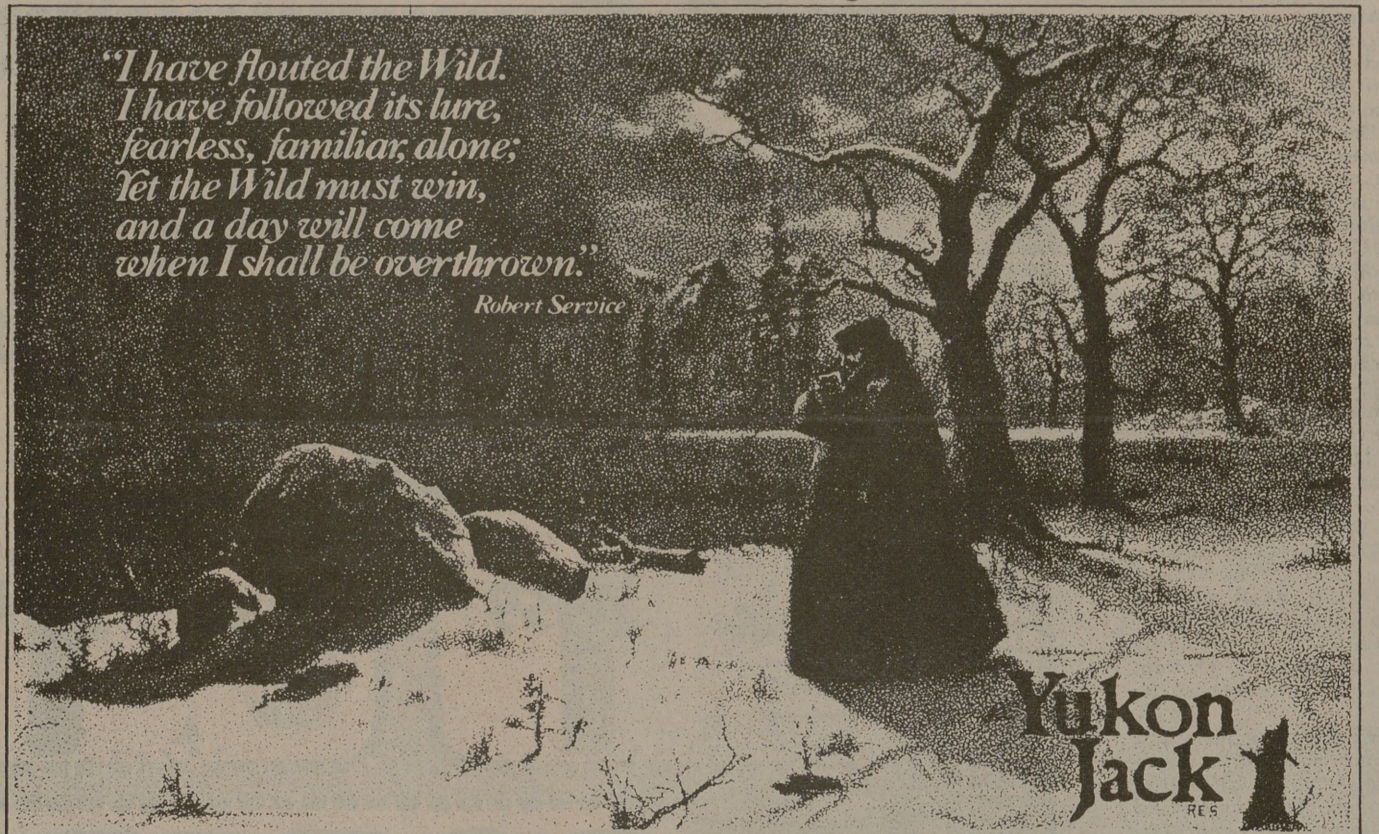
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